

The Führer	Führer Headquarters
November 3, 1943	27 copies
Directive No. 51	

The hard and costly struggle against Bolshevism during the last two and a half years, which has involved the bulk of our military strength in the East, has demanded extreme exertions. The greatness of the danger and the general situation demanded it. But the situation has since changed. The danger in the East remains, but a greater danger now appears in the West an Anglo-Saxon landing! In the East, the vast extent of the territory makes it possible for us to lose ground, even on a large scale, without a fatal blow being dealt to the nervous system of Germany.

It is very different in the West! Should the enemy succeed in breaching our defenses on a wide front here, the immediate consequences would be unpredictable. Everything indicates that the enemy will launch an offensive against the Western front of Europe, at the latest in the spring, perhaps even earlier.

I can therefore no longer take responsibility for further weakening the West, in favor of other theaters of war. I have therefore decided to reinforce its defenses, particularly those places from which the long-range bombardment of England will begin. For it is here that the enemy must and will attack, and it is here -- unless all indications are misleading -- that the decisive battle against the landing forces will be fought.

Holding and diversionary attacks are to be expected on other fronts. A large-scale attack on Denmark is also not out of the question. From a naval point of view such an attack would be more difficult to deliver, nor could it be as effectively supported by air, but if successful, its political and operational repercussions would be very great.

At the beginning of the battle the whole offensive strength of the enemy is bound to be thrown against our forces holding the coast-line. Only by intensive construction, which means straining our available manpower and materials at home and in the occupied territories to the limit, can we strengthen our coastal defenses in the short time which probably remains.

The ground weapons which will shortly reach Denmark and the occupied areas in the West (heavy anti-tank guns, immobile tanks to be sunk in emplacements, coastal artillery, artillery against landing troops, mines, etc.) will be concentrated at strong-points in the most threatened areas on the coast. Because of this must face the fact that the defenses of less threatened sectors cannot be improved in the near future.

Should the enemy, by assembling all his forces, succeed in landing, he must be met with a counterattack delivered with all our weight. The problem will be by the rapid concentration of adequate forces and material, and by intensive training, to form the large units available to us into an offensive reserve of high fighting quality, attacking power, and mobility, whose counterattack will prevent the enemy from exploiting the landing, and throw him back into the sea.

Moreover, careful and detailed emergency plans must be drawn up so that everything we have in Germany, and in the coastal areas which have not been attacked, and which is in any way capable of action, is hurled immediately against the invading enemy.

The Luftwaffe and Navy must go into action against the heavy attacks which we must expect by air and sea with all the forces at their disposal, regardless of the losses.

I therefore order as follows:

A. Army

1. The Chief of the Army General Staff and the Inspector General of Panzer Troops will submit to me without delay a plan for the distribution, within the next three months, of weapons, tanks, self-propelled guns, motor vehicles, and ammunition on the Western front and in Denmark, in accordance with the requirements of the new situation.

The plan will rest on the following basic principles:

(a) All Panzer and Panzer Grenadier divisions in the West will be assured of adequate mobility, and each will be equipped with 93 Mark IV tanks or self-propelled guns, and with strong anti-tank weapons by the end of December 1943.

The 20th Luftwaffe Field Division will be converted into an effective mobile offensive formation by the allocation of self-propelled artillery before the end of 1943.

SS Panzer Grenadier Division "HJ" [Hitler Youth], 21st Panzer Division, and the infantry and reserve divisions stationed in Jutland will be brought up to full armed strength with speed.

(b) There will be a further reinforcement with Mk. IV self-propelled guns and heavy anti-tank guns of Panzer divisions in reserve in the West and in Denmark, and of the self-propelled artillery training unit in Denmark.

(c) A monthly allocation of a hundred heavy anti-tank guns Mks. 40 and 43 (of which half will be mobile), for the months of November and December, in addition to the heavy anti-tank guns, will be made to the newly raised formations in the West.

(d) An increased allocation of weapons (including about 1,000 machine guns) will be made to improve the equipment of ground forces engaged in coastal defense in the West and in Denmark, and to coordinate the equipment of units which are to be withdrawn from sectors not under attack.

(e) A liberal supply of short-range anti-tank weapons will be granted to formations stationed in threatened areas.

(f) The firepower in artillery and anti-tank guns of formations stationed in Denmark, and on the coasts of occupied territories in the West, will be increased, and Army artillery will be strengthened.

2. No units or formations stationed in the West and in Denmark, nor any of the newly raised self-propelled armored artillery or anti-tank units in the West, will be withdrawn to other fronts without my approval.

The Chief of the Army General Staff and the Inspector General of Panzer Troops will report to me, through the High Command of the Armed Forces (Operations Staff), when the equipment of armored units, self-propelled artillery units, and light anti-tank units and companies is complete.

3. Commander-in-Chief West will decide which additional formations from sectors of the front that have not been under attack can be moved up and made capable of an offensive role, by a timetable of exercises in the field and similar training measures. In this connection, I insist that areas unlikely to be threatened should be ruthlessly stripped of all except the smallest forces essential for guard duties. In areas from which these reserves are drawn, units will be formed from security and emergency forces for duties of surveillance and protection. Our labour units employed on construction will open the lines of communication which will probably be destroyed by the enemy, employing for this the help of the local population on an extensive scale.

4. The Commander of German troops in Denmark will adopt the measures outlined in paragraph 3 for the area under his command.

5. The Chief of Army Equipment and Commander of the Replacement Army will raise battle groups of regimental strength in the Home Defence area from training depots, troops under instruction, army schools, training battalions and recuperative establishments. These will form security and engineer-construction battalions, and will be ready, on receipt of special orders, to move within forty-eight hours of being called up.

In addition, all further personnel available will be incorporated in infantry units and equipped with such weapons as are available, so that they may immediately replace the heavy casualties to be expected.

B. Luftwaffe

In view of the new situation, the offensive and defensive power of formations of the Luftwaffe stationed in the West and in Denmark will be increased. Plans will be drawn up to ensure that all forces available and suitable for defensive operations will be taken from flying units and mobile anti-aircraft artillery units engaged in Home defense, from schools and training units in the Home Defense area, and will be employed in the West, and if necessary in Denmark.

Ground establishments in Southern Norway, Denmark, Northwestern Germany, and the West will be organised and supplied so that, by the largest possible degree of decentralisation, our own units are not exposed to enemy bombing at the beginning of large-scale operations, and the weight of the enemy attack will be effectively broken up. This applies particularly to our fighter forces, whose ability to go into action must be increased by the establishment of a number of emergency airfields. Particular attention will be paid to good camouflage. In this connection also I expect all possible forces to be made available for action regardless of the circumstances, by stripping less threatened areas of their troops.

C. Navy

The Navy will draw up plans for bringing into action naval forces capable of attacking the enemy landing fleet with all their strength. Coastal defences under construction will be completed with all possible speed, and the establishment of additional coastal batteries and the laying of further obstacles on the flanks will be considered.

Preparations will be made for the employment of all ranks capable of fighting, from schools, train-

ing establishments, and other land establishments, so that they may be deployed with the least possible delay, if only on security duties, in the battle area where enemy landings have taken place.

In the naval plans for strengthening defenses in the West, special attention will be given to defense against enemy landing in Norway or Denmark. In this connection, I attach particular importance to plans for using large numbers of submarines in the northern sea areas. A temporary diminution of submarine forces in the Atlantic must be accepted.

D. SS

The Reichsfuehrer SS will test the preparedness of units of the Waffen SS and Police for operational, security, and guard duties. Preparations will be made to raise battle-trained formations for operational and security duties from training, reserve and recuperative establishments, and from schools and other units in the Home Defence Area.

E. Commanders-in-Chief of the branches of the Armed Forces, the Reichsfuehrer SS, the Chief of the Army General Staff, Commander-in-Chief West, the Chief of Army Equipment and Commanding General of Replacement Army, the Inspector-General of Panzer Troops, and the Commander of German troops in Denmark will report to me by the 15th November the steps taken, and those which they propose to take.

I expect all staffs concerned to exert every effort during the time which still remain in preparation for the expected decisive battle in the West.

All those responsible will ensure that time and manpower are not wasted in dealing with questions of jurisdiction, but that they are employed in increasing our powers of defense and attack.



signed: ADOLF HITLER

Teleprint	
High Command of the Armed Forces (Operations Staff)	
Qu. I (Transport)	February 5, 1945
Subject: Transport of refugees from the East to Denmark.	

The Fuhrer issued the following orders on February 4, 1945:

In order to relieve the transport situation in the Reich immediately, I order as follows: Our compatriots temporarily moved back from the Eastern part of the Reich will be accommodated in Denmark as well as in the Reich. In particular, civilians will be evacuated to Denmark who:

1. Can be moved by the Navy by sea, without prejudice to the day-to-day movement of troops and supplies, or who:
2. Have been landed in Western Baltic ports, including Stettin and Swinemunde, and must be moved from there by rail.

The Reich Plenipotentiary will cooperate with the local Danish authorities in arranging suitable accommodation for evacuated civilians. The Armed Forces will afford all possible assistance in this respect.



signed: ADOLF HITLER

Comment by the High Command of the Armed Forces for the Armed Forces:

The Armed Forces will make special efforts to help by making use of all means of transport returning west, by sea, rail, or road; by assistance with rations, medical care, and arrangements for accommodation at intermediate points on the journey.

pp. signed WINTER,
Lieutenant General and Acting Chief of the High Command of the Armed Forces, Operations Staff.

Fuehrer Headquarters			
23 March 1942	Top Secret	25 Copies	Copy No. ...
The Fuehrer and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces			
OKW/WFSt/Op.Nr.: 001042 g.Kdos.		Directive No. 40	
Subj: Command Organization of the Coasts			

General Situation:

In the days to come the coasts of Europe will be seriously exposed to the danger of enemy landings.

The enemy's choice of time and place for landing operations will not be based solely on strategic considerations. Reverses in other theaters of operations, obligations toward his allies, and political motives may prompt the enemy to arrive at decisions that would be unlikely to result from purely military deliberations.

Even enemy landing operations with limited objectives will--insofar as the enemy does establish himself on the coast at all--seriously affect our own plans in any case. They will disrupt our coast-wise shipping and tie down strong Army and Luftwaffe forces which thereby would become unavailable for commitment at critical points. Particularly grave dangers will arise if the enemy succeeds in taking our airfields, or in establishing airbases in the territory that he has captured.

Moreover, our military installations and war industries that are in many instances located along or close to the coast, and which in part have valuable equipment, invite local raids by the enemy.

Special attention must be paid to British preparations for landings on the open coast, for which numerous armored landing craft suitable for the transportation of combat vehicles and heavy weapons are available. Large-scale parachute and glider operations are likewise to be expected.

General Tactical Instructions for Coastal Defense:

Coastal defense is a task for the Armed Forces, and requires particularly close and complete co-operation of all the services.

Timely recognition of the preparations, assembly, and approach of the enemy for a landing operation must be the goal of the intelligence service as well as that of continual reconnaissance by Navy and Luftwaffe.

Embarkation operations or transport fleets at sea must subsequently be the target for the concentration of all suitable air and naval forces, with the object of destroying the enemy as far off our coast as possible.

However, because the enemy may employ skillful deception and take advantage of poor visibility, thereby catching us completely by surprise, all troops that might be exposed to such surprise operations must always be fully prepared for defensive action.

Counteracting the well-known tendency of the troops to relax their alertness as time goes on will be one of the most important command functions.

Recent battle experiences have taught us that in fighting for the beaches--which include coastal waters within the range of medium coastal artillery--responsibility for the preparation and execution of defensive operations must unequivocally and unreservedly be concentrated in the hands of one man. All available forces and equipment of the several services, the organizations and formations outside of the armed forces, as well as the German civil agencies in the zone of operations will be committed by the responsible commander for the destruction of enemy transport facilities and invasion forces. That commitment must lead to the collapse of the enemy attack before, if possible, but at the latest upon the actual landing.

An immediate counterattack must annihilate landed enemy forces, or throw them back into the sea. All instruments of warfare--regardless of the service, or the formation outside of the armed forces to which they might belong--are to be jointly committed toward that end. Nevertheless, shore-based Navy supply establishments must not be hampered in their essential functions, nor Luftwaffe ground organizations and Flak protection of airfields impaired in their efficiency, unless they have become directly affected by ground combat operations.

No headquarters and no unit may initiate a retrograde movement in such a situation. Wherever Germans are committed on or near the coast, they must be armed and trained for active combat.

The enemy must be kept from establishing himself on any island which in enemy hands would constitute a threat to the mainland or coastwise shipping.

Disposition of forces and improvement of fortifications are to be so made that the main defensive effort lies in those coastal sectors that are the most probable sites for enemy landings (fortified areas).

Those remaining coastal sectors that are vulnerable to coups de main of even small units must be protected by means of a strongpoint type of defense, utilizing, if possible, the support of shore batteries. All installations of military and military-economic importance will be included in that strongpoint defense system.

The same rules apply to offshore islands. Coastal sectors that are less endangered will be patrolled.

The several services will establish a uniform definition of coastal sectors, if necessary on the basis of a final decision on the part of the responsible commander named in III.) 1.) below.

By means of proportionate allocation of forces, improvement of positions (perimeter defense), and stockpiling of supplies, the fortified areas and strongpoints must be enabled to hold out even against superior enemy forces for extended periods of time.

Fortified areas and strongpoints are to be held to the last. They must never be forced to surrender because of a shortage of ammunition, rations, or water.

The commander responsible according to III.) 1.) below, issues orders for coastal security, and assures a speedy evaluation, collation, and dissemination to authorized headquarters and civil agencies of intelligence procured by all the services.

Upon the first indication of an imminent enemy operation, that commander is authorized to issue the necessary orders for unified and complementary reconnaissance by sea and air.

All elements stationed in the vicinity of the coast, whether headquarters or units of the Armed Forces, or organizations or formations outside of the Armed Forces, will forego the niceties of peacetime protocol. Their quarters, security measures, equipment, state of alert, and utilization of local resources will be governed solely by the necessity of countering every enemy raid with the utmost speed and force. Wherever the military situation demands, the civilian population will be evacuated at once.

Command:

The following authorities are responsible for the preparation and conduct of defense on coasts under German control:

- in the Eastern Theater of Operations (excluding Finland), the army commanders designated by OKH;
- in the coastal sector under the control of Army Lapland, the Commanding General of Army Lapland;
- in Norway, the Armed Forces Commander, Norway;
- in Denmark, the Commander of German Troops in Denmark;
- in the occupied West (including the Netherlands), the Commander in Chief West;
In matters pertaining to coastal defense, the commanders mentioned in categories d) and e) above are under the direct control of OKW.
- in the Balkans (including the occupied islands), the Armed Forces Commander Southeast;
- in the Baltic and the Ukraine, the Armed Forces Commanders Baltic and Ukraine;
- in the Zone of Interior, the commanding admirals.

Within the framework of coastal defense missions, the commanders designated in III.) 1.) above, will have command authority over tactical headquarters of the services, the German civil authorities as well as units and organizations outside of the armed forces that are located within their respective areas. In exercising that authority, the commanders will issue tactical, organizational, and supply orders necessary for coastal defense, and insure their execution. They will influence training to whatever extent is necessary for preparing their forces for ground operations. The required data will be put at their disposal.

Orders and measures implementing this directive will give priority to the following:

- inclusion within fortified areas or strongpoints of all installations important militarily or to the war economy, particularly those of the Navy (submarine bases) and the Luftwaffe;

- unified direction of coastal surveillance;
- infantry defenses of fortified areas and strongpoints;
- infantry defenses of isolated installations outside of fortified areas and strongpoints, such as coastal patrol and aircraft warning stations;
- artillery defenses against ground targets (in installing new shore batteries and displacing those in position, the requirements of naval warfare will receive priority);
- defense preparedness of fortified establishments, their structural improvement, and the stockpiling of reserve supplies, as well as defensive preparedness and stockpiling of supplies in isolated installations outside of those establishments (including supply with all weapons necessary for defense, mines, hand grenades, flame throwers, obstacle material, and similar items);
- signal communications;
- tests of the state of alert as well as infantry and artillery training within the framework of the defensive missions.

Similar authority will be vested in the commanders of local headquarters down to sector commands, insofar as they have been made responsible for the defense of coastal sectors.

The commanders enumerated in III.) 1.) above, will generally confer such responsibilities on commanding generals of army divisions that are committed for coastal defense, and in Crete, on the Fortress Commander Crete.

In individual sectors and subsectors, and particularly in establishments that have definitely been designated as air or naval bases, the local Luftwaffe or Navy commanders are to be put in charge of the entire defense, insofar as their other missions permit them to assume those responsibilities.

Naval and strategic air forces are subject to the control of the Navy or Luftwaffe, respectively. However, in case of enemy attacks on the coast they are within the framework of their tactical capabilities bound to comply with requests from the commanders responsible for defensive operations. For that reason they must be included in the exchange of military intelligence, in preparation for their future employment. Close contact must be maintained with their respective higher headquarters.

Special missions of the several services within the framework of coastal defense:

Navy:

organization and protection of coastwise shipping; training and commitment of the entire coastal artillery against sea targets;

commitment of naval forces.

Luftwaffe:

air defense in the coastal areas.

This mission does not affect the right of local defense commanders to direct the assembly of Flak artillery suited and available for commitment against enemy invasion forces.

improvement of the Luftwaffe ground organization and its protection against air and surprise ground attacks on airfields that have not been sufficiently protected by their inclusion in the coastal defense system.

commitment of strategic air forces.

Instances of overlapping control resulting from those special missions must be accepted as unavoidable.

As of 1 April 1942, all instructions and orders not in agreement with the present directive are rescinded.

New combat directives issued by the responsible commander pursuant to my directive will be submitted to me through OKW.

Two handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature on the left is a stylized, cursive 'H'. The second signature on the right is more complex and dense, also appearing to be a stylized 'H' or similar monogram.

signed: Adolf Hitler