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(Copy # 3/ of 50)

9 July 1945

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JCS Memo

17 Jan 1973

By authority A. C. of S., G-2

Date 10 JULY 45 (JLC) Initials

REPORT FROM CAPTURED PERSONNEL AND MATERIAL BRANCH
ISSUED BY THE MILITARY INTELLIGENCE DIVISION, U.S.
WAR DEPARTMENT, BY COMBINED PERSONNEL OF U.S. AND
BRITISH SERVICES FOR USE OF ALLIED FORCES.

Information obtained from a GAF Field
Marshal on the pre-war development of
the GAF, and some aspects of policy
relating to it during the war. Allied
Source. Received in Britain 3 June 1945.

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USAF HRA 170.2281-12 9 JULY 1945

At the outbreak of war the original policy for the GAF envisaged on the one hand, the so-called independent air forces, which were to operate strategically, and on the other, the support, mainly of the Army, but also of the Navy; and as far as I know it was intended first of all to attack airfields and bridges behind the front. Industry was probably not thought of at first; that only came later. So it was really more for tactical use. The organization of the GAF was really not at all suited to strategic work. It was not by any means completely organized. The war actually came as a surprise to everyone in Germany. For if you have built up a thing for about six years, of which 1 1/2 to 2 years were spent more on preparatory work - from 1933 onwards - the very first thing which had to be done was to build factories to construct aircraft. Our largest factory was Junkers. That could build 16 Ju.52s a year if on other aircraft were made. That was in 1933. If I remember right there were 3500 men in all employed in the whole aircraft industry. So first of all that had to be built up. New factories had to be built, and workers found. That was on the technical side.

On the other side people had first of all to be picked out who were in a position to act as instructors to the young people who were coming. For the 'fun and games', as we called them, which the Army and the Navy used to go in for in the way of flying at that time were always very much over-rated. I subsequently saw some of it myself and also took over what we got from there. There wasn't one single serviceable aircraft among the ones we took over. So all that had to be started up, and it wasn't actually until from 1936 onwards that the affair progressed. The first two years after 1933 were spent on this preliminary work. The government was also naturally very wary of starting these things too openly because of the Versailles Treaty etc., and they were very much afraid that someone, France above all, might say: "Stop!" You could say that not until the turn of the year 1934/35 was the construction of certain military types started. Until then only the Ju.52 was built. Some fighters were also constructed, but extremely few.

As far as types were concerned the decisions were made in 1934. They first of all had to be designed by the firms; there was nothing reasonable there. Of course in order to give the industry larger orders at once, the Ju.52 was put on order. There had already been a few Do.11s even before that; that was a kind of bomber of a completely useless type. Those were the results which the Army had theoretically achieved by that time. In order to keep industry employed, because it was not yet known what would be done, orders were also given for these aircraft (for quite a considerable number as a matter of fact), and the only use for them which was ever found

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afterwards was as training aircraft; so it was not possible to start properly until 1935. That's to say $1\frac{1}{2}$ years had actually passed since the proper beginning, and it was quite out of the question in that time to build up an air force suitable for war when as good as nothing had been done in that sphere from 1918 to 1933. There were no experienced pilots, no commanding officers, none of them were available.

Thus the original plan or policy for the use of the GAF in the event of the outbreak of war was mainly tactical. The ideas which certainly played a great part with Goering were always very far-reaching. He never had any inhibitions as regards size. Of course he saw in the GAF an instrument with which he could do everything. He almost pitied the Army as a poor, miserable antiquated branch of the Armed Forces. He regarded the Navy as completely out of date. He always had very hazy ideas about it. He also completely failed to understand that sometimes things had to be done slowly. He simply said: "That must be tripled in the next three months." He also kept promising the Fuehrer: "My Fuehrer, I'll do all that." He actually behaved more like a managing director in a very imposing office with several telephones to use when he wanted to send for his people. But he never took time into account; that was beyond him.

The fact that we got an Air Ministry was mainly due to Goering's wish that he personally should also be a Minister in the Reichs Cabinet. Previously his only fixed job was Minister for the Interior (sic) in Prussia. As a result of that he demanded an Air Ministry. That was also approved by the other parties, under pressure by Hitler. Goering did, I believe, put the alternative - he once told me that - that he would either become Minister of Transport - (Eitz von Ribonach, a relation of von Papen, was in that post) or else Air Minister. And now, in order to get the Ministry put through, the others were told: "He (von Ribonach) must go, we won't take him over with the others." Papen would have been miserable if his relation had not been given a Ministry. So it was declared: "If he stays we'll make an Air Ministry. Then all flying which has hitherto come under the Ministry of Transport as civil aviation must be taken away from there and put under the Air Ministry." Thereupon this political bargain was made.

But in the beginning there wasn't a Ministry, but only a 'Reichskommissar' for aviation; Goering became that. And after two or three months the Air Ministry developed from that. I was sent for and told to organize this affair. I first of all formed a department to cope with aviation, meteorological services and the things which actually already existed. Then a second, which was to cope with all the technical side. There was a large technical organization which had always belonged to the civilian side - those people were partly in the 'Lufthansa', then in the research institutes for aviation, and then there were also others in transport flying schools, and we formed this department with the people from the Ministry of Transport. Mddig-Hofmann (?), a 'Ministerialrat' advisor, and a Herr Bunker who was at that time an 'Oberregierungsrat' (Chief Government Counsellor) and subsequently became a 'Ministerialrat' (Ministerial Counsellor). They formed the technical side of it.

Then there were also technical experts in the Army and the Navy and it took months to get them all into the same organization. I once had the organizational plans submitted to me by these gentlemen,

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which comprised a civilian technical side, an Army technical side and a Navy technical side. But each side included aircraft engines.

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which comprised a civilian technical side, an Army technical side and a Navy technical side. But each side included air-frames, aircraft engines, aircraft instruments and aircraft equipment. On the Army side there were also weapons, and there were weapons on the Navy side too. These difficulties had first of all to be disposed of, but at first we always came up against some political obstacle. So then gradually the Ministry did turn into something like a Ministry. The third part was administration: clothing, food, billeting and administration of land and buildings etc. One section was reserved by the Army and the Navy for their Military Operations Staffs. He did not call them General Staffs at that time, that was only introduced later in accordance with Goering's wish. We actually only wanted to have a 'Führungsamt' (Direction Office). All these quarrels and difficulties lasted out through the whole of 1933 and into 1934. I can't remember exactly when the official birthday of the GAF was, but I think it was 1935, when the Führer officially inspected a 'Gruppe' of Heinkel fighters at Staaken airfield. The Army first of all provided an officer as Operations Staff Officer, of whom Hammerstein, the head of the OKH, said: "I'll send the Air Ministry an officer who certainly won't be able to do the job." That man was removed afterwards, and succeeded by a very capable officer.

Up to the end of 1937 Goering only very seldom bothered about the question of production figures for various types of planes. In the first years I saw him about four or five times for discussions and the other officers not at all. Then in rather later years he also sent for the other people individually without me, then often one didn't find out what had been discussed. But I had my weekly conferences with the heads of the departments, and ran the affair. If Hitler wanted to know anything about it he usually - from the third year onwards - sent not for Goering, but for me. I couldn't go to see Hitler on my own initiative, but only when I was sent for. I had the impression that Hitler was far more interested in the whole affair than Goering. That was the end of 1937. Then at about the turn of the year 1937/38 that changed considerably. Until then everything had gradually come under my charge, including the Chief of General Staff, which appointment had been created in the meantime. We had made detailed plans of which types to construct and how many of them, as early as 1935. In the previous years we had kept working on them and revising them. We had to develop our industry and our ground organizations, the barracks and airfields on some predetermined scale. We had made accurate plans which were then co-ordinated by the General Staff and thoroughly discussed by me with the technical experts, the personnel branch etc. Only at every conference with Goering this programme was changed round.

The original programme was something like this - there were at least 500 alterations in the programme - that we should form about five to six fighter 'Geschwader' (Wing) in the course of six or seven years. I thought that it was best at first to develop things slowly - because it was impossible to get people of the necessary quality so quickly. That was in about 1935. We had already formed our ideas by 1934 and by 1935 we were about ready to discuss them. Then we decided that we wanted to have a few bomber formations too in order to a certain extent to have a 'precautionary' bombing 'Flotte' (Fleet), as we called it at that time, since Germany at first stood in an extremely weak position in this whole sphere of international politics. One thing was quite obvious: We were going to leave the League of Nations in order to get out of the Versailles Treaty - that also became clear to us through public statements and

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by the Fuehrer's speeches; we always found out the policy only through the speeches. Thereupon we said that we must have a certain number of bombers in order to prevent people from starting a war against us.

The first plan was not drawn up by me, but by the rather peculiar Chief of General Staff of that time, whom I mentioned earlier. He wanted to have 144 fighters, twelve bombers, and the rest reconnaissance aircraft, 200 aircraft in all. That was in about 1933-34. He wanted to take that as the first plan and then enlarge on it later, if necessary. Of course I told him that that was rather a small number, that you couldn't do anything with that and it would be better to leave the whole affair alone altogether. I had intended more or less, spread over several years, to form about six bomber 'Geschwader', about six fighter 'Geschwader' and a corresponding number of reconnaissance aircraft etc., but no formation of units except for training units.

The strength of a 'Geschwader' was then six 'Staffeln' (Squadrons) of 12, 9 operational and 3 reserve. That made 72. Later the figures so-envisaged were considerably increased, as I will explain. I didn't want to form any bomber 'Geschwader' or any great number of fighter 'Geschwader', but I wanted to put all the material into the schools, because I said: "There's no point at all in having a unit without any trained crews; that is to say, before anything else we must train them. Hundreds and thousands of people must pass through a school, schools for fitters etc." Then one day I was told to take this plan to Goering. When he read it he laughed me to scorn and said I was crazy, and demanded that everything I had set out should be formed in quite a short time, but not as schools, which should be additional, but as units. Actually every conference ended up like that - there were about three, four or five a year - by his saying each time: "What you intend to do during the next five years must be done in one year or six months."

The Fuehrer took a much more intelligent view of it; he didn't understand anything about the technical or the tactical side of it; he did understand something about the organization. Then there was once a row too; Goering told the Minister of Finance that if he wanted to have the air arm doubled in a short time, all he had to do was to send for me and give me a kick in the pants, and twice the amount would be there. Thereupon I went to see him and asked if that was his opinion, as it would be better in that case for someone else to take over. Then he swore that he had never said that. That was how the first plans ran for the formation of the GAF, about six fighter 'Geschwader' and six bomber 'Geschwader'. It was considered in 1934 and put on paper with instructions for it to be carried out in the Spring of 1935. It was supposed to be ready after several years. It was impossible to say exactly because at that time we still hadn't any general picture of when our industry would be ready or - as the training also depended on the industrial output - when the training would be ready. There were then frequently serious discussions saying that more should be done. Then attempts were made to do more, but of course that led to a certain hastiness in the whole affair.

We were always trying to make a fixed programme. Once we - the Chief of General Staff, the heads of the technical, personnel and administrative branches with the ground organization - were agreed what could be done, when everything under my command had been agreed on, then for a time we used to think we now had one at last. Then came the next conference with Goering and it was changed. Then we agreed

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that from then on we would say 'No' to everything, because we considered it to be unreasonable to rush matters. We were then called to a conference at which Hitler and Goering were present. I, as the senior officer, made a statement and said that we could not do more than that. There was immediately a sharp retort, and the then Chief of General Staff, who was otherwise excellent and also pulled his weight with me, gave in out of sheer fright and said that, if it was asked for in that way, more would simply have to be done, and more would be done. He said to me afterwards: "When Hitler said it to me like that, I couldn't do anything else." It was a mesmerising influence which he exerted on everyone. He didn't talk about plans for a war. It was purely defensive; a fear that the others might do something. Above all they were afraid of France attacking.

I was more or less thrown out of the whole business in 1937/38. First of all the General Staff was taken away from me; that became independent of me. Then the Personnel Branch was taken away, and then all the technical side was taken away from me, and also became independent. All that was about the end of 1937. There were big quarrels between Goering and myself, and I asked him several times to be relieved of my post. That was refused with the words: "We shall decide when you have to go. Nobody can go!" I said: "Then I might go sick." Goering said: "Then you will be examined, and if you are not ill you will be punished." I said: "Then I can commit suicide." So he said: "That's the only thing left to you." That was in 1937. I was 'General der Flieger' then. Everybody was treated like that. The human key to the problem is as follows: there were a number of people in the Party who did not like Goering. They went around saying: "The real C-in-C of the GAF isn't Goering at all, it's Milch." Then there were people in my own circle who wanted to harm me; people who had come from the Regular Army. During all the years from the last war until 1933 I was not in the Forces; I was a civilian in the Lufthansa. They also said I was arrogating the supreme command to myself, that I inspected the troops like a C-in-C, and that I also made addresses to them. I did all that, but each time I said: "I have come on the orders of, and as representative of General Goering." Then Goering probably became jealous.

One day he was with Hitler, and Goering made various suggestions which didn't suit Hitler, so Hitler said to him: "Oh let Milch do that, he does it very well, why do you always want to involve yourself in details." He got the impression that Hitler too believed Goering wasn't C-in-C - he was certainly Air Minister, but not C-in-C - and that robbed him of his sleep. That is why he did that splitting-up and took away the most important sections which were formerly in my charge. I told him I could understand his doing it, but only on the one condition that he stepped into my place and did the work. And as I didn't imagine I was so very much more stupid than he was, I believed he would need almost as much time as I did if he wanted to do it properly. Then I said: "I should understand your having your Chief of the General Staff, your Personnel Chief and one man to do the remaining work, but I shouldn't understand it if the technical part were taken away, because the only remaining thing would be supplies - the supply of personnel and materials - airfields, aircraft and so on. He said no, I must leave him to do it in his own way, and he wanted to have it like that.

So I said: "Right, then, I agree. But you have continually told us how often you intended to work, and all the things you wanted to do": - every Christmas, on his leave at Karinhall, he drew up a plan: Mondays one hour from 10 - 11 Milch, from 11 - 12 the Chief of the General Staff and Milch. He had a programme like that for each day,

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showing 3 - 4 hours during which he intended to work with us. He did that each year. I said: "You haven't yet stuck to that for a single day," throughout all the years up to 1937. "You won't keep to it in the future either." "I shall keep to it," he said. I told him I didn't believe it, and that it would mean that to all outward appearances I would still bear all the responsibility under him, and that everyone would believe I was to blame if anything went wrong or didn't work properly, and that he would make me responsible for it, too, but that all the people who, by their own wish had become independent under me would no longer do what I wanted. Confidence in me had been undermined, and I could see only one possibility, namely that he should release me immediately. After all, I asked him in 1933, when I had to join him, that I should at all events have the right to return to the Lufthansa, and I was still a director of Lufthansa, although I had joined the Forces meanwhile. He replied that it was out of the question and he then said that only those in higher authority could decide that, and I had no say in the matter.

I can no longer say exactly what our strength was at the outbreak of war in 1939. I reckon that altogether with transport units, auxiliary units, etc., there might have been between three and four thousand aircraft, not counting the purely training aircraft. Naturally all the old stuff which was constructed at first went to the schools. There were perhaps 600 to 700 fighters, and possibly 800-900 bombers. I can give an example of how little the air arm, and in my opinion those in command too, believed in the possibility of war: In 1939 we drew attention to the fact that no bombs were being produced for us; it was said that steel was too scarce, and priority was always given to the U-boats or Navy, and above all to the big ships. The Navy chiefly had priority at that time, and then later the Army joined them in the limelight. But at that time the Navy was 'me plus ultra' in the Fuehrer's eyes. I drew attention to the fact that, owing to bad allocation, bomb production was impossible. Whereupon I was told: "It isn't necessary." I said I should like to have that in writing, because if something should happen and we were then without any bombs, a scapegoat would be sought immediately. We went into the war with Poland, and in those 21 or 22 days which the Polish war lasted, we dropped more than half of the available bombs, although Poland wasn't at all heavily bombed. I believe it was intended originally to start in the West immediately after Poland, but the weather situation kept preventing it; at that time tremendous attention was paid to the weather, not in regard to bombing, but as concerned the ground fighting. They wanted to start that seeing that war had been declared.

It was not, to be sure, mere accident that we had 3,000-4,000 planes when war broke out. It was part of a programme. It worked out like that. There was no definite programme. When I gave up the technical side and other things at the end of 1937, the production of aircraft was slightly higher in 1938 than in 1937. No more were produced in 1939 than in 1938 and only at the beginning of the war, in 1940, was production increased by about 10%, not more. Whether the programme was changed following the outcome of the first stage of the air war against Britain I can't say. I had nothing to do with the technical part of it then; as Inspector General I was continually travelling about visiting the units everywhere.

When the heavier British night raids on Germany came, I, as Inspector General, demanded that the programme should be changed over completely (I had nothing to do with the programme, but I knew what it was) to defence measures. That was turned down. And as one

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reckoned that America would enter the war, and particularly when America did enter the war, I personally demanded that a complete change-over to defence should be made as regarded organization, technical matters and also the training of personnel. No alteration was made. I was told: "What the Americans are saying is bluff, they've got nothing up their sleeves." At the end of 1941 we were only producing about 850 aircraft a month, including training aircraft. There were perhaps 100 training planes involved, and some 30 or 40 transport machines. There were also about 40-50 transport gliders for the airborne troops. I know that the maximum number of fighters produced was 220, and the General Staff programme was 360 fighters. I took over the programme like that from Udet at the end of 1941.

At that time bombers numbered 4-500 per month, and they were to be increased if possible, whereas no pressure was brought to bear on fighter production. I personally told the people it was madness. I said to Goering: "I've been in America, I've seen factories like Ford's there, and I know what can be achieved there from the technical point of view. The American programme of 7-8000 aircraft after two or three years is no bluff, it will be done." Afterwards, when it was too late, it was started. I tackled the matter independently, in the spring of 1942, having gained a general picture of the technical side of it. I didn't want to take over this technical job, in the first place the thing seemed to me to have been completely mismanaged, and secondly I didn't feel that I was enough of a technical man to take on responsibility for the running of the whole thing right down to details. I had a clear idea of the picture by February 1942 - I had taken over at the beginning of December, Udet died on 17 November 1941.

I needed about two months in order merely to form the new organization. The 'Generalluftzeugmeister' (Air Inspector General) had 22 officials in posts which were directly subordinate to him, reports from whom he was supposed to hear daily. As he couldn't listen to 22 people, he listened to none at all. As a result I had to change things round completely and make four individual departments with which I worked. There were certain tasks which were not tackled at all, which were also very important: the dispersal of industry and similar questions. In February 1942 I went to Rominten - the Fuehrer's HQ were in the East at that time - and met Goering and the then Chief of the General Staff. I told him I must draw attention to the fact that in my programme there was a target figure of 360 fighters and that, as Inspector General, which post I still hold, I could only say that this figure was so ridiculous that I considered it a crime that only 360 had been demanded, quite apart from the fact that only 220 had been produced. Whereupon the Chief of Staff audibly gasped his indignation, because the figure came from him in the first place, and he maintained to me that he would have quite sufficient if he had 360 fighters. These were still all Messerschmitt 109-s, but an older type, 'D' or 'E'.

Thereupon the Chief of General Staff said to the Reichsmarschall: "I wouldn't know what to do with more than 360 fighters!" I shall never forget that sentence in my life. Goering then said to me: "What do you think is necessary?" I replied: "Several thousand are necessary. But in any case I should like to be given authority today, as I am here to give an account of things, to produce at least twice the number that have been demanded." "You mean 720?" "We won't take as low a figure as that, I'll say 1000." He said: "I should be delighted if you could produce as many as that, but you won't be able to." I said: "Oh yes, we can manage that easily - I've already been into that."

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Thereupon the Chief of General Staff said to Goering: "Sir, there's a snag in this. When Field Marshal Milch says that, he as good as says that he will produce fewer bombers and fewer transport aircraft, and I cannot dispense with a single one of these aircraft." "Now about that, Milch, explain yourself!" said Goering with a frown of worry immediately. I said to him: "Not one bomber less will be produced, not one transport aircraft less, because the factories which produce those are different ones." "All right," he said, "if you want to do it, do so by all means. I don't believe you'll manage it, because I know perfectly well that you haven't got the material for it or the workmen. What do you need extra?" I replied: "Nothing at all." "Do you mean to say you can do it with the present material and the present people?" I replied: "Yes, quite comfortably." I then went home.

I 'd already included the 1000 fighters in the programme long before - and reported to him four weeks later that I would reach a production of 3000 fighters within two years, namely that the 1000 fighter target figure would be passed in July 1943, providing our production wasn't smashed by raids, and that a figure of 3000 fighters would be reached in the summer of 1944. "What is the number of bombers per month?" I replied: "The production of bombers, probably including the dive-bombers as long as they continue to be produced, amounts to between 800 and 1000." The probable number we had was 950 or 960. "About 200 transport aircraft. Ground-strafting aircraft are included amongst the fighters - that is, the fighter bombers - also the gradual replacement of the Ju.87 Stuka by fighters is included in the fighter figure of 3000." I had investigations in hand for bringing the fighter production up to 5000, and to find out what more was necessary for this purpose, because that actually exceeded our allocation of material, and we immediately began making a change over to wooden wings, wooden control surfaces, and steel spars and so on, in order to lessen the consumption of aluminum, which was the scarcest commodity at the time.

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The programme was carried out and exceeded in July 1943, as was expected. All the aims were achieved: 1000 fighters and about 650 bombers including the Stukas. Until that time there were no heavy raids on the aircraft industry. During that June/July, however, the heavy raids - mainly American, but also English - started, which had as their chief target the air-frame industry. As a result we were not able to produce more than those 1000 fighters a month from August 1943 until February 1944. The additional number which we would have produced was destroyed. According to the programme, by January 1944 we should have reached the figure of 2000 fighters a month; we wanted to reach 3000 by July 1944. When I saw that, I got in touch with SPEER's Ministry in February/March 1944, who had to supply us (that is, crankshafts and a certain number of other aircraft accessories were delivered to us from the industry in question, which came under the Armaments Ministry and not under us) all those parts which were also necessary for other things - crankshafts were for tanks, cars, etc.

Fear of air raids was my motive for pushing this increase of production; and all my associates shared the fear. I worked very closely with GALLAND, who as 'General der Jagdflieger' was Inspector and who noticed exactly the same points, but who was as little able to put them into effect as I was. The others didn't see it: they didn't want to see it either. It still wasn't seen much later than that. I now started to form a joint working committee between the SPEER Ministry and ourselves because actually the SPEER Ministry also gradually realised that without a fighter production programme we should very soon be finished, so that I got quite considerable support from them which hadn't been in evidence before. They had been on production for the Army only before, and had certain competitive feelings towards us. We took SPEER's Chief of Production, a Herr SAUER, who had been in charge of the final assembly work, into this so-called fighter staff. This fighter staff existed until about July, and then from July or August onwards it was re-named 'Production Staff'. GORING started boycotting me at that time, with the final result that on 21st June I gave up my appointments with him and only kept on the office of Inspector General, but without doing any particular job. I was supposed to help supervise the transfer of air production to the SPEER Ministry. The production side went over, whilst the development and testing side remained under GORING.

Meanwhile we'd had the heavy raids, but were able to increase the production of fighter-aircraft, and in the summer of 1944 we brought the number up to about 3200, although it had meant leaving out bombers. That was the monthly output for July or August 1944. Those were the aircraft which, quite according to programme, were put into the oven as rolls for baking in January and February and were now coming out. From then on the figure dropped first slowly and then rapidly. It wasn't necessary from our production side that the bombers and other things should be put to one side, but it may have been necessary from the angle of basic production in individual parts on the forge and foundry sides. 3200 fighters was the peak production; things were suddenly switched over in July or August - but that wasn't until after my time - bombers went, transport aircraft went, training aircraft went, only fighters were produced.

When I took the thing over at the end of 1941, my first step was to give the order to disperse from the factories immediately, and out of a floor space of 12 million square metres, 4 million were moved further out, but not below ground. I had neither a building allocation - that was refused me - nor any fairly large scale means of transport to further any schemes of going below ground. The decision to do that was only made at the beginning of 1944. It was then said there would be buildings below ground and concreted ones, similar to the big U-boat shelters on the CHANNEL coast. The reason for the long delay was the persistent belief that the war would end victoriously. GORING always believed there would be no large-scale bombing, and always tried to deny the possibility. Those gentlemen were never in the industrial areas of GERMANY, they were in EAST PRUSSIA or somewhere round about there, and never saw the damage that was done; they didn't experience the raids themselves. I personally

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didn't under-estimate the American production capacity and possibilities: On the contrary. In fact I believed it would go even more quickly. But I couldn't make the people realise that. Just as little as we could make them realise---shortly before the Russian campaign started, we learned what was planned. Only a short time beforehand the Russians had shown our engineers their great new factories at KUBISHEV and so on, in comparison with which ours were mere toys. It was simply rejected as defeatism and lies. The engine factory at KUBISHEV is bigger than all our German ones together were at that time. It wasn't believed, and it was also forbidden to talk about it.

The bulk of our people were agreed that American production of planes would turn out to be very large indeed; but those in command over me rejected the idea. HITLER did the same: "That's all nonsense!" Unfortunately I had no opportunity of influencing such decisions. Those in control believed that AMERICA wouldn't be able to make many more aircraft than GERMANY herself. But GERMANY didn't produce the number of aircraft she could have. In the 18 months from January 1942 until the middle of 1943, I increased the production figure of 850 aircraft, which was what it was when I took over, to 2600 or 2700, without using an ounce more material or one single workman more; on the contrary, owing to Army call-ups I lost a considerable number of good people who were not replaced. We had quite correct statistics concerning what the U.S. produced, in the way of steel, for example. But those were not figures which meant anything to the people in power.

I personally reckoned with the likelihood that the Americans could get their machines to England and operate them from Britain as a base. But I didn't believe they would find it possible to start flying them across the ocean so quickly. That was a surprise to me. I estimated the figures more or less correctly, but I didn't consider that such an air traffic across the ocean would be possible. The long-range fighters too, proved a complete surprise to our leaders, although we had told them it would come. When they suddenly appeared over the HANOVER and BRUNSWICK area, first without fighter escort and then after a short time with fighter escort, GORING told me one day that he had never expected that. I said that we had reported to him that we could get a range of 2400 km. out of our Messerschmitt comfortably, and a range of 2600 km. out of the 190. He gaped at me. "Yes", I said, "the General Staff isn't interested in it. But that it's perfectly possible is obvious." "Well, I was told by the General Staff that it wasn't at all possible and that it was only stupid talk on the part of the technical people." I said: "No, I told you so."

GORING, however, just couldn't grasp it. There never was a peaceful conference. I don't know of a single conference which was carried out from start to finish in quiet, reasonably terms, in which people kept to the point and which didn't immediately lead to furious attacks. For instance there was supposed to be a technical conference, but actually the tactics of fighter-flying were discussed and everything else imaginable at the same time, the incompetence of the Army and mistakes of the Navy. If one offered advice, one was cursed. "I never asked you, I don't want your advice, I know better myself." If I wanted to bring up something I had to try to say it to him privately, he then accepted what one said, only one never got hold of him!

I reckon that the June 004 had reached the mass production stage by early summer 1944. It was a war baby. The aircraft itself was constructed by MESSERSCHMITT in the summer of 1941; I saw it whilst under construction, and I presume the propulsion units had already been constructed too. But at that time I had nothing whatsoever to do with the technical side, and had been ordered to pay no attention to it. The production figure for the

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'262' was 200 per month in the spring of 1945 and could easily have been increased to 500. In my opinion there was no point in producing more, because the crews weren't available. You can't fly those aircraft with common-or-garden crews, such as our 'starved' crews who were flying around. They were all thoroughly starved as regards training. 25 - 30 hours was a lot it they'd done that on front-line types. Allied raids on the aircraft factories naturally put a strong brake on the increase in production. But later on underground plants were partly available, so our figures rose again. The more effective raids were those on the engine factories, but those too could have been mitigated by means of underground plants. Two things, however, could not be overcome and they were responsible for our collapse: they were the day raids on the hydro-generation works and the day raids on our communication network. Communications were so topsy-turvy that we no longer got things from the RUHR to Central GERMANY.

Assuming the air raids continued the production would have been bound to have dropped off considerably, even if Germany hadn't been over-run. But supposing we had succeeded in producing the 500, the use of them in considerable numbers would no longer have been possible, owing to shortage of fuel. By spreading the work among other factories a considerable number of Arado 234's could have been produced. I don't know what was the target. I once heard something about 120 per month - that was my idea. But to what extent they'd been changed I don't know, plans were altered every few weeks according to the situation. But the figure of 120 or 200 could easily have been reached together with the '262s'. The '152' was being produced by FOCKE-WULF instead of the '190' D-9. The collective figure ought to have been over 3000, without counting the jet-propelled aircraft. This ought to have been possible in spite of raids. The bombing caused very heavy damage. The figure of 3200 was actually reached, but it couldn't afterwards be maintained. But at the time when all bombers were being crossed off the list, the FUERER did not agree with GORING's opinion, but demanded, for instance, that the Me. 262 should be used only as a bomber. As a result the aircraft was at a standstill for weeks or months on end.

With the Me. 163, the figures aimed at were small; when I was about to go a man who was doing the technical work on the staff with GORING suddenly insisted that 100 ought to be produced per month. Whereupon I spoke with the tongue of an angel, saying that it was nonsense, because we hadn't got the necessary fuel - they had that liquid powder stuff. The same stuff was used in small quantities for the V 1, and in large quantities for the new U-boats. To continue production of the '163' was madness! They couldn't be flown because there was no fuel. It was ordered and it was done. GORING gave the order, because he had faith in the man with him; he was gradually coming to consider me an idiot, I believe; he didn't say so, but he was already treating me as such.

The man's name was DIESING. One night shortly before the collapse he had a fatal motor accident owing to carelessness. He was quite a young General, who belonged to GORING's string of favourites. Generally speaking he only had a few quite young people around him, and only they had any say in things, they managed the air arm. He was fond of them and they weren't dangerous to him; in his eyes they presented no competition. DIESING was the technical man; when he gave judgement it was right, and when we said anything it was just nonsense. In addition there was the '162', the 'Volksgaenger'. That was started after my day and was supposed to come out in quite large numbers this year: 50, I believe, in January, then 150, 300, 500, 700, 1000. But it couldn't make its appearance, it wasn't ready. Anybody in his senses should have known, from the very day that war with Russia began, how absolutely essential it was for Germany to adapt herself for defence.

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The primary reason why so much man-power was tied up in the production of those V-weapons was simply that great promises about miraculous weapons had been made to the people, and they now wanted to redeem those promises in some way or other, and therefore went in for these things. In my opinion it was more a matter of home politics. The V 1 was comparatively cheap, each one took about 200 working hours to produce. In contrast the V 2 was very costly in working hours - I can't give the exact figure, but 40000 to 50000 hours was mentioned for each one. In the case of the V 1 I know a production figure of 8000 per month was spoken of: I don't know about the V 2. I rather imagine between 600 and 1000 per month. No one with any sense believed that England could be brought to her knees with any such devices. I don't know positively, but I don't think they believed it even in Government circles. It was hopeless, that's why I told myself the year before that I could get out of the business, without realising that the collapse would be so complete, and I said to myself: "Just get out of this, don't take the responsibility for long." And I didn't mean responsibility towards the outside world, but responsibility towards our own people. It was already like that before the war, although not one of us believed that it would come to war, for we knew we stood to gain everything only through peace. Personally I don't suppose GÖERING himself wanted war; it was bound to upset his way of life.

For the A.C. of S., G-2.

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P. E. Peabody (Skr)
 P. E. PEABODY
 Brigadier General, GSC
 Chief, Military Intelligence
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