

SECRET

DECLASSIFIED AND RELEASED BY
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
SOURCE METHOD EXEMPTION 3B26
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
DATE 2006

General Adolf Heusinger

1. General Heusinger is Inspector General of the West German Armed Forces, a position roughly equivalent to our Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He was born in Holzminden on the Weser on 4 August 1897, and is a member of an old Brunswick family of theologians and philologists. He and his wife Gerda have two grown daughters.

2. A career army officer, the 62-year-old Heusinger entered the army during World War I as a private. Commissioned a second lieutenant in 1916, he was captured by the British a year later while serving as an infantry platoon leader in France. After his release from captivity in England, Heusinger entered the Reichswehr. Between 1931 and 1934 Heusinger was assigned to the Operations Training Division of the Truppenamt (in reality the general staff forbidden by the Versailles Treaty) in the Defense Ministry. In 1937 he was assigned to the Plans and Operations Division of the Army General Staff, the division charged with operational responsibility for planning the occupation of Austria, the Sudetenland, the interior of Czechoslovakia and Memel, as well as the Polish, French, Balkan and first stages of the Russian campaigns. From 1937 until 1940 Heusinger was first assistant to the chief of the division, and from 1940 until 1944 he served as its chief. By 1936 he had achieved his majority; thereafter, successive promotions advanced him to Lieutenant Colonel in 1939, Colonel in 1940, Brigadier General in 1941, and Major General in 1943. On July 20, 1944, Heusinger was standing beside Hitler when the Stauffenberg bomb was detonated. Wounded by splinters from the explosion, he was hospitalized briefly and then taken to a Gestapo prison when it became known that he was aware that preparations were being made for a coup. After admitting to the Gestapo that he had not approved of Hitler's military decisions and wished that the Fuehrer would return the supreme command to the soldiers, he was released for lack of evidence and retired.

3. Upon surrendering to U. S. Army authorities in May 1945, the question of his implication as a war criminal arose in connection with certain orders he signed and forwarded which sealed the fate of captured Russian political indoctrination officers and Allied commandos. However, in view of Heusinger's cooperative attitude at Nuernberg and the fact that he had only initialed the orders in transmittal, no action was undertaken. Instead, Heusinger served as a research consultant without pay for the Office of the United States Chief of Counsel for War Crimes at Nuernberg periodically between 1945 and 1948.

SECRET

- 2 -

4. In 1947 he joined General Gehlen's intelligence organization. As chief of Gehlen's evaluation group, Heusinger won the respect of both his American and German colleagues for his professional competence and personal integrity. The excellence of Gehlen's evaluation staff today is due, in some measure, to Heusinger's supervision from 1947 until 1951. At one time, CIA representatives seriously considered Heusinger for Gehlen's position. Heusinger remained on General Gehlen's staff, at the latter's request, until his appointment to the Blank Office in the fall of 1951. During 1950 in his dual role as unofficial military advisor and senior officer of a U. S. subsidized West German intelligence organization, Heusinger was an influential representative of U. S. interests in both German remilitarization and the Gehlen group. However, with his assignment to Bonn and return to his military career, Heusinger has gradually dissociated himself from intelligence affairs. From time to time, owing to his personal loyalty to Gehlen and his genuine interest in the future of the Gehlen organization, Heusinger has been a helpful mediator between Gehlen and his adversaries in the Bonn Government. He has also kept Gehlen apprised of governmental developments relating to the future of German intelligence. At the same time, Heusinger has continued to consult with and confide in CIA representatives with whom he was associated as a member of the Gehlen organization. He has voluntarily kept us informed, reporting with remarkable candor, on political, military and intelligence matters of interest to U. S. policy makers. CIA representatives have found Heusinger's political views clearly in the interest of the U. S.

5. Owing to his long career as a General Staff officer, Heusinger has been deeply interested in German remilitarization. He has, however, remained aloof from the political intrigues of the various groups of former German officers agitating for West German rearmament and recognition from the Bonn Government. As a result, in the fall of 1951 Heusinger emerged as a ranking representative of moderate elements of the former German officers corps and Adenauer, with Schumacher's approval, appointed him to an advisory committee established to initiate consultative liaison with Allied military authorities. In this quasi-official capacity as military spokesman for Chancellor Adenauer, Heusinger had several conferences with Mr. McCloy, General George P. Hays, Mr. Samuel Reber and Dr. Conant. On 22 January 1951, Adenauer, Heusinger and General Hans Speidel were the guests of Mr. McCloy at a dinner in honor of General Eisenhower. On this occasion, Eisenhower singled out Heusinger and Speidel to explain his 1945 views on German generals and to assure them of his high regard for the German professional soldier and of his interest in the integration of West German Armed Forces into the European Defense Community. This meeting left a profound impression on Heusinger who felt Eisenhower shared his optimism for the future of West German contingents in the defense of Europe.

ET

SECRET

- 3 -

6. By the fall of 1951, Heusinger was officially established in the office of Theodor Blank as top military advisor. In the summer of 1952 he was designated coordinator of German military defense planning. In this position he was a deft mediator between the Adenauer Government, the Socialist Party, former German officers groups, and Allied military authorities. Heusinger became increasingly preoccupied with his official duties in the Blank Office and further removed from the affairs of General Gehlen. In 1957, Heusinger was promoted to rank of full general and was appointed Inspector General of the West German armed forces, a position he continues to hold.

SECRET