



Lecture Notes July 16, 38

The Führer appears to consider a violent solution to the Sudeten German question through an invasion of Czechoslovakia unavoidable; this notion is reinforced by irresponsible, radical elements around him. There are divided opinions on Göring's position. Some believe he recognizes how earnest the situation is and is attempting to exert a calming influence on the Führer, whereas others think he is playing a two-faced game as in the case of Blomberg and Fritsch, and will cave in when he faces the Führer.

All upright and earnest German men in responsible positions in the state must feel called upon and obliged to use all conceivable means, up to the final consequence, to avert a war against Czechoslovakia, the effects of which will necessarily lead to a world war, which would mean the Finis Germaniae.

The highest leaders in the Wehrmacht are primarily called upon and able to do so, for the Wehrmacht is the government's executive instrument of power in the implementation of a war.

Final decisions about the nation's existence are at stake here; history will incriminate these leaders with bloodguilt if they do not act according to their specialist and political knowledge and conscience.

Their soldierly obedience reaches its limit when their knowledge, their conscience, and their responsibility forbid carrying out an order.

Should their advice and warnings not be heeded in such a situation, then they have the right and the duty, to the nation and to history, to step down from their offices.

If they all act in this way with united will, it is impossible to carry out an act of war. They will thus have safeguarded their fatherland from the worst, from its downfall.

If a soldier in a most senior position in such times sees his duties and tasks only within the limited parameters of his military orders, without being aware of his highest responsibility to the entire nation, he shows a lack of greatness and of recognition of duty.

Unusual times call for unusual actions!

Other upright men in responsible positions in the state outside the Wehrmacht will join us on their way.

If we keep our eyes and ears open, if we do not fool ourselves with false figures, if we do not live in the intoxication of an ideology, then we can only come to the conclusion that we are currently not equipped for a war in terms of defense policy (leadership, training, and equipment), economic policy, or the general mood.

The thought of a "Blitzkrieg" (after 2 days in Prague?) is a nonsensical dream; one ought to have learned from modern martial history that surprise attacks have rarely ever led to lasting success.

Our preparations (West) are now or are becoming so clearly recognizable that we must count on preventive measures by the enemies. The war propaganda in the foreign press has already begun. (Articles: Konrad - Reichenau - Pierre Cot).

In the event that objections by appointed men should succeed in preventing a war, we must anticipate considerable domestic tensions.

On the radical side, there will be declarations that the implementation of the Führer's intent failed due to the incapability of the Wehrmacht and its leaders. Renewed and greater defamation will set in. In this case, we must keep a watchful eye and ear on developments.

The Führer is said to have stated in private: I still have to wage war against Czechoslovakia with the old generals; I will wage war against England and France with a new leadership.

We will therefore have to decide, in direct or subsequent connection with an objection, to initiate a clarifying dispute between the Wehrmacht and the SS.

In this context, a brutally clear description of the true mood among the people would also be appropriate, a mood essentially provoked by the rising mandarinism in the Third Reich.

On the timing of these steps:

We can probably expect a note from the French and the English, perhaps still in a conciliatory tone, to arrive in the summer months (August), to be followed after a certain interval by a note written in the form of an ultimatum, which no longer allows the government to evade or give in; that is, if the enemy does not take preventive measures in the first place.

As a result, the most favorable moment for possible measures seems to be: directly after receipt of the first note.

Finally, I shall allow myself to suggest another consideration: whether we ought not to consciously take the position that the Führer's current opinion and the measures ordered by him should be seen only as a great bluff aimed at the opponent, and his behavior is set to precisely this purpose: i.e., we cannot believe that the measures ordered are really meant to lead to a war, but consider them merely a brilliant bluff.

However, taking this attitude could mean a dangerous game.

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