

BRITISH JOINT STAFF MISSION  
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WASHINGTON~~U L T R A~~

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MEMORANDUM FOR MAJOR-GENERAL CLAYTON BISSELL

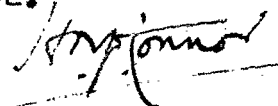
through Brigadier-General Carter W. Clarke.

INDICATIONS OF GERMAN OFFENSIVE

In answer to a request addressed by you to London on Christmas Day, a report has been prepared, and a copy is enclosed herewith at ANNEX B. Sir Edward Travis, Director G.C.C.S., asks me to make it quite clear that this is an unofficial appreciation, prepared by G.C.C.S. Neither War Office nor Air Ministry are responsible for it and it should not be quoted in any communication addressed to them. Copies have however been given to D.M.I. and A.C.A.S.I.

There is also attached, at ANNEX A, a covering minute received by cable for transmission to you. This minute is a joint comment by D.M.I. and A.C.A.S.I.

I am instructed by General Menzies to present it with the report to yourself, Brig.Gen. Clarke and Colonel McCormack, and to ask you, at the special request of A.C.A.S.I. to pass a copy to Major General J.P. Hodges, A.C. of Air Staff, A-2.

  
H.M. O'Connor  
Colonel, G.S.




WAR DEPARTMENT  
WAR DEPARTMENT GENERAL STAFF  
MILITARY INTELLIGENCE DIVISION, G-2  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

WDGBI

27 January 1945

MEMORANDUM FOR GENERAL CLARKE

Attached hereto are the papers from Travis through O'Connor. Please craft a letter of appreciation to be passed to Travis. I desire your recommendation regarding paragraph IV, German Signal Intelligence, on page 22. After discussion of paragraph 2., page 26, with General Osmun, Colonel McCormack and General Weckerling I desire your recommendation.

  
CLAYTON BISSELL  
Major General, GSC  
A.C. of S., G-2

Incl

~~TOP SECRET~~

ANNEX A

~~ULTRA~~

\* This page British to a British "consumer"

First: Report shows clearly, as do all post-mortems, which of many interpretations and clues were right. Do not agree clear warning given as to date. As with all post-mortems, value lies in lessons which can be extracted for future use.

Second: Such lessons from the report apply partly to H.Q.s in charge of operations and partly to H.Q.s responsible for over-all watch on war.

Third: We believe following lessons can be extracted:

- (a) Intelligence staffs must not become rigid in their thoughts. Long period since Germans launched an offensive produced tendency in this case.
- (b) Heavy losses among relatively few formations can quickly be made good from over-all German output. Optimistic but local reports success November Allied offensives in weakening Germans, obscured German freedom to confine the bulk of their reinforcements in men and equipment to the West.
- (c) Intelligence staffs must appreciate enemy view of current Allied operations. In this operation they failed to realise the extent to which Germans felt free to use their reserves for an attack.
- (d) Almost all evidence from ULTRA sources of military and air preparations could have been interpreted either as:  
 (i) offensive nature, or  
 (ii) defensive plus building up of central reserve to restore situation.  
Tactical reconnaissance, active patrolling, capture for interrogation of prisoners of war and the like must, in spite of ULTRA, still remain surest guide to enemy intentions for Commanders in the field. In this case weather and the Siegfried Line, and not lack of effort, were presumably to blame.
- (e) Germans have learnt from us <sup>how</sup> to employ deceptive measures.
- (f) Germans are learning too much of our Order of Battle from our bad wireless security.

Fourth: Must point out that dispositions in Ardennes were noted by Strong in his intelligence appreciation in his GAD/SH 142 of 13th December which contained a warning that a relieving attack there should be expected if some of the excess of divisions were not moved away soon. Generals Bradley and Strong both known to have agreed several times in December that attack in Ardennes was on the cards.

~~TOP SECRET~~ ULTRA

~~TOP SECRET ULTRA~~

ANNEX B.

Copy No. 12.

28. 12. 44.

~~TOP SECRET ULTRA~~INDICATIONS OF THE GERMAN  
OFFENSIVE OF DECEMBER 1944Contents:

- A. Source CX/LSS.
  - I. G.A.F. Evidence.
  - II. Army Evidence.
  - III. German Signals.
  - IV. German Signals Intelligence.
  - V. German Security Measures.
  
- B. Other Sources.
  - I. HITLER interviews.
  - II. German Parachute Operations.
  
- C. Some Conclusions.

~~ULTRA~~~~TOP SECRET ULTRA~~

~~TOP SECRET ULTRA~~

It is not the purpose of this paper to indulge in wisdom after the event, but to learn what can be learnt.

A. Source ~~OX/1339.~~

It can be stated at once that:-

- (1) Source gave clear warning that a counter-offensive was coming.
- (2) He also gave warning, though at rather short notice, of when it was coming.
- (3) He did not give by any means unmistakable indications of where it was coming; nor, on the military side, (which was the important side) of its full scale.
- (4) This was largely due to new and elaborate deceptions staged by German security.
- (5) German planning, on the other hand, must have been greatly helped by the insecurity of certain Allied signals. On this point the warnings of source were both timely and ample, but in vain.

Is "he" a cover  
for "ULTRA"?

~~TOP SECRET ULTRA~~

## I. G.A.F. Evidence.

~~TOP SECRET, ULTRA~~(a) General

The G.A.F. evidence shows that ever since the last week in October preparations have been in train to bring the bulk of the Luftwaffe on to airfields in the West.

The evidence has always tended to show that any such Westward move would be in support of the Army. But it has never been possible to infer the exact nature or timing of the Army operation.

It seems that the original plan was set in motion about November 4, when the fighter units were ordered to send advanced detachments to the West. The actual units never came West in November, but preparations continued.

By about November 20 the urgency seems to have disappeared and a certain hesitation is seen regarding the role of these fighters.

About Nov. 25th a striking change took place in the Command and from December 1st all measures were concerted for the ultimate deployment and operation of the fighter close-support force to aid the attack.

Evidence that the blow was imminent appeared from about December 4; possible evidence of its timing and duration was also available (Pilot a/c coming for "about 14 days").

Evidence of precise point of attack was never clear. The two Groups of airfields, in the AACHEN - DUESSELDORF and FRANKFURT areas, flanked a very wide field extending from KOELN to LUXEMBOURG.

It should be emphasised that, so far as the G.A.F. was concerned, at no stage between the end of October and December 16 was there any radical change in the general planning. Every addition was simply a further elaboration. There was nothing to show any change in G.A.F. strategy. In fact, this unbroken sequence of preparation over a period of seven weeks tended to conceal any changes in the plans of the Army, though it seems clear that Army intentions must have differed considerably in early November from what they had become by mid-December.

(b) Details

OKW = Oberkommando der Wehrmacht  
OKL = " " " " der Luftwaffe

First date =  
date of document.  
Second date =  
date of TP.

SummaryCommentStatements of Policy

pub #'s →	T349/42	Statement of G.A.F. Policy to Navy. Defence of Reich must be chief concern, and therefore, so long as warfare on main fronts remained static, armies would be deprived of close support.	} These two messages, taken in conjunction explain the whole G.A.F. policy throughout November and right up to Rundstedt's attack in December. The G.A.F. like the Army's strategic
dates	18/10 20/10		
	T350/20 25/10 27/10	JODL passed to C.-in-C. WEST decision of OKW. Preparations being made by OKL to bring up very strong fighter forces in event of large Allied attack in West. Transfer not possible at present, for reasons connected with training and fuel.	}

~~TOP SECRET~~

Summary

Comment

T350/20  
25/10  
27/10

JODL passed to C.-in-C. WEST decision of OKW. Preparations being made by OKL. to bring up very strong fighter forces in event of large Allied attack in West. ~~Transfer~~ not possible at present, for reasons connected with training and fuel.

) Rundstedt's attack in December. The G.A.F. like the Army's strategic reserve, would only be committed when the Army's defensive position required. Until that moment they would be held back.

Earlier Indications of Nature of Operation

T350/15  
26/10  
27/10

Luftgau VI wanted help in stocking up 11 airfields with C3 for "project in first few days of November". 500 cbm. requested, as stocks were dispersed and could not be moved about for "SCHLAGARTIGER EINSATZ" ("lightning employment"). Allusion to "three operations".

T353/60  
29/10  
31/10

Jagdkorps I to run a TEWT on "air defence by day" on 2/11. Kommodores of JG. 2 and JG. 26 to attend, as well as a representative of JK. II.

) This seems to have been genuinely concerned with air defence. During November air opposition to VIII USAAF raids to Central GERMANY was stepped up.

T345/101  
31/10  
1/11

JG. 26 quoted GOERING order that re-equipment of all fighter aircraft as fighter bombers must be possible within 24 hours.

Move up of Fighter Units

T362/38  
7/11  
8/11

Jagdkorps I reported to Jagdkorps II equipment of 21 day fighter Gruppen belonging to JG.'s 3, 4, 11, 27, 77, 300.

) Clearly foreshadows operation on large scale under control of Jagdkorps II. Other information showed JG. 1 and 6 also involved; that is, almost the entire German fighter force.

T361/167  
7/11  
8/11

Referring to Jagdkorps I of 4/11, JG. 11 reported GRIESHEIM, BIBLIS, and BABENHAUSEN suitable airfields.

) All advanced detachments moved up about 7-8/11. Except for JG. 4, JG. 3 and JG. 27, flying elements did not follow until about 17/12. (I.e. not until actual opening of offensive; cf. reference to "lightning employment").

T366/35  
11/11  
12/11

JG. 27 advance detachments in COLOGNE area.

~~TOP SECRET - ULTRA~~

T364/14      Advanced detachment Stab  
9/11      JG. 6 to QUAKENBRUECK.  
10/11

T362/111      TWENTE and STEENWIJK to  
8/11      be prepared for I and II  
9/11      JG. 1.

T361/2      Advanced detachments of  
6/11      JG. 77 arriving at short  
7/11      notice on airfields in  
DUESSELDORF area.

T361/1      Advanced detachments of JG. 300 } These units subsequently  
6/11      and JG. 301 arriving shortly } dropped out of the  
7/11      at airfields in the KASSEL } scheme.  
district.

T367/53      First mention of an advanced  
12/11      detachment of JG. 3.  
14/11

T374/76      Locations of advanced detach-  
19/11      ments of JG. 3 in the  
21/11      STOERMEDE area.

R367(A)/14      Reference to difficulties  
9/11      at new operational location  
14/11      of JG. 4.

Bringing in of SG. 4

T359/71      III SG. 4 to REINSEHLEN.      } SG. 4 had been operating  
4/11      } on the North Russian  
6/11      } Front. It appears to  
} have been withdrawn to  
} GERMANY about 4/11 to  
} retrain with a new anti-  
} tank weapon, so as to be  
} brought into operation  
} with the fighter units.  
} Suggests most strongly  
} that the coming operation  
} would be closely connected  
} with the Army. (See also  
} under "Pilot Aircraft"  
} below).

T359/122      Stab and II SG. 4 to move  
5/11      to UNTERSCHLAUERSBACH to train  
6/11      in bad-weather ground-attack  
and re-equip with "Panzerblitz"  
(an anti-tank weapon) and M8,  
for operations on Western front.

T360/32      Elements of III SG. 4 retraining  
5/11      at UBETIFELD.  
6/11

T379/39      Stab SG. 4 at GUETERSLOH.  
23/11  
25/11

/Miscellaneous events

~~TOP SECRET - ULTRA~~



~~TOP SECRET ULTRA~~Miscellaneous events 12/11-27/11

- T367/31  
12/11  
13/11 JG. 77 asked for repairs to an underground fuel-installation urgently required for "special contingency known to you".
- T367/125  
13/11  
14/11 JG. 11 states that arranging of quarters by advanced detachments on their own responsibility is forbidden, as endangering secrecy. ) An example of the elaborate security precautions throughout. These suggest offensive rather than defensive intention.
- T369/56  
14/11  
16/11 Fighter units in West not to use Geschwader badges or unit markings. )
- T371/41  
16/11  
17/11 Luftgau XIV order (based on Luftflotte Reich order of 14/11): Serviceability of airfields intended for bringing up of fighters to be reported daily.
- T374/100  
19/11  
21/11 A.R.C. DELMENHORST ordered work on airfield defences to be halted at once till completion of airfields for "fighter operations WEST".
- T375/122  
18/11  
22/11 Warning from G.A.F. Command WEST to Flak to expect appearance of strongish fighter forces in Western GERMANY. ) Obscure. Looked at the time as if things were about to begin; but no evidence of move up of units. Order may have been due to American Army attacks - a precautionary warning in case fighters had to be used prematurely.
- T372/16  
18/11  
18/11 Above passed on by Luftgau XIV.
- T375/119  
21/11  
22/11 GOERING decision. Fighter aircraft intended for operations in the West not to be equipped with "E.T.C." These however to be kept ready. ) This order and the next reflect a certain hesitation about this date - whether fighters to be used as such or not. Perhaps earlier plan was hanging fire as serious break-through by Allies came to seem unlikely.
- T381/23  
25/11  
27/11 Re-equipping with "E.T.C." of fighter units intended for operations in the West and for employment as fighter bombers must be possible within 24 hours. ) Last ten days of November possibly a replanning stage during which counter offensive hatched.

~~TOP SECRET ULTRA~~ T373/8

T377/8  
18/11  
19/11

Advanced detachment of a JG. 27 unit moved from the KOELN area to ACHMER.

Switch of JG. 27 may also reflect this hesitation. If things were not to happen soon, it might be better to pull JG. 27 out of the exposed KOELN airfields.

T375/80  
/94  
/120  
20-21/11  
22/11

JG. 27 flying units moved up to the ACHMER area.

Reason not clear. They remained quiescent until attack began. As experienced close-support units, they may have been intended as a readily available reserve in case of break-through by 1 or 9 Armies. Unlike all other units coming up, JG. 27 had only been away from Jagdkorps II for about 3 weeks; consequently its return cannot be evidence of an intention at this date to reinforce the front at once on a large scale.

T378/83  
24/11  
25/11

JG. 4 was operational and receiving orders from 5 JD.

Bringing into operation of JG. 4 and III SG. 4 about this date was probably premature and a reaction to successes of 3 and 7 Armies.

T379/60  
25/11  
26/11

"Auswertung" being set up for III SG. 4 at KIRRLACH.

T381/43  
26/11  
27/11

III SG. 4 at KIRRLACH.

Alterations in Chain of Command  
(Latter end of November)

T379/86  
25/11  
26/11

Fliegerdivision 3 withdrawn from operations.

These most significant. They resulted in setting-up a very powerful close-support command, Jagdkorps II, controlling the bulk of the German fighter force and all bombing, ground-attack and night ground-attack forces in the West. Fighters were controlled through two subordinate commands, Jafue Middle Rhine and Jagddivision 3. Jafue Middle Rhine previously only in control of night-fighters and subordinate to 5 JD. Jagddivision 3 in control of strategic day and night fighters. G.A.F. Command WEST retained control only of the long-distance Ar.234 recce a/c. In fact, this recreated the /old

T380/87  
26/11  
27/11

F. 123 and its units subordinate to Jagdkorps II.

T383/95  
30/11  
30/11

I KG. 66 subordinate to Jagdkorps II.

T390/22  
5/12  
6/12

Battle Unit HALLENSLEBEN sub. to JK. II.

T390/14  
5/12  
6/12

KG. 51 sub. to JK. II.

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~~TOP SECRET~~ ~~ULTRA~~

T379/22  
T381/12  
23/11  
25-7/11.

JG. 4 and JG. 2 added to signals list of Jafue Middle Rhine.

} old G.A.F. pattern of Luftflotte - Fliegerkorps, normal during the phase of German offensive.

T384/47  
29/11  
1/12

JD. 3 return of strengths of JG. 3, JG. 27, JG. 26.

} 5 JD. remains outside the plan, showing that, wherever operation might be intended, at least the extreme South of the front was excluded.

T387/53  
2/12  
3/12

First return of day-fighter strengths by Jafue Middle Rhine to Jagdkorps II, covering JG. 2 and JG. 4.

Type of Preparations being made by Units in early December

T384/16  
T386/33  
29-30/11  
30/11-2/12

Return of stocks of "E.T.C." by I and III JG. 11. Returns quoted a reference of 26/10.

} Insistence on bomb-release gear and low-level attack again points to army co-operation.

T398/53  
12/12  
15/12

Jafue Middle Rhine reported on training in "homing flight" in JG. 4, JG. 2 and JG. 11.

} Mention of Pilot Aircraft led to misinterpretation. Zielflug was thought to be practice for interception, as on previous occasions. In fact, it is here used to mean attacks on ground targets.

R.396/A/15  
5/12  
13/12

On 2/12 and 3/12, III JG. 26 carried out 4 practice flights in low-flying attack.

T399/30  
14/12  
15/12

Return of "E.T.C." by Jafue Middle Rhine covering I, II, III and IV JG. 4 and I, II and III JG. 2.

Chronology Early December

T384/47  
29/11  
1/12

JG. 3 aircraft in STOERMEDE area.

R.384/A/84  
30/11  
1/12

Courses for National-Socialist Leaders in Luftgau VI 3-16/12 cancelled owing to "impending special operation".

This now has an obvious significance but the context is comparatively trivial and it was impossible to attach its true value to it owing to German abuse of language. No doubt "special operation" failed to ring a bell.

/T 390/56

~~TOP SECRET~~ ~~ULTRA~~

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~~TOP SECRET-ULTRA~~

T390/56 2/ 2 6/12	G.A.F. Command WEST to Luftflotte REICH, Gen. Oberst STUMPF. "Enlargement repeatedly asked for of the DOPPELKOPFKREIS extremely urgent. Non-compliance with request can have unpredictable consequences".	} DOPPELKOPF ("double head") is also a card game. On 15/11 there was also a Railway Movement DOPPELKOPF, apparently part of a Games series, since it included a "HIST". But this seems mere coincidence. It is possible in retrospect to fancy meanings for DOPPELKOPF the operation (e.g. attack by two Pz. armies). But there is no evidence that the ordinary meaning plays any more part with DOPPELKOPF the operation than with DOPPELKOPF the Railway Movement.
R.398/C/77 12/12 13/12	Oberst von FICHTE arriving 13/12 at Rest and Refitting Staff 16 for DOPPELKOPF-SPIELEN. FREDI to be informed.	
T390/26 2/12 6/12	Luftgau XI to report by 5/12 barrel requirements for stocking up for "Fighter Ops. WEST".	
T388/13 3/12 4/12	Luftgau VI to report to Luftflotte REICH on measures taken for technical supply of units that had arrived for ops. in the West.	
T392/62 4/12 8/12	Pyrotecnics used as visual navigation aids to be stored at observer ports. Instructions how to use them.	} This fits in with the pilot-aircraft technique, see below.
T389/3 4/12 5/12	All Kommodores and Kommandeure of day fighter Geschwader except JG. 300 and JG. 301 to attend conference at Jagdkorps II H.Q. beginning 5/12.	} Very significant. Jagdkorps II is giving orders to units formerly under Jagdkorps I.
T393/18 8/12 9/12	Advanced Detachment II SG. 4 arrived KIRTORF.	} Parallel to move up of fighter advanced detachments about 7/11.
T389/11 4/12 5/12	When brought up, JG. 11 to go to BIBLIS, ZELLHAUSEN, and GROSSOSTHEIM.	} Minor switch of destination, in same area as before. Mysterious at time, but later pilot-aircraft documents showed it referred to the operation, as a whole.
T395/65 10/12 12/12	Referring to Jagdkorps II master order of 1/12, unusually stringent security regulations governing briefing of III JG.3 and subsequent movements of crews.	
T397/79 13/12 14/12	Luftgau XIV asked if LIPPE, AILERTCHEN, and BREITSCHIED were still required for JG.27.	} A hint that JG.27 always intended to return to the KOELN area and only moved North to concreted airfields as a temporary measure when, about 20/11, immediate employment seemed unnecessary.

/T399/74

~~TOP SECRET-ULTRA~~

T309/74  
14/12  
16/12

Order from 3 JD. to JG.1. Gruppen to move up. This order was distributed as low as Gruppen, owing to urgency.

First movement of units prior to the operation.

T398/74  
14/12  
15/12  
T399/58  
15/12  
16/12

III SG. 4 to transfer to KIRTORF as soon as weather allows.  
First strength return of Jafue Middle Rhine covering Stab and I SG. 4 ZIEGENHAIN, II SG. 4 KIRTORF, and III SG. 4 KIRRLACH.

SG. 4 concentrating in area of KOELN for operations as a Geschwader Shows operations in the South of third Gruppe were outside general plan.

Intruder Operations by NJG.4

T389/7  
4/12  
5/12

I, II and III NJG. 4 to collect "window". (To be in possession of Gruppen at all costs by 9/12).

Only loosely connected with the main scheme, and not very revealing at the time.

T400/94  
T402/7  
15-16/12  
17-18/12

I and III NJG. 4 report arrival of window.

The most that these preparations showed was that the G.A.F. was becoming more offensive.

T397/7  
12/12  
13/12

NJG. 4 specifies airfields in HOLLAND for undertakings ROPER and BARKER.

T398/78  
14/12  
15/12

ROPER shown to be an intruder operation directed against Bomber Command.

BERTIE

R.394/A/13  
8/12  
11/12

An a/c fuel column moving from OBERNBURG to ESCHBORN and then on, under keyword BERTIE.

This is a scheme to provide mobile G.A.F. servicing units, presumably for aircraft making emergency landings in the tactical area.

T399/21  
14/12  
15/12

BERTIE issued on 14/12, units from A.R.C.'s KOELN and ALMELO to report at ALTENKIRCHEN.

T400/49  
15/12  
16/12

BERTIE units left GIESSEN and ETTINGHAUSEN.

The Pilot Aircraft

T388/77  
4/12  
5/12

16 pilot aircraft and crews to be provided by NJG.101 for II and III JG. 11 and I, II and III JG. 2, all in FRANKFURT area.

This is the most revealing of all. Air Ministry at first on 6/12 connected it with large-scale interception of strategic bombers, but SG.4 was hard to explain away even then. Later reference to low-level flight and nocturnal marking showed the pilot a/c must be intended to assist large formations of fighters and fighter-bombers to get off and find their target area. Firm comments were sent to this effect about the fighters as soon as the necessary indications were available i.e. on 14/12. See below. /it

T389/64  
4/12  
6/12

2 night-fighter crews to be allotted for about 14 days as pilot aircraft for I, II, III and IV JG. 4, I JG. 11 (all in FRANKFURT area) and I, II and III SG. 4 at ZIEGENHAIN, KIRTORF, and KIRRLACH.

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~~TOP SECRET-ULTRA~~

It was on 4/12 that I SG. 4, till then thought to be on the Russian Front, was seen to be joining the rest of the Geschwader in the West. It was also on 4/12 that we had the first indication that II SG, 4 was coming on to operation after re-training. Concentration of a whole specialised ground-attack Geschwader at this juncture clearly showed that things were moving.

T390/29  
5/12  
6/12

2 night-fighter crews, to ensure assembly of strong day-fighter formations in bad weather, sent to I, II and III JG. 1 in HOLLAND.

T391/78  
4/12  
8/12

2 Ju. 88 crews each to a number of airfields covering units mentioned above, plus JG. 6, 3, 27, 26 and 53.

T398/1  
12/12  
14/12

Amendments to a Jagdkorps II master order of 1/12. Flare cartridges to be fired upward when flying at low level. Pilot aircraft to pass on to formations being led any order for recall. Reference to "Northern" and "Southern" groups.

T399/31  
13/12  
15/12

More amendments to master order of 1/12, dealing with drill for formation take-off with pilot aircraft in darkness and marking of route with lights.

These "groups" doubtless refer to Jafue Middle Rhine and 3 Jagddivision. They are the only indication of the intended ops. area, and then regrettably vague - only the area South of KARLSRUHE is excluded.

#### SENNE Airfield and Parachutists

T396/30  
8/12  
12/12

Wehrkreis VI wished to prevent use of SENNE airfields by G.A.F., of which an advanced detachment had arrived.

T398/30  
9/12  
14/12

RUNDSTEDT gave emphatic orders to Wehrkreis VI to allow G.A.F. Command WEST to use SENNE 1 and 2.

T399/44  
8/12  
15/12

SENNE 1 prescribed as take-off airfield for a unit connected with Transport Command. Nearby airfields listed as intermediate fuelling-points.

This was not grasped in its full significance till the morning of 16/12, when an ELGAR message dealing with a large scale Ju. 52 operation made it all clear. The only intelligence on the subject which could however tie up SENNE with parachutists only came in on the evening of the 15th (T399/44). The whole of this intelligence was signalled very fast in its true perspective, on the 16th i.e. before the parachute drop on the 17th but after the ELGAR warning and cancellation of a Ju. 52 operation in the early hours of 16th.

~~TOP SECRET-ULTRA~~

/ II.

~~TOP SECRET - ULTRA~~

II. Army Evidence.

(a) General.

Recapitulation of General Situation  
Before the Counter-Offensive

After the German rout in FRANCE and BELGIUM, when Allied logistic difficulties permitted a stabilisation of the German front, HITLER made up his mind to hit back.

For this he pushed on the new call-up and planned a strategic armoured reserve.

After the failure at ARNHEIM, the Germans, though still watching this sector, appreciated that the greatest threat was to KOELN. It was reasonable therefore to appreciate that the move of the armoured reserve to complete its rest and refit in the KOELN sector was a precaution against an attack there, which did in fact take place.

At the opening of this attack, which was concentrated on the drive for KOELN, but covered the whole fronts of American 3 and 7 Armies as well as of the French Army, German dispositions were as follows.

Heeresgruppe "H" controlled 15 Army, 1 Para. Army, Armeekorps CHRISTIANSEN (ex C.-in-C. NETHERLANDS), and Armeekorps KLEFFEL (a new-comer from the BALTIC). This front was thinly held and the Heeresgruppe controlled no Armoured or PG. Divisions. The state of the two parachute divisions refitting was not exactly known. There were not in any case sufficient divisions to explain the presence of a spare Armeekorps Staff. One possible explanation was that it would control the development of the defences of the Rhine Bridgeheads in the group rear-area. But this was not convincing and its presence may be called "Riddle Number 1".

Heeresgruppe "B", in the key sector, controlled 5 Pz. Army and 7 Army, with 6 Pz. Army in reserve. Besides infantry and Para. Divisions, 5 Pz. Army had 5 Armoured and 2 PG. Divisions in line or in tactical reserve. By stubborn fighting, helped by the weather, 5 Panzer Army had managed to make the Allied offensive slow and costly. Ultimately it was appreciated by both sides that the control of the ROER waters was the key to further advance. At the time of the counter-offensive the Germans still had this control.

7 Army covered a much longer front, thinly held and mainly quiet, with pressure only on its right wing. It had one Armoured Division.

6 Panzer Army consisted at that time of 4 Armoured Divisions.

Then certain changes in German dispositions became evident. Panzer Army 5 faded from view. Its sector was now reported under Gruppe MANTEUFFEL (hitherto G.O.C. 5 Pz. Army). This implied an up-grading and so possibly a reinforcement, in what was a "Schwerpunkt" sector. Then elements of 15 Army started being identified in Gruppe MANTEUFFEL. This coincided with evidence that 15 Army's T.P. call-sign was being used on the line to 5 Pz. Army. It was possible to assume

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that 15 Army was relieving 5 Pz. Army, which had been temporarily up-graded to a Gruppe, while it had elements of two Armies under it. For reasons to be stated later, some interpretations "needed" another Army staff further South. Thus a relief was suspected. But German camouflage blurred the evidence, making the relief (if relief there was) seem more gradual than the truth. This was "Riddle Number 2".

It was, however, possible, on the theory that 15 Army was gradually withdrawing from Heeresgruppe H, to solve "Riddle Number 1", for a clear function was immediately found for Armee Abt. KLEFFEL in its place.

There were two views of the possible destination of Pz. Army 5. One favoured the neighbourhood of 7 Army, where five new V.G. Divisions were reported arriving from GERMANY. 7 Army, though on a mainly quiet front, contained divisions that were exhausted, particularly those on the right flank South of AACHEN. It was plausible that 5 Pz. Army might be needed to rest and refit any of those after their relief by the new arrivals. The objection was that this would be wasting a Panzer Staff. In any case, this theory was not held strongly, nor widely, nor for long.

The arrival of the five new V.G. Divisions was "Riddle Number 3". The fact that the Allies were known to be weak here cut both ways.

This brings us to Army Group "G". It had originally controlled 1 and 19 Armies. With two Pz. and two FG. Divisions, 1 Army had been bearing the brunt of PATTON's attack. 19 Army had been reduced to a bridgehead. It contained no armour. Then C.-in-C. Upper Rhine (apparently HIMMLER himself) took over command not only of West Wall defences East of the Rhine, but of 19 Army as well. Later Heeresgruppe Upper Rhine was identified. This left Heeresgruppe "G" with only 1 Army and Gruppe HOEHNE (an enlarged Corps sector).

Here if anywhere was room for a new Panzer Army. Moreover it would be familiar ground for Panzer Army 5. The appearance of new Flak Division supported this.

Such was the picture when Wireless Silence was ordered for all SS. Units (including specifically some of those in Pz. Army 6).

We were uncertain about the Higher Command in the North. We were hoping to break the impasse in the AACHEN Sector by an assault on the ROER dams. We were not unduly worried about the arrival of 5 V.G., non-offensive divisions behind 7 Army. We had driven 1 Army back on to the West Wall, but were still exerting enough pressure to justify the arrival of a new Pz. Army Staff.

"Riddle Number 4" (HIMMLER as C.-in-C. Upper Rhine) could be connected with reports of trouble in the Black Forest and of discord between various German authorities, and with the need to organise a static defence on the Upper Rhine.

By now the strategic armoured reserve was clearly on the move, but it comprised only four divisions and there were no direct clues to its operational area. Other armour, which proved later to be available, was believed to be in tactical rather than strategic reserve. It had not been concentrated. At most two other Armoured Divisions were available in GERMANY.

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Meanwhile our two threats to GERMANY (HODGES and PATTON) were both temporarily blunted. This was not therefore the time to use 6 Pz. Army as a counter-attack force, unless we seriously threatened the ROER dams. Its move/did not seem necessarily to imply immediate action.

We were tantalisingly near the truth, but the German camouflage of formations just sufficed its end.

(b) Details

For an explicit statement that an offensive was being planned in the West one must go to the BAY series. (See Section B). The Japanese Ambassador after interviews with HITLER and RIBBENTROP (BAY/XL 119, 152, BAY/HP 113) reported that HITLER intended an offensive in the West, to take place in November.

Source, however, did provide detailed evidence for the steps by which HITLER's order was implemented: (a) the formation of the striking force, (b) the reorganisation of the chain of command.

Evidence for the formation of the striking force was given in detail, from the orders for setting-up of Panzer Army 6 on 18/9 up to the imposition of wireless silence for SS. formations on 10/12.

The reorganisation of the chain of command took place under a cloud of false names and cover-planning. The only previous parallel (apart from the ultra-secret world of flying bombs and rockets), and that on a much more modest scale, was the German occupation of HUNGARY in March 1944. This reorganisation involved the switch of 15 Army from North HOLLAND to the AACHEN area in order to free 5 Panzer Army; the formation of a new 25 Army to take the place of 15; and the bringing up of both 5 and 6 Panzer Armies between 15 and 7 Armies. In addition four corps staffs (67, 85 Infantry, 47 and 58 Panzer) were made available for the offensive by withdrawing them from the line, and two Corps staffs (53 and FELBER) were brought up from other fronts.

The clearest indications from source for the area from which the offensive was to be launched came from messages dealing with train movements. (See section 3A below.)

X | The fact that Allied wireless insecurity permitted the Germans to form a substantially accurate picture of the Allied line-up in the sector South of AACHEN is made abundantly clear by the Y Service reports quoted below. (See Section on German Signals Intelligence).

Finally some minor points should be mentioned. The formation of a special unit for operations in the West was noted by source, and the existence of the unit, Panzer Brigade 150, as well as its connection with SKORZENY, was spotted; the connection of the unit with the operation, however, was not recognised until it was met in the field.

A series of messages from 7 Army in late November - early December underlining the weakened condition of its formations may have helped to set the minds of Allied planners at rest as to any German threat from the LUXEMBOURG sector.

To sum up, source made plain that a German offensive potential existed, and gave hints as to the time and, less clearly, the place of the offensive. Viewed in the light of what has happened, these hints seem sufficiently plain; but the picture as it now appears is not the one which developed from day to day.

1. Formation of striking force.
  - A. Rest and Refit of 6 Pz. Army

Ref.	Text	Comment
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T320/33 18/9 27/9	1,2,9,12 SS. Panzer Divisions. Heavy SS. Panzer Abteilungen 501, 502 and 503 and Corps troops of I SS. Panzer Corps subordinated for rest and refit to Staff of Panzer Army 6.	
T328/11 30/9 5/10	I SS. Pz. Corps, 1,12 SS. Pz. Divs. and Pz. Lehr to rest and refit in North West GERMANY.	
<i>md</i> T332/98 7/10 10/10	Elements 9 SS. Panzer Division to area MINDEN - HAMELIN - HANNOVER.	
T340/8 15/10 17/10	KEITEL order: 6 Panzer Army as OKW. Reserve, will control rest and refitting of I SS. Pz. Corps, 1,2,9,12 SS. Pz. Divs. and Pz. Lehr Div.	
T346/97 18/10 24/10	Withdrawals from line: Panzer Lehr, Battle Groups 1 and 12 SS. Pz. Divs., 9 SS. Pz. Div., 2 SS. Pz. Div., H.Q. 155 Pz. Corps.	
T346/93 22/10 24/10	Reporting Centre of SS. Pz. Army 6 SALENFLEN (B 78)/ 1 SS. Pz. Corps PETERSHAGEN (W 82). 1 SS. Pz. Div. LUEBBECKE (W 61). 12 SS. Pz. Div. SULINGEN (W 75). Pz. Lehr Div. HOLZHAUSEN (B 86). 2 SS. Pz. Div. BUEREN (B 52). 9 SS. Pz. Div. WADERSTICH (B 34). Also Heavy SS. Pz. Abteilungen 501 SENNELAGER (B 65), 502 GESERZ (B 53), 503 SENNELAGER.	

B. 6 Panzer Army Crosses the RHINE.

Ref.	Text	Comment
T373/52 E/11 19/11	Pz. Signals Regt. 6 arrives KOBLEN area.	
T371/50 9/11 18/11	Command Echelon 6 Panzer Army included in contents of movement TANNENBERG. Elements of 12 SS. Pz. Div. also listed, but not clear whether part of same movement.	
T378/6 9/11 24/11	Transport of remainder of command echelon of 6 Pz. Army and elements 1 SS. Pz. Div.	
T365/110 10/11 12/11	Transport away of 6 Panzer Army. 2, 12 SS. Pz. Divs. and Pz. Lehr behind schedule.	No indication of destination.
T373/69 16/11 20/11	SS. Pz. Army 6 and I SS. Pz. Corps addressed via Army Group B.	
<u>Pz. Lehr Division Committed under Army Group G.</u>		
T381/1 25/11 27/11	Army Group G report mentions attack by Pz. Lehr Div. area PINSFINGEN.	
T382/29 27/11 28/11	Pz. Lehr Division in sitrep under LXXXIX Corps.	
T395/71 4/12 12/12	Counter attack by Pz. Lehr and 11 Pz. Div. area SCHARUNION.	Last reference to Pz. Lehr before offensive
T401/22 16/12 12/12	Pz. Lehr reports boundaries with 2 Pz. Div. and LXXXV Corps.	
<u>II SS. Corps Moves up.</u>		
T384/55 29/11 1/12	W/E silence II SS. Corps.	Clearly in preparatio for move up to 6 Pz. Army.
T378/88 24/11 25/11	II SS. Pz. Corps subordinated to 6 Pz. Army with 2 SS., unspecified SS. Pz. Division, 3 Parachute Division. Intentions: "kurzfristig" rest, refit and training before fresh employment.	
<u>I SS. Corps located.</u>		
T380/91 26/11 27/11	I SS. Corps LECHENICH, Flivo to locate Pz. Lehr, 1,2,9,10,12 SS. Divisions.	

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Ref.	Text	Comment
T382/31 27/11 28/11	Rations to 2 SS. Division at GREVENBROICH (F 17).	
T382/57 28/11 28/11	Flivo I SS. Corps reports 2 SS. Division BEDBURDYCK (F 28), 9 SS. GELSDORF, (F 52).	
T392/75 1-3/12 9/12	Spare parts for 1 SS. BRUCKNUEHLEN (W 40), EUSKIRCHEN (F 33). 9 SS - BONN (F 53). 10 SS. - BENSBERG (F 56). 12 SS. - PULHEIM (F 36). 116 Pz. - BERGISCH GLADBACH (F 56).	These places, like the G.A.F. airfields, are deceptively far North and suggest threat to AACHEN sector.
T390/21 4/12 6/12	Reporting centres: I SS. Pz. Corps HERRIG (F 24), 1 SS. Pz. Div. MUELHEIM (F 23), 2 SS. Pz. Div. KAARST (F 29), 12 SS. Pz. Div. BRAUWEILER (F 36).	
T392/38 4/12 8/12	Fuehrer Begleit Brigade WITTLICH (L 35).	
T395/49 11/12 11/12	9 SS. GELSDORF (F 52).	
<u>Imposition of Wireless Silence.</u>		
T395/83 10/12 12/12	Wireless silence for all SS. formations. Trupps with II SS. Pz. Corps and 2 SS. Panzer Division identified.	
T396/63, 66, 79. 11-12/12 13/12	Further Trupps involved in silence identified: XII SS. Panzer Corps, 1 and 12 SS. Panzer Divisions.	
<u>Move up to Final Positions.</u>		
T395/71 4/12 12/12	Sitrep under heading Army Group B lists Gruppe von MANTEUFFEL, 7th Army, Rest and Refitting Staff 716, and unspecified Kd. z.b.V.	Comment suggested "716" an error for "16". Sitrep too generalised, however, to point to any specific localities.
T400/10 15/12 16/12	Rest and Refitting Staff 16 boundary with Gruppe von MANTEUFFEL.	Comment pointed out close association Rest and Refitting Staff 16 with 6 Panzer Army, but no realisation that it was identical with the Army itself.
T400/48 16/12 16/12	Wireless silence I SS. Corps cancelled. Location SCHMIDTHEIM (F 16). Divs. subordinated 1 and 12 SS. Panzer, 277 and 212 V.G., 3 Para.	

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## C. Rest and Refit of Formations not under 6 Pz. Army.

## 1. Panzer Divisions.

Ref.	Text	Comment
T348/7 14/10 25/10	Consignment for 2 Pz.Div. sent to Pz. Base NORTH, Unloading Station BERGISCH GLADBACH.	
T367/35 11/11 13/11	Short term repair scheme involving 2,9,11, 21,116 Pz. Divs., 17 SS. P.G., 12 V.G. Divisions.	All, except 21 Pz. and 17 SS.P.G. Divisions, now (24/12) committed in the offensive.
R.383/C/59M/T 26/11 4/12	for 17 SS. P.G. Division under heading Rest and Refit 6 Pz. Army.	17 SS. P.G. at present (24/12) not yet involved in 6 Pz. Army offensive.
T392/9 1/12 8/12	Rest and Refitting Staff 16 informed 8 tanks V with crews ready for loading to BERGISCH GLADBACH for 116 Pz. Div.	
T391/35 3/12 7/12	13 tanks V already taken over by Pz. Regt. 16 (116 Pz. Div.) had been blocked and handed over to 11 Pz. Div.	
T392/75 1/12 9/12	5 Panther tanks for 116 Pz. Div.	

## 2. Parachute Divisions. (Movements later than 1 December).

Ref.	Text	Comment
<u>5 Para. Div.</u>		
T396/18 3/12 12/12	Transport authority 7 Army notified of movements of elements 5 Parachute Division.	
T397/96 8/12 14/12	6 Para. Div. gives up W/T and armament for 5 Para. Div.	5 Parachute Div. (Army Group B).
T389/8 4/12 5/12	Para. Pz.Jg.Abt. 5 arrives in area of employment without certain W/T equipment.	No location indicated, but comment suggested OLDENBURG area for the division.
T390/25 3/12 7/12	2 Para. Division OLDENBURG.	

3 Para. Div.

T350/86 19/10 28/10	W/T equipment to OLDENZAAL for elements 3 Para. Div. resting and refitting.	
T370/95 15/11 17/11	3 Para. Div. ENSCHEDE (V 40).	

Ref.	Text	Comment
T378/88 24/11 25/11	3 Para. Div. subordinated to II SS. Pz. Corps for training purposes only.	
T400/48 16/12 16/12	3 Para. Div. subordinated to I SS. Pz. Corps	
3.	Reorganisation of Higher Command.	

Ref.	Text	Comment
A.	<u>Formation of Army Group H.</u>	
T358/9 1/11 4/11	Heeresgruppe H being set up.	
T363/20 3/11 9/11	Armeegruppe STUDENT mentioned under Heeresgruppe B.	
T364/55 2/11 13/11	Composition of Army Group H given in terms of Railway numbers, plus 1 Parachute Army.	Equations 15 Army, 5 Pz. Army tentative suggested.
T375/83 7/11 22/11	Personnel elements Army Abt. SERBIA for inclusion in staff of Army Group H.	
T369/14 11/11 15/11	Reference to setting up of Armeegruppen (plural) in message from Heeresgruppe H.	
T372/67 13/11 19/11	Armee Gruppe CHRISTIANSEN formed from G.O.C. Armed Forces NETHERLANDS.	
T374/106 15/11 21/11	Armee Abteilung KLEFFEL addressed via Army Group H.	Previously under Arm Group NORTH.

B. Relief of 5 Panzer Army by 15 Army.

T372/35 17/11 18/11	First mention of Gruppe MANTEUFFEL in Sitrep under Army Group B.	
T385/23 26/11 1/12	Armee Gruppe von MANTEUFFEL mentioned under Heeresgruppe B.	This thought at the time to be temporary up-grading of Pz. Army
T388/26 3/12 4/12	Sitrep shows sector 15 Army apparently reduced.	
T392/24 3/12 8/12	30 and 88 Corps under 15 Army.	Comment pointed out inconsistency with T388/26.

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Ref.	Text	Comment
T392/65 3/12 9/12	15 Army addressed via Army Group B.	Comment on contrast 15 Army under Army Group H on 3/12. T392/24.
T398/37 5/12 14/12	Von ZANGEN acting G.O.C. Gruppe von MANTEUFFEL.	Comment sent later as AWL 3531. Conclusion that 15 Army was relieving 5 Pz. Army, but that process still incomplete. This supported by evidence from other sources.
<u>C. Release of Corps Staffs</u>		
T356/45 T357/48 2/11, 3/11 2/11, 3/11	} 58 Pz. Corps being relieved } by 89 Corps.	Only one subsequent reference to 58 Panzer Corps 22/11, no location (MBB/MS78/77), until appearance in offensive 18/12 (T402/78).
T367/114 13/11 14/11	Corps TRESLOW relieved 85 Corps as from 15/11.	No subsequent mention of 85 Corps until appearance in offensive 16/12 (T401/22).
T376/11 21/11 22/11	67 Corps replaced by 30 Corps.	67 Corps the right Corps of 15 Army in HOLLAND. Took part in offensive.
T375/114 21/11 22/11	2 SS. Corps no longer in former sector.	Previously under 15 Army in NIJMEGEN sector.
T377/35 23/11 23/11	6 Para. Div. in previous sector of 2 SS. Corps.	
T377/73 T378/42 24/11 24, 25/11	} 2 SS. Corps Flive ALFTER (F 43). } No subordinated troops.	
T378/41 24/11 24/11	67 Corps reserve of Army Group H.	
T386/58 27/11 3/12	Sigs. Abt. 453 KREFELD.	Comment: 53 Corps not identified since June when on Russian front; considered destroyed by W.O. Took part in offensive.
T386/46 2/12 2/12	Flive 67 Corps transferring.	Comment: Not clear whether Corps transferring or only the Flive.

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/T386/55

Ref.	Text	Comments
T386/55 2/12 3/12	Unspecified formation no longer under 12 SS. Panzer Corps.	
T395/71 4/12 12/12	47 Pz. Corps under Gruppe von MANTEUFFEL.	Last reference to 47 Pz. Corps before offensive.
T395/50 4/12 11/12	Corps FELDT to Army Group H, 67 Corps to Army Group B.	
T395/88 10/12 12/12	74 Corps under Gruppe MANTEUFFEL.	An extension of 15 Army area rather than move of Corps.
	<u>A Reserve of Infantry formed</u> (see also move up of 3 and 5 Para. Divs. above).	
T382/51 28/11 28/11	363 V.G. Division to be brought up from 67 Corps for 5 Panzer Army.	
T387/1 2/12 3/12	Unloading areas: 245 Div. W. of MULHOUSE 326 V.G. Division GEROLSTEIN (L28) BITBURG (L 15). Fuehrer Begleit Brigade TRABEN-TRARBACH (L 55) KIRN (L 83). 62 V.G. Div. WITTLICH (L 35). 719 V.G. Div. SAARLAUTERN. 560 V.G. Div. DEMSBORN-SPEICHER (L 24). SS.Pz.Abt.501 - EUSKIRCHEN (F 33) 353 V.G.Div. ZUELPICH (F 23) - EUSKIRCHEN-BAAL (K 97). 347 V.G. Div. area SAARLAUTERN (Q 73). Assault Gun Brigade 200 TRABEN-TRARBACH. Army Engineer Bde. 17, MUNSTEREIFEL (F 31). Fuehrer SS. Begleit Bde., OEFFENBURG (W 18).	This can be seen now to be part of the concentration for the offensive. But it is also very misleading. The V.G. divisions going to the ARDENNES are not high-quality units.
T392/49 3/12 8/12	... V.G. Division addressed ZINGSHEIM (F 21) via 5 Panzer Army.	Another hint, not understood at the time. A comment pointed out that this was believed to be in 7 Army's area.

## 3. Contributory Evidence.

A. Requests for Nighter Protection for Troop Movements

T359/103  
5/11  
6/11

Area KYLLBURG (L 16) - KASL (F 11)  
GEROLSTEIN (L 28) - FUSCH (F 16)  
- BITBURG (L 15) - BIRCHEIM (F 26).

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/T360/109



Ref.	Text	Comment
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T360/109 6/11 7/11	Area KALL (F 11) - TILBURG (unlocated) suggest KYLLBURG (L 16). <i>start planning</i>	
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T362/95 8/11 9/11	Area DUEREN, GEROLSTEIN, KYLLBURG, WITTLICH (L 35), BITBURG.	
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Similar requests for fighter protection for train-movements and unloadings occurred repeatedly in the first half of December. (T388/70, T390/84, T595/10, T394/1 etc.) in the areas LUENCHEN GLADBACH - ERKELINZ - GREVENBROICH - OSTERRATH (behind AACHEN sector), but also behind the front of the coming offensive - WITTLICH - BITBURG - BRUEHL - TRIER - HILLESHEIM. The night of 9/12 (T394/1) was outstanding, with 38 trains (direction unspecified, but pretty clearly arriving), KOCHER - TRIER, DUEMPPELFELD - HILLESHEIM, and ZUELPICH.

B. Formation of a Unit for a Special Undertaking in the West

T350/47 26/10 1/11	HITLER's orders for setting-up a special force for special undertaking in the West. Knowledge of English and American idiom essential for volunteers.	
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T357/45 31/10 3/11	Call for volunteers. To be sent to GRAFENWOEHR.	
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T375/20 19/11 22/11	M/T for Pz. Brigade 150 to GRAFENWOEHR.	
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C. Condition of 7 Army

T385/71 30/11 2/12	"Fighting strength of 89 and 344 Inf. Divs. weakened to an extraordinary extent so that condition of these divs. demands their early relief".	
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T387/82 3/12 4/12	"Continuous decrease in fighting strength of own troops ..... compelling us to put in reserves at present available".	
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Ref.	Text	Comment
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T391/11	<u>Grading of Divisions:-</u>	
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5/12		
7/12		

74 Corps:		
353 Div. state	(III)	
344 Div.	(IV)	
89 Div.	(IV)	
272 Div.	(III)	
277 Div.	(III)	
66 Corps:		
(18 V.G. Div.)	(IV)	
26 Div.	(III)	
80 Corps:		
352 Div.	(III)	
212 Div. (incomplete)		

(III = Fully fit for defensive employment.

IV = Conditionally fit for defensive employment.)

III	<u>A Note on German Signals Instructions and Precautions</u>	
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|----|---|--|
| 1) | On 10/12 a wireless silence was imposed on all SS. formations on the Western Front. This was less significant than it sounds, as such silences have been ordered on previous occasions. The security ban was however stricter than before, in that it did not exempt even divisions.  |  |
| 2) | On 12/12 there was a general issue of new signals instructions in area of Jagdkorps II. These were to take effect from 0300/14/12 and concerned 2 Para. Korps, 1, 2, 12 SS. Pz. Korps, 30, 66, 67, 74, 80, 81, 86 and 88 Corps, with 1, 2, 9 and 12 SS. Pz. Divs. New signals instructions were also issued by the Jagdkorps, with effect from 14/12, to its subordinate G.A.F. Units. This, in retrospect, was clearly in preparation for the offensive. But similar general issues of signals instructions had taken place in ITALY and had borne no operational significance whatever, being simply a general re-organization. |  |
| 3) | The W/F silence already referred to was relaxed on 16/12, when Source reported telegrams to 1 SS. Pz. Korps, 47 Pz. Korps, 2 and 12 SS. Div. all stamped 1342-1350 and authorizing those H.Q.'s. to send KR messages. Similar instructions were sent to 1 SS. Pz. Div. at 0055/17/12.   |  |

/ Other formations

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Other formations must have received similar leave, for late on 17/12 the privilege was withdrawn again from 47 Pz. Korps, 74 Korps, 1 SS. Pz. Div. and 2 Pz. Div. This order of 16/12 was clearly the final starting-gun. But it was received too late for warning.

#### IV. German Signals Intelligence

Ever since D-Day U.S. Signals have been of great assistance to the enemy. Scores of instances, "For Attention of Signals Security Officers", have been sent to Ministries and Commands, the last often with high priority; but with little noticeable result. It has been emphasized that, out of thirty odd U.S. Divisions in the West, the Germans have constantly known the locations, and often the intentions, of all but two or three. They knew that the Southern wing of U.S. 1st Army, on a front of some 80 miles, was mostly held either by new or by tired divisions.

On 11/11 Army Group B appreciated: "General: The enemy is weakening the right wing of 1 American Army (elements of 85 Div.) in favour of 3 American Army. Any plan for attack by them in the EIFEL is therefore unlikely". (1367/47, HP 6542.)

It is, in short, a little startling to find that the Germans had a better knowledge of U.S. Order of Battle from their Signals Intelligence than we had of German Order of Battle from Source.

#### V. German Security Measures. The Phantom Armies

It is clear that high circles in the Wehrmacht have developed an extreme respect for Allied Intelligence and distrust for their own countrymen. They therefore decided before the present offensive that a certain amount of dust should be thrown in the eyes of all their subordinates below the highest rank. They had camouflaged the occupation of HUNGARY as an operation against guerillas. Now they gave false names, not merely to their intentions, but to Army Groups and Armies. This deception proved highly successful: indeed without it all their other precautions might well have proved vain.

/ As has been said,

As has been said, the arrangement of Armies had been (North to South):

15 Army (HOLLAND)  
 1 Para. Army (HOLLAND)  
 5 Pz. Army (AACHEN area)  
 7 Army (DUREN - TRIER)  
 with 6 SS. Pz. Army refitting behind KOELN - DUESSELDORF.

In broad outline, the offensive involved (not necessarily in this order):

- (1) Insertion of 6 SS. Pz. Army South of 5 Pz. Army.
- (2) Relief of 5 Pz. Army H.Q. (and 47 Pz. Korps) by 15 Army H.Q.
- (3) Leapfrogging of 5 Pz. Army H.Q. Southward, over 6 SS. Pz. Army, into a sector between it and 7 Army.

To disguise this:

- (1) 6 SS. Pz. Army was camouflaged as "Resting and Refitting Staff 16". Source even got hold of documents addressed to "6 SS. Pz. Army, and, for information, to Refitting Staff 16". As refitting was precisely what 6 SS. Pz. Army had been doing for weeks, that was extremely plausible. This alias was still in use as late on 25/12.
- (2) MANTEUFFEL, commanding 5 Pz. Army, was promoted to a bogus "Army Group", which took over also his Signals and his cover-name ERIKA.
- (3) Meanwhile 5 Pz. Army was stealing into position in the South under the sobriquet of "Feldjaeger Korps s.b.V.". On 18/12 Army Group MANTEUFFEL was pretending to control 15 Army (T402/76): two days later, on 20/12, 5 Pz. Army was again openly bearing its old commander's name as "Army MANTEUFFEL", as it attacked in the next sector but one to the South, on the left of 6 SS. Pz. Army (T405/37).
- (4) This elaborate "camouflaging of command authorities", as the Germans called it, was extended even to Railway Transport Offices. Here the disguises were allowed to lapse on 17/12 (T405/6).  
 It need hardly be added that in long documents this sham would have exposed itself: but in the short and allusive scraps seen by Source these fictitious H.Q.'s. proved smoke-screen enough.

~~TOP SECRET + ULTRA~~

/ B. Other Sources

~~TOP SECRET - ULTRA~~B. Other SourcesI 1. Indications that an offensive in the West was planned

Ref.	Text	Comments
(a) BAY/XL119 21/8 24/8	Japanese Minister quoting Vice-Minister Foreign Affairs: Germans could not take initiative and launch offensive on big scale before about two months.	The trouble with evidence from Japanese sources is that Japanese Ministers are less critical than some in believing what they are told - as the Germans are aware.
(b) BAY/XL152 4/9 10/9	Japanese Ambassador after interview with HITLER and RIBBENTROP: when the one million new troops now being formed, together with units withdrawn from other fronts were ready, and as soon as replenishment of air force (now proceeding) was concluded, intention was to undertake great offensive in West (probably from November onwards).	
(c) BAY/HP113 16/11 23/11	Japanese Ambassador after interview with RIBBENTROP: RIBBENTROP stated offensive as soon as possible, to be directed primarily against West. Unable to name time.	

24 - ~~TOP SECRET - ULTRA~~

~~TOP SECRET - ULTRA~~II 2. The Parachute Landings

The only advance intelligence of the German offensive received in low-grade air codes was the following warning of the parachute landings (all times G.M.T.).

- 1) 16/12. 0415 and 0419 messages intercepted warning Flak Units that 90 Ju. 52's and 15 Ju. 88's were going from PADERBORN area to area 6° - 6° 30' E. to 50° 31' - 50° 45' N. and returning by the same route. These messages were cancelled at 0549.
- 2) 17/12. At 0042 and 0052 similar messages (with T.O.O. 0033 and 0041) were intercepted warning Flak Units that 90 Ju. 52's and 15 Ju. 88's were going from PADERBORN area to area 6° - 6° 30' E. and 50° 30' - 50° 45' N. and returning by same route to land at 0430. A further message referring to these two was intercepted at 0142. "Course North and West". The following action was taken:

- 1) On 16/12:
  - (a) The Operational Watch B.P. phoned Fighter Command, Hut 3 (Air and Army), CANTERBURY, and CHEADLE, warning CHEADLE that this was not an ordinary transport operation. The information was passed to Hut 3, D.D.I.3 and D.D.I.4 by teleprinter O.P.I. by 0800 hours.
  - (b) CHEADLE put the three messages out at 0450, 0455, 0508 to CANTERBURY for the broadcast to R.A.F. Units in FRANCE.
  - (c) Operational Watch B.P. put out a considered version in G.A.G. teleprints to CANTERBURY for the broadcast to R.A.F. Units in FRANCE, to Det. A. for SHAEF A/C of S/A-2, CHEADLE D.O., A.I.4.B., A.I.3.B., and **MI 4** Major OWEN of Lt. Col. BROWN's party. The teleprints were received at CANTERBURY at 1000 hours (first two messages), 1030 hours third message.

- 2) On 17/12 similar action was taken: CHEADLE put out the first two messages at 0117 and the third at 0224. G.A.G. teleprints were received at CANTERBURY at 0155 hours for first two messages and 0311 hours for third message.

It would appear therefore that the cancelled messages of 16/12 gave a day's warning of the operation and that the messages referring to the operation itself were dispatched to Hut 3 and R.A.F. Units in FRANCE within half an hour of their receipt here. R.A.F. H.Q's. in FRANCE are responsible for passing information of interest to the corresponding Army H.Q's.

*Evidence that  
this c/A also  
done in field  
(not Eric MA?)*

It should also be pointed out that all R.A.F. Field Units with Groups and the main American Field Unit with the 9th Air Force should have taken and decoded the German messages (it is known that 8th Group took the messages on 16/12).

~~TOP SECRET - ULTRA~~

C. Some Conclusions1. The Distortion of Restrospect

One word of caution seems necessary at the outset, if injustice is not to be done to many responsible for appreciating this intelligence. There is here collected the evidence that pointed to a German offensive in the ARDENNES. There is not much here of the evidence that pointed to German offensives elsewhere. Where there was a tangled wood of detail, there are now left standing only the few relevant trees: it is not easy to imagine how difficult it was then to find the way. And yet, had the Germans really attacked in the AACHEN sector, it would not be very difficult to assemble substantial reasons why they should have attacked there and nowhere else.

2. Alternative Appreciations

It is however hard not to feel, if a brief generalization may be allowed, that there does exist a besetting tendency in Intelligence, of which the present is a serious example - the tendency to become too wedded to one view of enemy intentions. It had grown to be generally believed that the Germans would counter-attack, head-on, when we had pushed them hard enough, probably in the ROER sector with its dams. This idea died hard; and it killed other truer ideas of what was really going on. It is less impressive, no doubt, to deal always in alternatives, to say "There are 4 chances out of 5 that the Germans will do A; yet there is still 1 in 5 that they will do B". But unless Intelligence is perpetually ready to entertain all the alternatives, it sees only the evidence that favours the chosen view; and, unconsciously, other indications are, not explained, but explained away.

3. Reliance on Source

There is a risk of relying too much on Source. His very successes in the past constitute a danger, if they lead to waiting for further information, because "Source will tell us that", or to doubting the likelihood of something happening because "Source would have told us that". He told us all about ROMMEL's attack on the MARETH LINE: but before the KASSERINE PASS offensive we had failed, as here, to divine where the blow that we saw was coming, would finally fall. There is always an element of capriciousness and luck, which the steady flow of our intelligence tends at times to leave forgotten. The evidence given above was passed in its abundance to those responsible. But in its very abundance, in its very authenticity, lie dangers. It would be interesting, for example, to know how much reconnaissance was flown over the EIFEL sector on the 1st Army Front. Source gave all he knew: but he does not always know everything.

4. Improved German Security

German suspicions of Allied Intelligence may be lulled again by their present success. Indeed their security measures have for years shown a repeated oscillation between sudden spurts of precaution and relapses into laziness and laxity. Still the general level of security definitely rises, and it is always possible that, having succeeded at last in surprising us, they may think the precautions taken well worth repetition.

In any case it has to be faced that, in future documents produced by Source may need far more careful scrutiny for occasional booby-traps, mare's nests, and red herrings. On the other hand if we improve the Germans, they improve us. This time their phantom armies enjoyed a surprise success: but the surprise-value of such stratagems is less easy to repeat.

5. Allied Insecurity

The Germans have this time prevented us from knowing enough about them; but we have not prevented them from knowing far too much about us. This leakage is continuing as badly as ever, since the battle began. About other points in this paper, endless argument is possible: no one will dispute the disastrous absurdity of handing the enemy, month after month, with open eyes and open hands, our own Order of Battle.

Distribution

The Director (5 copies)

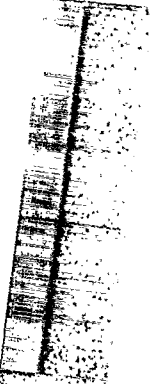
~~TOP SECRET - ULTRA~~

/JCP/PAI/19L/23/12/44



ARDENNES - British  
ASSESSMENT  
13 JAN 1945

British Assessment



BRITISH JOINT STAFF MISSION

OFFICES OF THE COMBINED CHIEFS OF STAFF

WASHINGTON

~~TOP SECRET~~~~ULTRA~~

HMOC/2122

13 January 1945

MEMORANDUM FOR MAJOR-GENERAL CLAYTON BISSELL

through Brigadier-General Carter W. Clarke.

INDICATIONS OF GERMAN OFFENSIVE

In answer to a request addressed by you to London on Christmas Day, a report has been prepared, and a copy is enclosed herewith at ANNEX B. Sir Edward Travis, Director G.C.C.S., asks me to make it quite clear that this is an unofficial appreciation, prepared by G.C.C.S. Neither War Office nor Air Ministry are responsible for it and it should not be quoted in any communication addressed to them. Copies have however been given to D.M.I. and A.C.A.S.I.

There is also attached, at ANNEX A, a covering minute received by cable for transmission to you. This minute is a joint comment by D.M.I. and A.C.A.S.I.

I am instructed by General Menzies to present it with the report to yourself, Brig.Gen. Clarke and Colonel McCormack, and to ask you, at the special request of A.C.A.S.I. to pass a copy to Major General J.P. Hodges, A.C. of Air Staff, A-2.

*H.M. O'Connor*  
H.M. O'Connor  
Colonel, G.S.

~~TOP SECRET - ULTRA~~



WAR DEPARTMENT  
WAR DEPARTMENT GENERAL STAFF  
MILITARY INTELLIGENCE DIVISION, G-2  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

WDGBI

24 January 1945

MEMORANDUM FOR GENERAL CLARKE

Attached hereto are the papers from Travis through O'Connor. Please draft a letter of appreciation to be passed to Travis. I desire your recommendation regarding paragraph IV, German Signal Intelligence, on page 22. After discussion of paragraph 2., page 26, with General Osmun, Colonel McCormack and General Weckerling I desire your recommendation.

CLAYTON BISSELL  
Major General, GSC  
A.C. of S., G-2

Incl

~~TOP SECRET~~

ANNEX A

~~ULTRA~~

First: Report shows clearly, as do all post-mortems, which of many interpretations and clues were right. Do not agree clear warning given as to date. As with all post-mortems, value lies in lessons which can be extracted for future use.

Second: Such lessons from the report apply partly to H.Q.s in charge of operations and partly to H.Q.s responsible for over-all watch on war.

Third: We believe following lessons can be extracted:

- (a) Intelligence staffs must not become rigid in their thoughts. Long period since Germans launched an offensive produced tendency in this case.
- (b) Heavy losses among relatively few formations can quickly be made good from over-all German output. Optimistic but local reports success November Allied offensives in weakening Germans, obscured German freedom to confine the bulk of their reinforcements in men and equipment to the West.
- (c) Intelligence staffs must appreciate enemy view of current Allied operations. In this operation they failed to realise the extent to which Germans felt free to use their reserves for an attack.
- (d) Almost all evidence from ULTRA sources of military and air preparations could have been interpreted either as:
  - (i) offensive nature, or
  - (ii) defensive plus building up of central reserve to restore situation.Tactical reconnaissance, active patrolling, capture for interrogation of prisoners of war and the like must, in spite of ULTRA, still remain surest guide to enemy intention for Commanders in the field. In this case weather and the Siegfried Line, and not lack of effort, were presumably to blame.
- (e) Germans have learnt from us now to employ deceptive measures.
- (f) Germans are learning too much of our Order of Battle from our bad wireless security.

Fourth: Must point out that dispositions in Ardennes were noted by Strong in his intelligence appreciation in his GAD/SH 142 of 13th December which contained a warning that a relieving attack there should be expected if some of the excess of divisions were not moved away soon. Generals Bradley and Strong both known to have agreed several times in December that attack in Ardennes was on the cards.

~~TOP SECRET~~ ULTRA

~~TOP SECRET ULTRA~~

ANNEX B.

Copy No. 12.

28. 12. 44.

~~TOP SECRET ULTRA~~INDICATIONS OF THE GERMAN  
OFFENSIVE OF DECEMBER 1944Contents:

- A. Source CX/MSS.
  - I. G.A.F. Evidence.
  - II. Army Evidence.
  - III. German Signals.
  - IV. German Signals Intelligence.
  - V. German Security Measures.
  
- B. Other Sources.
  - I. HITLER interviews.
  - II. German Parachute Operations.
  
- C. Some Conclusions.

~~ULTRA~~~~TOP SECRET ULTRA~~

~~TOP SECRET ULTRA~~

It is not the purpose of this paper to indulge in wisdom after the event, but to learn what can be learnt.

A. Source CX/MSS.

It can be stated at once that:-

- (1) Source gave clear warning that a counter-offensive was coming.
- (2) He also gave warning, though at rather short notice, of when it was coming.
- (3) He did not give by any means unmistakable indications of where it was coming; nor, on the military side, (which was the important side) of its full scale.
- (4) This was largely due to new and elaborate deceptions staged by German security.
- (5) German planning, on the other hand, must have been greatly helped by the insecurity of certain Allied signals. On this point the warnings of source were both timely and ample, but in vain.

~~TOP SECRET ULTRA~~

~~TOP SECRET ULTRA~~(a) General

The G.A.F. evidence shows that ever since the last week in October preparations have been in train to bring the bulk of the Luftwaffe on to airfields in the West.

The evidence has always tended to show that any such Westward move would be in support of the Army. But it has never been possible to infer the exact nature or timing of the Army operation.

It seems that the original plan was set in motion about November 4, when the fighter units were ordered to send advanced detachments to the West. The actual units never came West in November, but preparations continued.

By about November 20 the urgency seems to have disappeared and a certain hesitation is seen regarding the role of these fighters.

About Nov. 25th a striking change took place in the Command and from December 1st all measures were concerted for the ultimate deployment and operation of the fighter close-support force to aid the attack.

Evidence that the blow was imminent appeared from about December 4; possible evidence of its timing and duration was also available (Pilot a/c coming for "about 14 days").

Evidence of precise point of attack was never clear. The two Groups of airfields, in the ACHMIR - DUESSELDORF and FRANKFURT areas, flanked a very wide field extending from KOELN to LUXEMBOURG.

It should be emphasised that, so far as the G.A.F. was concerned, at no stage between the end of October and December 16 was there any radical change in the general planning. Every addition was simply a further elaboration. There was nothing to show any change in G.A.F. strategy. In fact, this unbroken sequence of preparation over a period of seven weeks tended to conceal any changes in the plans of the Army, though it seems clear that Army intentions must have differed considerably in early November from what they had become by mid-December.

(b) Details

First date =  
date of document.  
Second date =  
date of TP.

SummaryCommentStatements of Policy

T349/42	Statement of G.A.F. Policy to	) These two messages, taken in conjunction explain the whole G.A.F. policy throughout November and right up to Rundstedt's attack in December. The G.A.F. like the Army's strategic
18/10	Navy. Defence of Reich must	
20/10	be chief concern, and therefore, so long as warfare on main fronts remained static, armies would be deprived of close support.	
T350/20	JODL passed to C.-in-C.WEST decision	) in December. The G.A.F. like the Army's strategic
25/10	of OKW. Preparations being made by	
27/10	OKL to bring up very strong fighter forces in event of large Allied attack in West. Transfer not possible at present, for reasons connected with training and fuel.	

~~TOP SECRET ULTRA~~

~~TOP SECRET ULTRA~~SummaryComment

T350/20  
25/10  
27/10

JODL passed to C.-in-C. WEST decision of OKW. Preparations being made by OKL. to bring up very strong fighter forces in event of large Allied attack in West. ~~Transfer~~ not possible at present, for reasons connected with training and fuel.

) Rundstedt's attack in December. The G.A.F. like the Army's strategic reserve, would only be committed when the Army's defensive position required. Until that moment they would be held back.

Earlier Indications of Nature of Operation

T350/15  
26/10  
27/10

Luftgau VI wanted help in stocking up 11 airfields with C3 for "project in first few days of November". 500 cbm. requested, as stocks were dispersed and could not be moved about for "SCHLAGARTIGER EINSATZ" ("lightning employment"). Allusion to "three operations".

T353/60  
29/10  
31/10

Jagdkorps I to run a TEWT on "air defence by day" on 2/11. Kommodores of JG. 2 and JG. 26 to attend, as well as a representative of JK. II.

) This seems to have been genuinely concerned with air defence. During November air opposition to VIII USAAF raids to Central GERMANY was stepped up.

T345/101  
31/10  
1/11

JG. 26 quoted GOERING order that re-equipment of all fighter aircraft as fighter bombers must be possible within 24 hours.

Move up of Fighter Units

T362/38  
7/11  
8/11

Jagdkorps I reported to Jagdkorps II equipment of 21 day fighter Gruppen belonging to JG.'s 3, 4, 11, 27, 77, 300.

) Clearly foreshadows operation on large scale under control of Jagdkorps II. Other information showed JG. 1 and 6 also involved; that is, almost the entire German fighter force.

T361/167  
7/11  
8/11

Referring to Jagdkorps I of 4/11, JG. 11 reported GRIESHEIM, BIBLIS, and BABENHAUSEN suitable airfields.

) All advanced detachments moved up about 7-8/11. Except for JG. 4, JG. 3 and JG. 27, flying elements did not follow until about 17/12. (I.e. not until actual opening of offensive; cf. reference to "lightning employment").

T366/35  
11/11  
12/11

JG. 27 advance detachments in COLOGNE area.

~~TOP SECRET ULTRA~~ / T364/14



~~TOP SECRET ULTRA~~

T364/14      Advanced detachment Stab  
9/11          JG. 6 to QUAKENBRUECK.  
10/11

T362/111     TWENTE and STEENWIJK to  
8/11          be prepared for I and II  
9/11          JG. 1.

T361/2        Advanced detachments of  
6/11          JG. 77 arriving at short  
7/11          notice on airfields in  
              DUESSELDORF area.

T361/1        Advanced detachments of JG. 300    ) These units subsequently  
6/11          and JG. 301 arriving shortly       ) dropped out of the  
7/11          at airfields in the KASSEL         ) scheme.  
              district.                             )

T367/53       First mention of an advanced  
12/11         detachment of JG. 3.  
14/11

T374/76       Locations of advanced detach-  
19/11         ments of JG. 3 in the  
21/11         STOERMEDE area.

R367(A)/14   Reference to difficulties  
9/11          at new operational location  
14/11         of JG. 4.

Bringing in of SG. 4

T359/71       III SG. 4 to REINSEHLEN.            ) SG. 4 had been operating  
4/11    ) on the North Russian  
6/11    ) Front. It appears to  
  ) have been withdrawn to  
  ) GERMANY about 4/11 to  
  ) retrain with a new anti-  
  ) tank weapon, so as to be  
  ) brought into operation  
  ) with the fighter units.  
  ) Suggests most strongly  
  ) that the coming operation  
  ) would be closely connected  
  ) with the Army. (See also  
  ) under "Pilot Aircraft"  
  ) below).

T359/122      Stab and II SG. 4 to move  
5/11          to UNTERSCHLAUERSBACH to train  
6/11          in bad-weather ground-attack  
              and re-equip with "Panzerblitz"  
              (an anti-tank weapon) and M8,  
              for operations on Western front.

T360/32       Elements of III SG. 4 retraining  
5/11          at UDETFELD.  
6/11

T379/39       Stab SG. 4 at GUETERSLOH.  
23/11  
25/11

/Miscellaneous events

~~TOP SECRET ULTRA~~

~~TOP SECRET - ULTRA~~Miscellaneous events 12/11-27/11

T367/31 12/11 13/11	JG. 77 asked for repairs to an underground fuel-installation urgently required for "special contingency known to you".	
T367/125 13/11 14/11	JG. 11 states that arranging of quarters by advanced detachments on their own responsibility is forbidden, as endangering secrecy.	} An example of the elaborate security precautions throughout. <u>These suggest offensive rather than defensive intention.</u>
T369/56 14/11 16/11	Fighter units in West not to use Geschwader badges or unit markings.	}
T371/41 16/11 17/11	Luftgau XIV order (based on Luftflotte Reich order of 14/11): Serviceability of airfields intended for bringing up of fighters to be reported daily.	
T374/100 19/11 21/11	A.R.C. DELMENHORST ordered work on airfield defences to be halted at once till completion of airfields for "fighter operations WEST".	
T375/122 18/11 22/11	Warning from G.A.F. Command WEST to Flak to expect appearance of strongish fighter forces in Western GERMANY.	} Obscure. Looked at the time as if things were about to begin; but no evidence of move up of units. Order may have been due to American Army attacks - a precautionary warning in case fighters had to be used prematurely.
T372/16 18/11 18/11	Above passed on by Luftgau XIV.	
T375/119 21/11 22/11	GOERING decision. Fighter aircraft intended for operations in the West not to be equipped with "E.T.C." These however to be kept ready.	} This order and the next reflect a certain hesitation about this date - whether fighters to be used as such or not. Perhaps earlier plan was hanging fire as serious break-through by Allies came to seem unlikely.
T381/23 25/11 27/11	Re-equipping with "E.T.C." of fighter units intended for operations in the West and for employment as fighter bombers must be possible within 24 hours.	} Last ten days of November possibly a replanning stage during which counter offensive hatched.

~~TOP SECRET - ULTRA~~ T373/8

T377/8  
18/11  
19/11

Advanced detachment of a JG. 27 unit moved from the KOELN area to ACHMER.

Switch of JG. 27 may also reflect this hesitation. If things were not to happen soon, it might be better to pull JG. 27 out of the exposed KOELN airfields.

T375/80  
/94  
/120  
20-21/11  
22/11

JG. 27 flying units moved up to the ACHMER area.

Reason not clear. They remained quiescent until attack began. As experienced close-support units, they may have been intended as a readily available reserve in case of break-through by 1 or 9 Armies. Unlike all other units coming up, JG. 27 had only been away from Jagdkorps II for about 3 weeks; consequently its return cannot be evidence of an intention at this date to reinforce the front at once on a large scale.

T378/83  
24/11  
25/11

JG. 4 was operational and receiving orders from 5 JD.

Bringing into operation of JG. 4 and III SG. 4 about this date was probably premature and a reaction to successes of 3 and 7 Armies.

T379/60  
25/11  
26/11

"Auswertung" being set up for III SG. 4 at KIRRLACH.

T381/43  
26/11  
27/11

III SG. 4 at KIRRLACH.

Alterations in Chain of Command  
(Latter end of November)

T379/86  
25/11  
26/11

Fliegerdivision 3 withdrawn from operations.

These most significant. They resulted in setting-up a very powerful close-support command, Jagdkorps II, controlling the bulk of the German fighter force and all bombing, ground-attack and night ground-attack forces in the West. Fighters were controlled through two subordinate commands, Jafue Middle Rhine and Jagddivision 3. Jafue Middle Rhine previously only in control of night-fighters and subordinate to 3 JD. Jagddivision 3 in control of strategic day and night fighters. G.A.F. Command WEST retained control only of the long-distance Ar.234 recce a/c. In fact, this recreated the /old

T380/87  
26/11  
27/11.

F. 123 and its units subordinate to Jagdkorps II.

T383/95  
30/11  
30/11.

I KG. 66 subordinate to Jagdkorps II.

T390/22  
5/12  
6/12.

Battle Unit HALLENSLEBEN sub. to JK. II.

T390/14  
5/12  
6/12

KG. 51 sub. to JK. II.

~~TOP SECRET, ULTRA~~

		) old G.A.F. pattern of Luftflotte - Fliegerkorps, normal during the phase of German offensive.
T379/22 T381/12 23/11 25-7/11.	JG. 4 and JG. 2 added to signals list of Jafue Middle Rhine.	) 5 JD. remains outside the plan, showing that, wherever operation might be intended, at least the extreme South of the front was excluded.
T384/47 29/11 1/12	JD. 3 return of strengths of JG. 3, JG. 27, JG. 26.	
T387/53 2/12 3/12	First return of day-fighter strengths by Jafue Middle Rhine to Jagdkorps II, covering JG. 2 and JG. 4.	

Type of Preparations being made  
by Units in early December

T384/16 T386/33 29-30/11 30/11-2/12	Return of stocks of "E.T.C." by I and III JG. 11. Returns quoted a reference of 26/10.	) Insistence on bomb-release gear and low-level attack again points to army co-operation.
T398/53 12/12 15/12	Jafue Middle Rhine reported on training in "homing flight" in JG. 4, JG. 2 and JG. 11.	) Mention of Pilot Aircraft led to misinterpretation. Zielflug was thought to be practice for inter- ception, as on previous occasions. In fact, it is here used to mean attacks on ground targets.
R.396/A/15 5/12 13/12	On 2/12 and 3/12, III JG. 26 carried out 4 practice flights in low-flying attack.	
T399/30 14/12 15/12	Return of "E.T.C." by Jafue Middle Rhine covering I, II, III and IV JG. 4 and I, II and III JG. 2.	

Chronology Early December

T384/47 29/11 1/12	JG. 3 aircraft in STOERMEDE area.	
R.384/A/84 30/11 1/12	Courses for National- Socialist Leaders in Luftgau VI 3-16/12 cancelled owing to "impending special operation".	This now has an obvious significance but the context is comparatively trivial and it was impossible to attach its true value to it owing to German abuse of language. No doubt "special operation" failed to ring a bell.

/T 390/56

~~TOP SECRET, ULTRA~~

T390/56 2/12 6/12	G.A.F. Command WEST to Luftflotte REICH, Gen. Oberst STUMPF. "Enlargement repeatedly asked for of the DOPPELKOPFKREIS extremely urgent. Non-compliance with request can have unpredictable consequences".	} DOPPELKOPF ("double head") is also a card game. On 15/11 there was also a Railway Movement DOPPELKOPF, apparently part of a Games series, since it included a "HIST". But this seems mere coincidence. It is possible in retrospect to fancy meanings for DOPPELKOPF the operation (e.g. attack by two Pz. armics). But there is no evidence that the ordinary meaning plays any more part with DOPPELKOPF the operation than with DOPPELKOPF the Railway Movement.
R.398/C/77 12/12 13/12	Oberst von FICHTE arriving 13/12 at Rest and Refitting Staff 16 for DOPPELKOPF-SPIELEN. FREDI to be informed.	
T390/26 2/12 6/12	Luftgau XI to report by 5/12 barrel requirements for stocking up for "Fighter Ops. WEST".	
T388/13 3/12 4/12	Luftgau VI to report to Luftflotte REICH on measures taken for technical supply of units that had arrived for ops. in the West.	
T392/62 4/12 8/12	Pyrotecnics used as visual navigation aids to be stored at observer posts. Instructions how to use them.	} This fits in with the pilot-aircraft technique, see below.
T389/3 4/12 5/12	All Kommodores and Kommandeure of day fighter Geschwader except JG. 300 and JG. 301 to attend conference at Jagdkorps II H.Q. beginning 5/12.	} Very significant. Jagdkorps II is giving orders to units formerly under Jagdkorps I.
T393/18 8/12 9/12	Advanced Detachment II SG. 4 arrived KIRTORF.	} Parallel to move up of fighter advanced detachments about 7/11.
T389/11 4/12 5/12	When brought up, JG. 11 to go to BIBLIS, ZELLHAUSEN, and GROSSOSTHEIM.	} Minor switch of destination, in same area as before. Mysterious at time, but later pilot-aircraft documents showed it referred to the operation, as a whole.
T395/65 10/12 12/12	Referring to Jagdkorps II master order of 1/12, unusually stringent security regulations governing briefing of III JG.3 and subsequent movements of crews.	
T397/79 13/12 14/12	Luftgau XIV asked i.c. LIPPE, AILERTCHEN, and BREITSCHIED were still required for JG.27.	} A hint that JG.27 always intended to return to the KOELN area and only moved North to concreted airfields as a temporary measure when, about 20/11, immediate employment seemed unnecessary.

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T399/74 14/12 16/12	Order from 3 JD. to JG.1. Gruppen to move up. This order was distributed as low as Gruppen, owing to urgency.	} First movement of units prior to the operation.
T398/74 14/12 15/12 T399/58 15/12 16/12	III SG. 4 to transfer to KIRTORF as soon as weather allows. First strength return of Jafuc Middle Rhine covering Stab and I SG. 4 ZIEGENHAIN, II SG. 4 KIRTORF, and III SG. 4 KIRRLACH.	} SG. 4 concentrating in area of KOELN for operations as a Geschwader. Shows operations in the South of third Gruppe were outside general plan.

Intruder Operations by NJG.4

T389/7 4/12 5/12	I, II and III NJG. 4 to collect "window". (To be in possession of Gruppen at all costs by 9/12).	} Only loosely connected with the main scheme, and not very revealing at the time.
T400/94 T402/7 15-16/12 17-18/12	I and III NJG. 4 report arrival of window.	} The most that these preparations showed was that the G.A.F. was becoming more offensive.
T397/7 12/12 13/12 T398/78 14/12 15/12	NJG. 4 specifies airfields in HOLLAND for undertakings ROPER and BARKER. ROPER shown to be an intruder operation directed against Bomber Command.	}
R.394/A/13 8/12 11/12	An a/c fuel column moving from OBERNBURG to ESCHBORN and then on, under keyword BERTIE.	} This is a scheme to provide mobile G.A.F. servicing units, presumably for aircraft making emergency landings in the tactical area.
T399/21 14/12 15/12	BERTIE issued on 14/12, units from A.R.C.'s KOELN and ALMELO to report at ALTENKIRCHEN.	}
T400/49 15/12 16/12	BERTIE units left GIESSEN and ETTINGHAUSEN.	}

The Pilot Aircraft

T388/77 4/12 5/12	16 pilot aircraft and crews to be provided by NJG.101 for II and III JG. 11 and I, II and III JG. 2, all in FRANKFURT area.	} This is the most revealing of all. Air Ministry at first on 6/12 connected it with large-scale interception of strategic bombers, but SG.4 was hard to explain away even then. Later reference to low-level flight and route marking showed the pilot a/c must be intended to assist large formations of fighters and fighter-bombers to get off and find their target area. Firm comments were sent to this effect about the fighters as soon as the necessary indications were available i.e., on 14/12. See below.
T389/64 4/12 6/12	2 night-fighter crews to be allotted for about 14 days as pilot aircraft for I, II, III and IV JG. 4, I JG. 11 (all in FRANKFURT area) and I, II and III SG. 4 at ZIEGENHAIN, KIRTORF, and KIRRLACH.	}

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It was on 4/12 that I SG. 4, till then thought to be on the Russian Front, was seen to be joining the rest of the Geschwader in the West. It was also on 4/12 that we had the first indication that II SG. 4 was coming on to operation after re-training. Concentration of a whole specialised ground attack Geschwader at this juncture clearly showed that things were moving.

T390/29 5/12 6/12	2 night-fighter crews, to ensure assembly of strong day-fighter formations in bad weather, sent to I, II and III JG. 1 in HOLLAND.	
T391/78 4/12 8/12	2 Ju. 88 crews each to a number of airfields covering units mentioned above, plus JG. 6, 3, 27, 26 and 53.	
T398/1 12/12 14/12	Amendments to a Jagdkorps II master order of 1/12. Flare cartridges to be fired upward when flying at low level. Pilot aircraft to pass on to formations being led any order for recall. Reference to "Northern" and "Southern" groups.	) These "groups" doubtless refer to Jaue Middle Rhine and 3 Jagddivision. They are the only indication of the intended ops. area, and then regretfully
T399/31 13/12 15/12	More amendments to master order of 1/12, dealing with drill for formation take-off with pilot aircraft in darkness and marking of route with lights.	) vague - only the area South of KARLSRUHE is excluded.

SENNE Airfield and Parachutists

T396/30 8/12 12/12	Wehrkreis VI wished to prevent use of SENNE airfields by G.A.F., or which an advanced detachment had arrived.	) This was not grasped in its full significance till the morning of 16/12, when an ELGAR message dealing with a large scale Ju. 52 operation made it all clear. The only intelligence on the subject which could however tie up SENNE with
T398/30 9/12 14/12	RUNDSTEDT gave emphatic orders to Wehrkreis VI to allow G.A.F. Command WEST to use SENNE 1 and 2.	parachutists only came in on the evening of the 15th (T399/44). The whole of this intelligence was signalled very fast in its true perspective, on the 16th i.e. before the parachute drop on the 17th but after the ELGAR warning and cancellation of a Ju. 52 operation in the early hours of 16th.
T399/44 8/12 15/12	SENNE 1 prescribed as take-off airfield for a unit connected with Transport Command. Nearby airfields listed as intermediate fuelling-points.	

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II. Army Evidence.

(a) General.

Recapitulation of General Situation  
Before the Counter-Offensive

After the German rout in FRANCE and BELGIUM, when Allied logistic difficulties permitted a stabilisation of the German front, HITLER made up his mind to hit back.

For this he pushed on the new call-up and planned a strategic armoured reserve.

After the failure at ARNHEIM, the Germans, though still watching this sector, appreciated that the greatest threat was to KOELN. It was reasonable therefore to appreciate that the move of the armoured reserve to complete its rest and refit in the KOELN sector was a precaution against an attack there, which did in fact take place.

At the opening of this attack, which was concentrated on the drive for KOELN, but covered the whole fronts of American 3 and 7 Armies as well as of the French Army, German dispositions were as follows.

Heeresgruppe "H" controlled 15 Army, 1 Para. Army, Armeekorps CHRISTIANSEN (ex C.-in-C. NETHERLANDS), and Armeekorps KLEFFEL (a new-comer from the BALTIC). This front was thinly held and the Heeresgruppe controlled no Armoured or PG. Divisions. The state of the two parachute divisions refitting was not exactly known. There were not in any case sufficient divisions to explain the presence of a spare Armeekorps Staff. One possible explanation was that it would control the development of the defences of the Rhine Bridgeheads in the group rear-area. But this was not convincing and its presence may be called "Riddle Number 1".

Heeresgruppe "B", in the key sector, controlled 5 Pz. Army and 7 Army, with 6 Pz. Army in reserve. Besides infantry and Para. Divisions, 5 Pz. Army had 3 Armoured and 2 PG. Divisions in line or in tactical reserve. By stubborn fighting, helped by the weather, 5 Panzer Army had managed to make the Allied offensive slow and costly. Ultimately it was appreciated by both sides that the control of the ROER waters was the key to further advance. At the time of the counter-offensive the Germans still had this control.

7 Army covered a much longer front, thinly held and mainly quiet, with pressure only on its right wing. It had one Armoured Division.

6 Panzer Army consisted at that time of 4 Armoured Divisions.

Then certain changes in German dispositions became evident. Panzer Army 5 faded from view. Its sector was now reported under Gruppe MANTEUFFEL (hitherto G.O.C. 5 Pz. Army). This implied an up-grading and so possibly a reinforcement, in what was a "Schwerpunkt" sector. Then elements of 15 Army started being identified in Gruppe MANTEUFFEL. This coincided with evidence that 15 Army's T.P. call-sign was being used on the line to 5 Pz. Army. It was possible to assume

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that 15 Army was relieving 5 Pz. Army, which had been temporarily up-graded to a Gruppe, while it had elements of two Armies under it. For reasons to be stated later, some interpretations "needed" another Army staff further South. Thus a relief was suspected. But German camouflage blurred the evidence, making the relief (if relief there was) seem more gradual than the truth. This was "Riddle Number 2".

It was, however, possible, on the theory that 15 Army was gradually withdrawing from Heeresgruppe H, to solve "Riddle Number 1", for a clear function was immediately found for Armee Abt. KLEFFEL in its place.

There were two views of the possible destination of Pz. Army 5. One favoured the neighbourhood of 7 Army, where five new V.G. Divisions were reported arriving from GERMANY. 7 Army, though on a mainly quiet front, contained divisions that were exhausted, particularly those on the right flank South of AACHEN. It was plausible that 5 Pz. Army might be needed to rest and refit any of these after their relief by the new arrivals. The objection was that this would be wasting a Panzer Staff. In any case, this theory was not held strongly, nor widely, nor for long.

The arrival of the five new V.G. Divisions was "Riddle Number 3". The fact that the Allies were known to be weak here cut both ways.

This brings us to Army Group "G". It had originally controlled 1 and 19 Armies. With two Pz. and two PG. Divisions, 1 Army had been bearing the brunt of PATTON's attack. 19 Army had been reduced to a bridgehead. It contained no armour. Then C.-in-C. Upper Rhine (apparently HIMMLER himself) took over command not only of West Wall defences East of the Rhine, but of 19 Army as well. Later Heeresgruppe Upper Rhine was identified. This left Heeresgruppe "G" with only 1 Army and Gruppe HOEHNE (an enlarged Corps sector).

Here if anywhere was room for a new Panzer Army. Moreover it would be familiar ground for Panzer Army 5. The appearance of new Flak Division supported this.

Such was the picture when Wireless Silence was ordered for all SS. Units (including specifically some of those in Pz. Army 6).

We were uncertain about the Higher Command in the North. We were hoping to break the impasse in the AACHEN Sector by an assault on the ROER dams. We were not unduly worried about the arrival of 5 V.G., non-offensive divisions behind 7 Army. We had driven 1 Army back on to the West Wall, but were still exerting enough pressure to justify the arrival of a new Pz. Army Staff.

"Riddle Number 4" (HIMMLER as C.-in-C. Upper Rhine) could be connected with reports of trouble in the Black Forest and of discord between various German authorities, and with the need to organise a static defence on the Upper Rhine.

By now the strategic armoured reserve was clearly on the move, but it comprised only four divisions and there were no direct clues to its operational area. Other armour, which proved later to be available, was believed to be in tactical rather than strategic reserve. It had not been concentrated. At most two other Armoured Divisions were available in GERMANY.

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Meanwhile our two threats to GERMANY (HODGES and PATTON) were both temporarily blunted. This was not therefore the time to use 6 Pz. Army as a counter-attack force, unless we seriously threatened the ROER dams. Its move/did not seem necessarily to imply immediate action.

We were tantalisingly near the truth, but the German camouflage of formations just sufficed its end.

(b) Details

For an explicit statement that an offensive was being planned in the West one must go to the BAY series. (See Section B). The Japanese Ambassador after interviews with HITLER and RIBBENTROP (BAY/ZL 119, 152, BAY/HP 113) reported that HITLER intended an offensive in the West, to take place in November.

Source, however, did provide detailed evidence for the steps by which HITLER's order was implemented: (a) the formation of the striking force, (b) the reorganisation of the chain of command.

Evidence for the formation of the striking force was given in detail, from the orders for setting-up of Panzer Army 6 on 18/9 up to the imposition of wireless silence for SS. formations on 10/12.

The reorganisation of the chain of command took place under a cloud of false names and cover-planning. The only previous parallel (apart from the ultra-secret world of flying bombs and rockets), and that on a much more modest scale, was the German occupation of HUNGARY in March 1944. This reorganisation involved the switch of 15 Army from North HOLLAND to the AACHEN area in order to free 5 Panzer Army; the formation of a new 25 Army to take the place of 15; and the bringing up of both 5 and 6 Panzer Armies between 15 and 7 Armies. In addition four corps staffs (67, 85 Infantry, 47 and 58 Panzer) were made available for the offensive by withdrawing them from the line, and two Corps staffs (53 and FELBER) were brought up from other fronts.

The clearest indications from source for the area from which the offensive was to be launched came from messages dealing with train movements. (See section 3A below.)

The fact that Allied wireless insecurity permitted the Germans to form a substantially accurate picture of the Allied line-up in the sector South of AACHEN is made abundantly clear by the Y Service reports quoted below. (See Section on German Signals Intelligence).

Finally some minor points should be mentioned. The formation of a special unit for operations in the West was noted by source, and the existence of the unit, Panzer Brigade 150, as well as its connection with SKORZENY, was spotted; the connection of the unit with the operation, however, was not recognised until it was met in the field.

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A series of messages from 7 Army in late November - early December underlining the weakened condition of its formations may have helped to set the minds of Allied planners at rest as to any German threat from the LUXEMBOURG sector.

To sum up, source made plain that a German offensive potential existed, and gave hints as to the time and, less clearly, the place of the offensive. Viewed in the light of what has happened, these hints seem sufficiently plain; but the picture as it now appears is not the one which developed from day to day.

1. Formation of striking force.
  - A. Rest and Refit of 6 Pz. Army

Ref.	Text	Comment
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T320/33 18/9 27/9	1,2,9,12 SS. Panzer Divisions. Heavy SS. Panzer Abteilungen 501, 502 and 503 and Corps troops of I SS. Panzer Corps subordinated for rest and refit to Staff of Panzer Army 6.	
T328/11 30/9 5/10	I SS. Pz. Corps, 1,12 SS. Pz.Divs. and Pz.Lehr to rest and refit in North West GERMANY.	
<i>ind</i> T332/98 7/10 10/10	Elements 9 SS. Panzer Division to area MINDEN - HAMBURG - HANNOVER.	
T340/8 15/10 17/10	KEITTEL order: 6 Panzer Army as OKW. Reserve, will control rest and refitting of I SS. Pz. Corps, 1,2,9,12 SS. Pz. Divs. and Pz. Lehr Div.	
T346/97 18/10 24/10	Withdrawals from line: Panzer Lehr, Battle Groups 1 and 12 SS. Pz.Divs., 9 SS.Pz. Div., 2 SS. Pz. Div., H.Q.155 Pz.Corps.	
T346/93 22/10 24/10	Reporting Centre of SS. Pz. Army 6 SAIZUFLEN (B 78)/ 1 SS. Pz. Corps PETERSHAGEN (W 82). 1 SS. Pz. Div. LUEBBECKI (W 61). 12 SS. Pz. Div. SULINGEN (W 75). Pz. Lehr Div. HOLZHAUSEN (B 86). 2 SS. Pz. Div. BUEREN (B 52). 9 SS. Pz. Div. WADERSLOH (B 34). Also Heavy SS. Pz. Abteilungen 501 SENNELAGER (B 65), 502 GESEKZ (B 53), 503 SENNELAGER.	

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~~TOP SECRET - ULTRA~~B. 6 Panzer Army Crosses the RHINE.

Ref.	Text	Comment
T373/52 5/11 19/11	Pz. Signals Regt. 6 arrives KOELEN area.	
T371/50 9/11 18/11	Command Echelon 6 Panzer Army included in contents of movement TAMMENBERG. Elements of 12 SS. Pz. Div. also listed, but not clear whether part of same movement.	
T378/6 9/11 24/11	Transport of remainder of command echelon of 6 Pz. Army and elements 1 SS. Pz. Div.	
T365/110 10/11 12/11	Transport away of 6 Panzer Army. 2, 12 SS. Pz. Divs. and Pz. Lehr behind schedule.	No indication of destination.
T373/69 16/11 20/11	SS. Pz. Army 6 and I SS. Pz. Corps addressed via Army Group B.	
<u>Pz. Lehr Division Committed under Army Group G.</u>		
T381/1 25/11 27/11	Army Group G report mentions attack by Pz. Lehr Div. area FINSTINGEN.	
T382/29 27/11 28/11	Pz. Lehr Division in sitrep under LXXXIX Corps.	
T395/71 4/12 12/12	Counter attack by Pz. Lehr and 11 Pz. Div. area SAARUNION.	Last reference to Pz. Lehr before offensive.
T401/22 16/12 12/12	Pz. Lehr reports boundaries with 2 Pz. Div. and LXXXV Corps.	
<u>II SS. Corps Moves up.</u>		
T384/55 29/11 1/12	W/F silence II SS. Corps.	Clearly in preparation for move up to 6 Pz. Army.
T378/88 24/11 25/11	II SS. Pz. Corps subordinated to 6 Pz. Army with 2 SS., unspecified SS. Pz. Division, 3 Parachute Division. Intentions: "kurzfristig" rest, refit and training before fresh employment.	
<u>I SS. Corps located.</u>		
T380/91 26/11 27/11	I SS. Corps LECHENICH, Flivo to locate Pz. Lehr, 1,2,9,10,12 SS. Divisions.	

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Ref.	Text	Comment
T382/31 27/11 28/11	Rations to 2 SS. Division at GREVENBROICH (F 17).	
T382/57 28/11 28/11	Flivo I SS. Corps reports 2 SS. Division BEDBURDYCK (F 28), 9 SS. GELSDORF, (F 52).	
T392/75 1-3/12 9/12	Spare parts for 1 SS. BRUCKMUEHLEN (W 40), EUSKIRCHEN (F 33). 9 SS - BONN (F 53), 10 SS. - BENSBERG (F 56). 12 SS. - PULHEIM (F 36). 116 Pz. - BERGISCHE GLADBACH (F 56).	These places, like the G.A.F. airfields, are deceptively far North and suggest threat to AACHEN sector.
T390/21 4/12 6/12	Reporting centres: I SS. Pz. Corps HERRIG (F 24), 1 SS. Pz. Div. MUELHEIM (F 23), 2 SS. Pz. Div. KAARST (F 29), 12 SS. Pz. Div. BRAUWEILER (F 36).	
T392/38 4/12 8/12	Fuehrer Begleit Brigade WITTLICH (L 35).	
T395/49 11/12 11/12	9 SS. GELSDORF (F 52).	
<u>Imposition of Wireless Silence.</u>		
T395/83 10/12 12/12	Wireless silence for all SS. formations. Trupps with II SS. Pz. Corps and 2 SS. Panzer Division identified.	
T396/63, 66, 79. 11-12/12 13/12	Further Trupps involved in silence identified: XII SS. Panzer Corps, 1 and 12 SS. Panzer Divisions.	
<u>Move up to Final Positions.</u>		
T395/71 4/12 12/12	Sitrep under heading Army Group B lists Gruppe von MANTEUFFEL, 7th Army, Rest and Refitting Staff 716, and unspecified Kd. z.b.V.	Comment suggested "716" an error for "16". Sitrep too generalised, however, to point to any specific localities.
T400/10 15/12 16/12	Rest and Refitting Staff 16 boundary with Gruppe von MANTEUFFEL.	Comment pointed out close association Rest and Refitting Staff 16 with 6 Panzer Army, but no realisation that it was identical with the Army itself.
T400/48 16/12 16/12	Wireless silence I SS. Corps cancelled. Location SCHMIDTHEIM (F 16). Divs. subordinated 1 and 12 SS. Panzer, 277 and 212 V.G., 3 Para.	

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C. Rest and Refit of Formations not under 6 Pz. Army.

1. Panzer Divisions.

Ref.	Text	Comment
T348/7 14/10 25/10	Consignment for 2 Pz.Div. sent to Pz. Base NORTH, Unloading Station BERGISCH GLADBACH.	
T367/35 11/11 13/11	Short term repair scheme involving 2,9,11, 21,116 Pz. Divs., 17 SS. P.G., 12 V.G. Divisions.	All, except 21 Pz. and 17 SS.P.G. Divisions, now (24/12) committed in the offensive.
R.383/C/59M/T 26/11 4/12	for 17 SS. P.G. Division under heading Rest and Refit 6 Pz. Army.	17 SS. P.G. at present (24/12) not yet involved in 6 Pz. Army offensive.
T392/9 1/12 8/12	Rest and Refitting Staff 16 informed 8 tanks V with crews ready for loading to BERGISCH GLADBACH for 116 Pz. Div.	
T391/35 3/12 7/12	13 tanks V already taken over by Pz. Regt. 16 (116 Pz. Div.) had been blocked and handed over to 11 Pz. Div.	
T392/75 1/12 9/12	5 Panther tanks for 116 Pz. Div.	

2. Parachute Divisions. (Movements later than 1 December).

Ref.	Text	Comment
<u>5 Para. Div.</u>		
T396/18 3/12 12/12	Transport authority 7 Army notified of movements of elements 5 Parachute Division.	
T397/96 8/12 14/12	6 Para. Div. gives up M/T and armament for 5 Para. Div.	5 Parachute Div. (Army Group B).
T389/8 4/12 5/12	Para. Pz.Jg.Abt. 5 arrives in area of employment without certain W/T equipment.	No location indicated, but comment suggested OLDENBURG area for the division.
T390/25 3/12 7/12	2 Para. Division OLDENBURG.	

3 Para. Div.

T350/86 19/10 28/10	W/T equipment to OLDENZAAL for elements 3 Para. Div. resting and refitting.	
T370/95 15/11 17/11	3 Para. Div. ENSCHEDE (V 40).	

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Ref.	Text	Comment
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T378/88 24/11 25/11	3 Para. Div. subordinated to II SS. Pz. Corps for training purposes only.	
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T400/43 16/12 16/12	3 Para. Div. subordinated to I SS. Pz. Corps	
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3. Reorganisation of Higher Command.

Ref.	Text	Comment
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A. Formation of Army Group H.

T358/9 1/11 4/11	Heeresgruppe H being set up.	
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T363/20 3/11 9/11	Armeegruppe STUDENT mentioned under Heeresgruppe B.	
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T364/55 2/11 13/11	Composition of Army Group H given in terms of Railway numbers, plus 1 Parachute Army.	Equations 15 Army, 5 Pz. Army tentatively suggested.
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T375/83 7/11 22/11	Personnel elements Army Abt. SERBIA for inclusion in staff of Army Group H.	
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T369/14 11/11 15/11	Reference to setting up of Armeegruppen (plural) in message from Heeresgruppe H.	
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T372/67 13/11 19/11	Armee Gruppe CHRISTIANSEN formed from G.O.C. Armed Forces NETHERLANDS.	
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T374/106 15/11 21/11	Armee Abteilung KLEFFEL addressed via Army Group H.	Previously under Army Group NORTH.
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B. Relief of 5 Panzer Army by 15 Army.

T372/35 17/11 18/11	First mention of Gruppe MANTEUFFEL in Sitrep under Army Group B.	
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T385/23 26/11 1/12	Armee Gruppe von MANTEUFFEL mentioned under Heeresgruppe B.	This thought at the time to be temporary up-grading of Pz. Army 5.
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T388/26 3/12 4/12	Sitrep shows sector 15 Army apparently reduced.	
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T392/24 3/12 8/12	30 and 88 Corps under 15 Army.	Comment pointed out inconsistency with T388/26.
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Ref.	Text	Comment.
T392/65 3/12 9/12	15 Army addressed via Army Group B.	Comment on contrast 15 Army under Army Group H on 3/12. T392/24.
T398/37 5/12 14/12	Von ZANGEN acting G.O.C. Gruppe von MANTEUFFEL.	Comment sent later as AWL 3531. Conclusion that 15 Army was relieving 5 Pz. Army, but that process still incomplete. This supported by evidence from other sources.
<u>C. Release of Corps Staffs</u>		
T356/45 T357/48 2/11, 3/11 2/11, 3/11	} 58 Pz. Corps being relieved } by 89 Corps.	Only one subsequent reference to 58 Panzer Corps 22/11, no location (M33/T378/77), until appearance in offensive 18/12 (T402/78).
T367/114 13/11 14/11	Corps TRESLOW relieved 85 Corps as from 15/11.	No subsequent mention of 85 Corps until appearance in offensive 16/12 (T401/22).
T376/11 21/11 22/11	67 Corps replaced by 30 Corps.	67 Corps the right Corps of 15 Army in HOLLAND. Took part in offensive.
T375/114 21/11 22/11	2 SS. Corps no longer in former sector.	Previously under 15 Army in NIJMEGEN sector.
T377/35 23/11 23/11	6 Para. Div. in previous sector of 2 SS. Corps.	
T377/73 T378/42 24/11 24, 25/11	} 2 SS. Corps Flive ALFTER (F 43). } No subordinated troops.	
T378/41 24/11 24/11	67 Corps reserve of Army Group H.	
T386/58 27/11 3/12	Sigs. Abt. 453 KREFELD.	Comment: 53 Corps not identified since June when on Russian front; considered destroyed by W.O. Took part in offensive.
T386/46 2/12 2/12	Flive 67 Corps transferring.	Comment: Not clear whether Corps transferring or only the Flive.

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Ref.	Text	Comment
T386/55 2/12 3/12	Unspecified formation no longer under 12 SS. Panzer Corps.	
T395/71 4/12 12/12	47 Pz. Corps under Gruppe von MANTEUFFEL.	Last reference to 47 Pz. Corps before offensive.
T395/50 4/12 11/12	Corps FELDT to Army Group H, 67 Corps to Army Group B.	
T395/88 10/12 12/12	74 Corps under Gruppe MANTEUFFEL.	An extension of 15 Army area rather than move of Corps.
	<u>A Reserve of Infantry formed</u> (see also move up of 3 and 5 Para. Divs. above).	
T382/51 28/11 28/11	363 V.G. Division to be brought up from 67 Corps for 5 Panzer Army.	
T387/1 2/12 3/12	Unloading areas: 245 Div. N. of MULHOUSE 326 V.G. Division GEROLSTEIN (L28) BITBURG (L 15). Fuehrer Begleit Brigade TRABEN-TRARBACH (L 55) KIRN (L 83). 62 V.G. Div. WITTLICH (L 35). 719 V.G. Div. SAARLAUTERN. 560 V.G. Div. DENSBORN-SPEICHER (L 24). SS.Pz.Abt.501 - EUSKIRCHEN (F 33) 353 V.G.Div. ZUELPICH (F 23) - EUSKIRCHEN-BAAL (K 97). 347 V.G. Div. area SAARLAUTERN (Q 73). Assault Gun Brigade 200 TRABEN-TRARBACH. Army Engineer Bde. 47, MUNSTEREIFEL (F 31). Fuehrer SS. Begleit Bde., CFTENBURG (W 18).	This can be seen now to be part of the concentration for the offensive. But it is also very misleading. The V.G. divisions going to the ARDENNES are not high-quality units.
T392/49 3/12 8/12	1 V.G. Division addressed ZINGSHEIM (F 21) via 5 Panzer Army.	Another hint, not understood at the time. A comment pointed out that this was believed to be in 7 Army's area.

## 3. Contributory Evidence.

A. Requests for Fighter Protection for Troop Movements

T359/103  
5/11  
6/11

Area KYLLBURG (L 16) - KALL (F 11)  
GEROLSTEIN (L 28) - ELSLOPF (F 16)  
- BITBURG (L 15) - BERGHEIM (F 26).

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Ref.	Text	Comment
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T360/109 6/11 7/11	Area KALL (F 11) - TILBURG (unlocated) suggest KYLLBURG (I. 16).	
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*start proving*

T362/95 8/11 9/11	Area DUEREN, GEROLSTEIN, KYLLBURG, WITTLICH (L 35), BITBURG.	
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Similar requests for fighter protection for train-movements and unloadings occurred repeatedly in the first half of December. (T388/70, T390/84, T395/10, T394/1 etc.) in the areas MUENCHEN GLADBACH - ERKELENZ - GREVENBROICH - OSTERRATH (behind AACHEN sector), but also behind the front of the coming offensive - WITTLICH - BITBURG - BRUEHL - TRIER - HILLESHEIM. The night of 9/12 (T394/1) was outstanding, with 38 trains (direction unspecified, but pretty clearly arriving), KOCHEM - TRIER, DUEMPELFELD - HILLESHEIM, and ZUELPICH.

B. Formation of a Unit for a Special Undertaking in the West

T350/47 26/10 1/11	HITLER's orders for setting-up a special force for special undertaking in the West. Knowledge of English and American idiom essential for volunteers.	
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T357/45 31/10 3/11	Call for volunteers. To be sent to GRAFENWOEHR.	
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T375/20 19/11 22/11	M/T for Pz. Brigade 150 to GRAFENWOEHR.	
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C. Condition of 7 Army

T385/71 30/11 2/12	"Fighting strength of 89 and 344 Inf. Divs. weakened to an extraordinary extent so that condition of these divs. demands their early relief".	
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T387/82 3/12 4/12	"Continuous decrease in fighting strength of own troops ..... compelling us to put in reserves at present available".	
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/T391/11

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Ref. Text Comment

T391/11 Grading of Divisions:-5/12  
7/12

74 Corps:  
 353 Div. state (III)  
 344 Div. (IV)  
 89 Div. (IV)  
 272 Div. (III)  
 277 Div. (III)  
 66 Corps:  
 (18 V.G. Div.) (III)  
 26 Div. (III)  
 80 Corps:  
 352 Div. (III)  
 212 Div. (incomplete)

(III = Fully fit for defensive  
 employment.)

IV = Conditionally fit for  
 defensive employment.)

III A Note on German Signals Instructions and Precautions

- 1) On 10/12 a wireless silence was imposed on all SS. formations on the Western Front. This was less significant than it sounds, as such silences have been ordered on previous occasions. The security ban was however stricter than before, in that it did not exempt even divisions.
- 2) On 12/12 there was a general issue of new signals instructions in area of Jagdkorps II. These were to take effect from 0300/14/12 and concerned 2 Para. Korps, 1, 2, 12 SS. Pz. Korps, 30, 66, 67, 74, 80, 81, 86 and 88 Corps, with 1, 2, 9 and 12 SS. Pz. Divs. New signals instructions were also issued by the Jagdkorps, with effect from 14/12, to its subordinate G.A.F. Units. This, in retrospect, was clearly in preparation for the offensive. But similar general issues of signals instructions had taken place in ITALY and had borne no operational significance whatever, being simply a general re-organization.
- 3) The W/T silence already referred to was relaxed on 16/12, when Source reported telegrams to 1 SS. Pz. Korps, 47 Pz. Korps, 2 and 12 SS. Div. all stamped 1342-1350 and authorizing those H.Q.'s. to send KR messages. Similar instructions were sent to 1 SS. Pz. Div. at 0035/17/12.

/ Other formations

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Other formations must have received similar leave, for late on 17/12 the privilege was withdrawn again from 47 Pz. Korps, 74 Korps, 1 SS. Pz. Div. and 2 Pz. Div. This order of 16/12 was clearly the final starting-gun. But it was received too late for warning.

#### IV German Signals Intelligence

Ever since D-Day U.S. Signals have been of great assistance to the enemy. Scores of instances, "For Attention of Signals Security Officers", have been sent to Ministries and Commands, the last often with high priority; but with little noticeable result. It has been emphasized that, out of thirty odd U.S. Divisions in the West, the Germans have constantly known the locations, and often the intentions, of all but two or three. They knew that the Southern wing of U.S. 1st Army, on a front of some 80 miles, was mostly held either by new or by tired divisions.

On 11/11 Army Group B appreciated: "General: The enemy is weakening the right wing of 1 American Army (elements of 85 Div.) in favour of 3 American Army. Any plan for attack by them in the EIFEL is therefore unlikely". (T367/47, HP 6542.)

It is, in short, a little startling to find that the Germans had a better knowledge of U.S. Order of Battle from their Signals Intelligence than we had of German Order of Battle from Source.

#### V German Security Measures. The Phantom Armies

It is clear that high circles in the Wehrmacht have developed an extreme respect for Allied Intelligence and distrust for their own countrymen. They therefore decided before the present offensive that a certain amount of dust should be thrown in the eyes of all their subordinates below the highest rank. They had camouflaged the occupation of HUNGARY as an operation against guerillas. Now they gave false names, not merely to their intentions, but to Army Groups and Armies. This deception proved highly successful: indeed without it all their other precautions might well have proved vain.

/ As has been said,

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As has been said, the arrangement of Armies had been (North to South):

15 Army	(HOLLAND)
1 Para. Army	(HOLLAND)
5 Pz. Army	(AACHEN area)
7 Army	(DUIREN - TRIER)

with 6 SS. Pz. Army refitting behind KOELN - DUESSELDORF.

In broad outline, the offensive involved (not necessarily in this order):

- (1) Insertion of 6 SS. Pz. Army South of 5 Pz. Army.
- (2) Relief of 5 Pz. Army H.Q. (and 47 Pz. Korps) by 15 Army H.Q.
- (3) Leapfrogging of 5 Pz. Army H.Q. Southward, over 6 SS. Pz. Army, into a sector between it and 7 Army.

To disguise this:

- (1) 6 SS. Pz. Army was camouflaged as "Resting and Refitting Staff 16". Source even got hold of documents addressed to "6 SS. Pz. Army, and, for information, to Refitting Staff 16". As refitting was precisely what 6 SS. Pz. Army had been doing for weeks, that was extremely plausible. This alias was still in use as late on 25/12.
- (2) MANTEUFFEL, commanding 5 Pz. Army, was promoted to a bogus "Army Group", which took over also his Signals and his cover-name ERIKA.
- (3) Meanwhile 5 Pz. Army was stealing into position in the South under the sobriquet of "Feldjaeger Korps z.b.V.". On 18 /12 Army Group MANTEUFFEL was pretending to control 15 Army (T402/76): two days later, on 20/12, 5 Pz. Army was again openly bearing its old commander's name as "Armee MANTEUFFEL", as it attacked in the next sector but one to the South, on the left of 6 SS. Pz. Army (T405/37).
- (4) This elaborate "camouflaging of command authorities", as the Germans called it, was extended even to Railway Transport Offices. Here the disguises were allowed to lapse on 17/12 (T405/6).

It need hardly be added that in long documents this sham would have exposed itself: but in the short and allusive scraps seen by Source these fictitious H.Q.'s. proved smoke-screen enough.

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23- / B. Other Sources

~~TOP SECRET-ULTRA~~B. Other SourcesI 1. Indications that an offensive in the West was planned

Ref.	Text	Comments
(a) BAY/XL119 21/8 24/8	Japanese Minister quoting Vice-Minister Foreign Affairs: Germans could not take initiative and launch offensive on big scale before about two months.	The trouble with evidence from Japanese sources is that Japanese Ministers are less critical than some in believing what they are told -- as the Germans are aware.
(b) BAY/XL152 4/9 10/9	Japanese Ambassador after interview with HITLER and RIBBENTROP: when the one million new troops now being formed, together with units withdrawn from other fronts were ready, and as soon as replenishment of air force (now proceeding) was concluded, intention was to undertake great offensive in West (probably from November onwards).	
(c) BAY/HP113 16/11 23/11	Japanese Ambassador after interview with RIBBENTROP: RIBBENTROP stated offensive as soon as possible, to be directed primarily against West. Unable to name time.	

~~TOP SECRET - ULTRA~~II 2. The Parachute Landings

The only advance intelligence of the German offensive received in low-grade air codes was the following warning of the parachute landings (all times G.M.T.).

- 1) 16/12. 0415 and 0419 messages intercepted warning Flak Units that 90 Ju. 52's and 15 Ju. 88's were going from PADERBORN area to area 6° - 6° 30' E. to 50° 31' - 50° 45' N. and returning by the same route. These messages were cancelled at 0549.
- 2) 17/12. At 0042 and 0052 similar messages (with T.O.O. 0033 and 0041) were intercepted warning Flak Units that 90 Ju. 52's and 15 Ju. 88's were going from PADERBORN area to area 6° - 6° 30' E. and 50° 30' - 50° 45' N. and returning by same route to land at 0430. A further message referring to these two was intercepted at 0142. "Course North and West". The following action was taken:
  - 1) On 16/12:
    - (a) The Operational Watch B.P. phoned Fighter Command, Hut 3 (Air and Army), CANTERBURY, and CHEADLE, warning CHEADLE that this was not an ordinary transport operation. The information was passed to Hut 3, D.D.I.3 and D.D.I.4 by teleprinter O.P.I. by 0800 hours.
    - (b) CHEADLE put the three messages out at 0450, 0455, 0508 to CANTERBURY for the broadcast to R.A.F. Units in FRANCE.
    - (c) Operational Watch B.P. put out a considered version in G.A.G. teleprints to CANTERBURY for the broadcast to R.A.F. Units in FRANCE, to Det. A. for SHAEF A/C of S/A-2, CHEADLE D.O., A.I.4.B., A.I.3.B., and **MI 44** Major OWEN of Lt. Col. BROWN's party. The teleprints were received at CANTERBURY at 1000 hours (first two messages), 1030 hours third message.
  - 2) On 17/12 similar action was taken: CHEADLE put out the first two messages at 0117 and the third at 0224. G.A.G. teleprints were received at CANTERBURY at 0155 hours for first two messages and 0311 hours for third message.

It would appear therefore that the cancelled messages of 16/12 gave a day's warning of the operation and that the messages referring to the operation itself were dispatched to Hut 3 and R.A.F. Units in FRANCE within half an hour of their receipt here. R.A.F. H.Q's. in FRANCE are responsible for passing information of interest to the corresponding Army H.Q's.

It should also be pointed out that all R.A.F. Field Units with Groups and the main American Field Unit with the 9th Air Force should have taken and decoded the German messages (it is known that 8th Group took the messages on 16/12).

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C. Some Conclusions1. The Distortion of Restrospect

One word of caution seems necessary at the outset, if injustice is not to be done to many responsible for appreciating this intelligence. There is here collected the evidence that pointed to a German offensive in the ARDENNES. There is not much here of the evidence that pointed to German offensives elsewhere. Where there was a tangled wood of detail, there are now left standing only the few relevant trees: it is not easy to imagine how difficult it was then to find the way. And yet, had the Germans really attacked in the AACHEN sector, it would not be very difficult to assemble substantial reasons why they should have attacked there and nowhere else. //

2. Alternative Appreciations

It is however hard not to feel, if a brief generalization may be allowed, that there does exist a besetting tendency in Intelligence, of which the present is a serious example - the tendency to become too wedded to one view of enemy intentions. It had grown to be generally believed that the Germans would counter-attack, head-on, when we had pushed them hard enough, probably in the ROER sector with its dams. This idea died hard; and it killed other truer ideas of what was really going on. It is less impressive, no doubt, to deal always in alternatives, to say "There are 4 chances out of 5 that the Germans will do A; yet there is still 1 in 5 that they will do B". But unless Intelligence is perpetually ready to entertain all the alternatives, it sees only the evidence that favours the chosen view; and, unconsciously, other indications are, not explained, but explained away.

3. Reliance on Source

There is a risk of relying too much on Source. His very successes in the past constitute a danger, if they lead to waiting for further information, because "Source will tell us that", or to doubting the likelihood of something happening because "Source would have told us that". He told us all about ROMMEL's attack on the MARETH LINE: but before the KASSERINE PASS offensive we had failed, as here, to divine where the blow that we saw was coming, would finally fall. There is always an element of capriciousness and luck, which the steady flow of our intelligence tends at times to leave forgotten. The evidence given above was passed in its abundance to those responsible. But in its very abundance, in its very authenticity, lie dangers. It would be interesting, for example, to know how much reconnaissance was flown over the EIFEL sector on the 1st Army Front. Source gave all he knew: but he does not always know everything. //



Improved German Security

German suspicions of Allied Intelligence may be lulled again by their present success. Indeed their security measures have for years shown a repeated oscillation between sudden spurts of precaution and relapses into laziness and laxity. Still the general level of security definitely rises, and it is always possible that, having succeeded at last in surprising us, they may think the precautions taken well worth repetition. In any case it has to be faced that, in future documents produced by Source may need far more careful scrutiny for occasional booby-traps, mare's nests, and red herrings. On the other hand if we improve the Germans, they improve us. This time their phantom armies enjoyed a surprise success: but the surprise-value of such stratagems is less easy to repeat.

5. Allied Insecurity

The Germans have this time prevented us from knowing enough about them; but we have not prevented them from knowing far too much about us. This leakage is continuing as badly as ever, since the battle began. About other points in this paper, endless argument is possible: no one will dispute the disastrous absurdity of handing the enemy, month after month, with open eyes and open hands, our own Order of Battle.

Distribution

The Director (5 copies)

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