

Operation Sunrise:

America's OSS, Swiss Intelligence, and the German Surrender 1945

*by Stephen P. Halbrook**

Operation Sunrise was a cooperative effort of American and Swiss intelligence services which led to the unconditional surrender of the German Wehrmacht forces in Northern Italy and Western Austria on May 2, 1945. General Heinrich von Vietinghoff, Commander-in-Chief of the Southwest Command and of Army Group C, surrendered nearly a million soldiers, the strongest remaining German force. This was the first great surrender of German forces to the Allies, and became a strong impetus for the final Allied victory over Nazi Germany on May 8, Victory in Europe (VE) Day. Operation Sunrise helped to nip in the bud Nazi aspirations for guerilla resistance in an Alpine redoubt.

Sunrise, sometimes referred to as "Crossword," has special significance today beyond the sixtieth anniversary of the German surrender. Despite Switzerland's formal neutrality, Swiss intelligence agents aggressively facilitated American efforts to end the war. Ironically, the efforts of key U.S. intelligence agents on the ground to orchestrate the surrender were hampered and almost scuttled by leaders in Washington to appease Joseph Stalin, who wished to delay the surrender in the West so that Soviet forces could grab more territory in the East.

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Cartography by Mapping Solutions, Alaska.

Source: “Europe at the Beginning of December 1941,” in *Germany and the Second World War*, edited by the Research Institute for Military History (Potsdam, Germany). Volume IV, *The Attack on the Soviet Union*, by Horst Boog, Jürgen Förster, Joachim Hoffmann, Ernst Klink, Rolf-Dieter Müller, and Gerd R. Ueberschär (Clarendon Press: Oxford), 1998.

The key players in the Sunrise drama were Allen Dulles,¹ head of the U.S. Office of Strategic Services (OSS)² stationed in Bern; Major Max Waibel³ of the Swiss Army Intelligence branch Nachrichtensammelstelle I “Rigi”; and SS-Obergruppenführer Karl Wolff,⁴ head of the German police, the Gestapo, and SD intelligence in Italy. This study traces Operation Sunrise from the American perspective primarily through contemporaneous OSS dispatches.⁵

While several peace feelers preceded Sunrise, Dulles and his assistant Gero von Gaevernitz dated its origin as February 23, 1945.⁶ The intelligence cables passing that day between OSS Bern and Allied Forces Headquarters in Caserta, Italy,⁷ were distilled into a message from OSS Director William “Wild Bill” Donovan to President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Referring to information from Alexander von Neurath, German Consul at Lugano, Switzerland, as provided in a personal meeting with Dulles, Donovan told Roosevelt:

This official declares that [Field] Marshal [Albert] Kesselring and Rudolph Rahn, Ambassador to the

¹ Allen Dulles, *The Secret Surrender* (N.Y.: Harper & Row, 1966) (book based primarily on OSS report prepared just weeks after the surrender). See also Bradley F. Smith & Elena Agarossi, *Operation Sunrise* (London: André Deutsch, 1979); James Srodes, *Allen Dulles: Master of Spies* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery, 1999).

² See R. Harris Smith, *OSS: The Secret History of America's First Central Intelligence Agency* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972); Bradley F. Smith, *The Shadow Warriors: O.S.S. and the Origins of the C.I.A.* (N.Y.: Basic Books, 1983).

³ Max Waibel, *Operation Sunrise: 1945 Kapitulation in Norditalien* (Basel: Helbing & Lichtenhahn Verlag, 1981; reprint: Schaffhausen: Novalis Verlag, 2002). On Swiss intelligence, including references to Sunrise, see Pierre Th. Braunschweig, *Secret Channel to Berlin* (Philadelphia: Casemate, 2004); Jon Kimche, *Spying for Peace* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1961).

⁴ Wolff wrote no memoirs, but one of his Sunrise colleagues did. Eugen Dollmann, *Call Me Coward* (London: William Kimber, 1956). See also Shraga Elam, *Hitlers Fälscher* (Wien: Verlag Carl Ueberreuter, 2000), pp. 103-119.

⁵ Unless attributed to another source, all archival citations below are to the U.S. National Archives at College Park, Md.

⁶ Summary of the Operation SUNRISE, 15 June 1945. For the Commanding Officer: Reid M. Denis, Lt. A/C, Secretariat. Record Group 226, Entry 139, Box 60, Folder 553 - Sunrise. Hereafter cited “Summary of the Operation Sunrise.”

⁷ Telegram 5727, Feb. 23, 1945. Neal H. Peterson ed., *From Hitler's Doorstep: The Wartime Intelligence Reports of Allen Dulles, 1942-1945* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), 454; Telegram 5839, Feb. 23, 1945, in *id.* at pp. 454-56. Hereafter cited as “Peterson.”

Mussolini regime in North Italy, are ready to surrender and even to fight against Hitler, if the Allies can make it worth their while. Kesselring, according to the official, feels that under present trends he is destined to retire to the Alps and, subordinate to SS officials, to die in the final resistance or be killed for not resisting the Allies. As long as Kesselring is still in Italy he feels he still has power and is willing to use that power to surrender, in return for concessions.⁸

In a further explanation to Roosevelt, Donovan wrote that Neurath, at Kesslering's request, had secretly met with General Siegfried Westphal and General Johannes Blaskowitz in Germany on "the possibility of opening the Western Front to the Allies." The latter two questioned the step "if they were merely to be considered as war criminals," and noted that "their armies included large elements of Germans from East Prussia and eastern Germany whose fighting qualities had been stiffened by the Soviet occupation of their home areas." These troops "have lost everything and having no homes or families to which to return, consider it better to stay on and fight." However, Westphal and Blaskowitz appeared to be working with Kesselring, wanted to open up the Western and Italian Fronts to the Allies, and may be willing to discuss the arrangement with an American Army officer. It was doubted "that von Neurath will be guilty of indiscretion, since his own life is apparently at stake and since his background is non-Nazi." Discussions could be held in the Lugano vicinity.⁹

A meeting was indeed held on March 3 in Lugano in which Italian industrialist Baron Luigi Parrilli, SS Colonel Eugen Dollman, and SS Captain Guido Zimmer talked briefly with OSS agent Paul Blum. Dr. Max Husmann, director of a private school with students from Italy, and Lt. Friedrich Rothpletz of Swiss Army Intelligence set up the meeting and were present. The end result was that the Germans, to prove their sincerity, agreed to release Italian partisan

⁸ Donovan to Roosevelt, 24 Feb. 1945. Franklin D. Roosevelt Papers: President's Secretary's File (PSF), Office of Strategic Services: Container 151. Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York. Hereafter cited as "PSF-OSS, FDR Library."

⁹ Donovan to Roosevelt, 26 Feb. 1945. PSF-OSS, FDR Library.

leader Ferruccio Parri and Italian secret service member Antonio Usmiani.¹⁰

Dulles reported that “2 close friends in Swiss SI [Secret Intelligence]” advised that Baron Parrilli sought to facilitate contact between Germans and Allies “with general view terminating German resistance North Italy.” “We were advised late March 2 by our Swiss SI friends that Standartenfuehrer Dollmann and Zimmer had arrived at Swiss frontier.” “DB-001 [Paul Blum] who was proceeding Lugano on other business met Dollmann, Zimmer, Baron P and Swiss SI man at Lugano March 3.” By reputation, Dollmann made a fortune by ransoming important persons and saving Rome from destruction. “To Swiss intermediary Dollmann apparently claimed that he represented Kesselring, Rahn, Wolff and Harster but never specifically so stated to DB-001.”¹¹

The intermediaries, Dulles continued, told Dollmann that Blum was associated with Dulles. To show good faith, the release of unnamed Italian patriots was suggested. Dulles noted: “If this should be of a nature to facilitate unconditional surrender of German forces North Italy it might be desirable to arrange that military contact take place on Swiss side of frontier.” While Caserta had suggested that Kesselring, if he wished to surrender, could pursue normal channels, “elements with Kesselring whom might wish to facilitate surrender may only act with greatest secrecy lest their movements be betrayed by fanatical Nazis in Kesselring’s entourage.” Sending a messenger to Allied lines may be difficult, but it would be easy “for high officials to come to Switzerland without arousing suspicion as they have been doing this continuously over long period.” Dulles concluded: “I have confidence in Swiss through whom we are dealing. Also, all Swiss interests lie in facilitating peaceful surrender of Germans in North Italy.”

Dulles telegraphed Caserta and Donovan on March 8 that “Waffen SS General Karl Wolff, top SS officer North Italy together with OKW representative presumably from Kesselring staff plus Dollmann and Zimmer arrived Lugano this morning allegedly

¹⁰ Smith & Agarossi, *Operation Sunrise*, pp. 72-75; Dollmann, *Call Me Coward*, pp. 176-80.

¹¹ Cheston and 154 only. . . . From 110, Telegram 6329, March 5, 1945. Peterson, pp. 462-64.

prepared to talk definitely.” Parri was being produced to show good faith and the ability to act. SACMED (Supreme Allied Commander Mediterranean) agents should prepare to come, as “I could arrange entry [in] Switzerland in civilian clothes with absolute secrecy and we can be assured of secret cooperation [of] local authorities. Nothing unusual in this as high military authorities from SHAEF [Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force] come here constantly.” Dulles suggested that Wolff and Kesslering “might pull off unconditional surrender provided absolute secrecy can be preserved,” but worried “how much does Himmler know about this.”¹²

Donovan passed on this information to Roosevelt. “The OSS representative in Bern [Dulles] believes that, if Wolff is really working with Kesselring, the two Generals might effect an unconditional surrender.” Dulles could arrange for the secret entry into Switzerland of agents of the Supreme Allied Mediterranean Command.¹³

Extraordinary meetings occurred in Zurich on March 8-9, reported Dulles. Wolff appeared with Dollmann, Sturmbandfuehrer Wenner, Zimmer and Parrilli. “I only consented to see Wolff who came to my apartment [the] evening [of the] 8th with Swiss intermediary. 476 [Gaevernitz] and I then talked to Wolff alone.” Gaevernitz had an additional meeting with Wolff and Dollmann. Dulles described Wolff as a “distinctive personality” who “represents more moderate element in Waffen SS, with mixture of romanticism. Probably most dynamic personality North Italy and most powerful after Kesselring.”¹⁴ Dulles continued:

Wolff stated that time had come when some German with power to act should lead Germany out of war to end useless material and human destruction, that he was willing to act and felt he could persuade Kesselring to join, that together with Kesselring they controlled situation in Northern Italy, and as far as SS concerned he likewise controlled Western Austria, as his authority included Voralberg, Tyrol, and Brenner Pass with both northern and southern approaches. He felt that in case of joint action

¹² Telegram 1146 to Caserta, Mar. 8, 1945. Peterson, pp. 465-66.

¹³ Donovan to Roosevelt, 8 Mar. 1945. PSF-OSS, FDR Library.

¹⁴ From: Bern Switzerland, To: OSS, 9 Mar. 1945. #6689. For Glavin, 109, and Forgan. #829. Record Group 226, Entry 90, Box 7, Folder 86.

with Kesselring, Hitler, and Himmler would be powerless to take effective counter measures, thus distinguishing situation from that of July 20. He also felt that their joint action would have vital repercussion on German Army, particularly Western Front, as many generals waiting for someone to take lead.

Wolff made no request re personal safety or privileged treatment from war criminal viewpoint.

Wolff hoped to persuade Kesselring and other major German players in Northern Italy to draft an appeal "setting forth uselessness of struggle, their responsibility toward German people to terminate it and calling upon military commanders and others generally to disassociate themselves from Himmler-Hitler control, plus statement that hostilities North Italy would be terminated by Germans." Besides releasing Parri, Wolff was ready to "discontinue active warfare against partisans," "release to Switzerland several hundred Jews interned at Bozen," assume responsibility for British and American prisoners at Mantua, and "release to Switzerland, Sogno Franci, well known patriot working with CLNAI and British."

Wolff claimed that Himmler knew nothing about this peace initiative. In February, Wolff met with Hitler and Himmler, advising them that the situation was hopeless, but received no instructions. Dulles noted that "this may present very unique opportunity to shorten war and to permit occupation of north Italy and possibly even penetration Austria under most favorable conditions. Also this might wreck German plans for establishment of maquis." Dulles concluded with the obligatory statement that, "I have engaged in no negotiations, merely listened to his presentation and stated, with no refutation Wolff's part, that unconditional surrender [is the] only possible course."

Donovan repeated almost the entire above message in a communication to Roosevelt on March 10.¹⁵

Meanwhile, Dulles confirmed that Parri and Usmiani, who "ran one of our SI [Secret Intelligence Branch] chains [in] Milan," were "delivered to me unconditionally at Zurich with cooperation 511 [Swiss Intelligence]" Dulles remarked that "Both men when

¹⁵ Donovan to Roosevelt, 10 Mar. 1945. A briefer message from Dulles was passed on in Donovan to Roosevelt, 9 Mar. 1945. PSF-OSS, FDR Library.

taken out by SS assumed they being led to execution and neither yet knows, and should not know, why released.”¹⁶

On March 11, the Americans and the British notified the Soviets of the meeting. Churchill went further and sought the Soviets’ opinion. Molotov responded that Soviet officers must participate in the talks. Averell Harriman, U.S. Ambassador to Russia, opined that no justification existed for participation by the Soviets, who would not allow the Anglo-Americans to participate in any similar case on the Eastern Front.¹⁷

Indeed, the Americans resented British intervention in Sunrise, reflected in an instruction to Dulles: “Since AFHQ [Allied Force Headquarters] has placed full responsibility on OSS alone to handle all arrangements, we do not deem it necessary or desirable to consult SOE [Special Operations Executive].”¹⁸

On March 12, Dulles reported intelligence from Parrilli that “Kesselring had been summoned by Hitler and had just gone to Fuehrer headquarters. Wolff expects him back in 3 days but there is a chance that he may never come back.” Dulles noted:

We suggested to Parrilli that Wolff indicate: A. What he proposes to do if Kesselring does not return. B. What he would do if he likewise ordered to report to Fuehrer. C. If he refuses to report, what is his plan and what forces does he dispose of to carry it out. D. What areas could he temporarily control for possible contact with our forces if principal army commanders do not cooperate.

Dulles surmised that Hitler and Himmler may have been planning the evacuation of North Italy and that Kesselring would either cooperate, or receive a new command or prison.¹⁹

On March 12, Dulles reported that Wolff had received a telegram from SD head Kaltenbrunner not to make contact in

¹⁶ From: Bern, Switzerland, To: OSS, 9 Mar. 1945. #6709. Glavin (Caserta #4849), p. 109, and Forgan (London #8119 Paris #6809). Record Group 226, Entry 90, Box 7, Folder 86.

¹⁷ Smith & Agarossi, *Operation Sunrise*, pp. 85-87.

¹⁸ To: Berne RPT Washington, Confirmation: EG, 11 Mar. 1945, #434 Wash #3785(9). Glavin to 110 Info 109, Sunrise. Record Group 226, Entry 139, Box 60, Folder 554 - Telegrams Outgoing.

¹⁹ Telegram 6969 to Paris, Mar. 12, 1945. Peterson, p. 471.

Switzerland as it would interfere with Kaltenbrunner's plans. An SS official had leaked the possible contact to Kaltenbrunner. In addition, "Wolff is having some difficulty explaining to underlings the disappearance of Parri and might wish to dress him up as an exchange." The perfect ruse would be to locate ex-Hitler adjutant Obersturmbannführer Wuensche, who became a POW at Normandy, and to turn him over to the Germans.²⁰

A March 14 message posed questions as to how arrangements had been made for entry of AFHQ representatives. "(A) were negotiations to be made without knowledge of Swiss government, and (B) could similar arrangements be made for Russian generals without risk of incident even though Swiss and Soviet governments were not in diplomatic accord?" "AFHQ's reply was that to best of their knowledge Swiss government knew nothing of negotiations although members of Swiss SI had been used as intermediaries. AFHQ was confident that OSS could introduce Soviet representatives in clandestine manner."²¹

On the morning of March 14, Parrilli appeared with information on the intrigues of Kaltenbrunner, including his proposed meeting with Burckhardt (formerly of International Red Cross) and that he was attempting to contact the Allies. Dulles instructed Parrilli to advise Wolff that OSS paid no regard to these actions, "but that we were apprehensive that Himmler and Kaltenbrunner were trying to throw up a smoke screen by starting a peace offensive based on prisoner of war, laborer and refugee situation, and possibly on his talks with Burckhardt."²²

That evening, Dulles instructed Husmann about any future meeting with the Germans "that there could be no question of negotiating, that the principle of 'unconditional surrender' and the Yalta statement of policy were fully applicable, and the meeting would have no utility, unless this was recognized at the outset."

On the evening of March 14, two emissaries from Caserta met Dulles at Annemasse: U.S. Major General Lyman L. Lemnitzer, Deputy

²⁰ Telegram 6829, Mar. 12, 1945. Peterson, pp. 471-72.

²¹ To: Annemasse, Confirmation: TSR, 14 Mar. 1945, #235, Sunrise. Glavin & 110 from Ryan. Record Group 226, Entry 139, Box 60, Folder 554 - Telegrams Outgoing.

²² Top Secret Memorandum, 15 Mar. 1945, Re: Sunrise. Record Group 226, Entry 110, Box 2, Folder 16 - misc. memoranda.

Chief of Staff to Field Marshal Alexander, and British Major General Terence S. Airey, Alexander's Chief Intelligence Officer. Alexander was Supreme Allied Commander in the Mediterranean Theater.

The next day, the generals slipped into Switzerland under assumed names—Lemnitzer was “Nicholson” and Airey was “McNeely.” (These were actually names of OSS officers—the generals took their dog tags as false identifications.)²³ They then settled in at a secluded estate at Ascona belonging to a relative of Gaevernitz. Using Parrilli as a messenger, Dulles summoned Wolff to meet them there.

Uncertainties due to the Soviet demand to participate continued. AFHQ notified Dulles: “Combined Chiefs of Staff have informed us that Russian representatives will not join you but will take part discussions here on arrival [of] German delegation.” Further, “Field Marshal also requested instructions from them earliest; otherwise, proceedings might be delayed owing to the absence of the Russian Representative.”²⁵

On March 19, Wolff arrived to meet with Dulles and Gaevernitz in Ascona (described in reports only as “a place near Locarno”). Also present for the afternoon meetings were Lemnitzer and Airey. Lemnitzer and Airey used assumed names and were introduced as military advisors.

Two hours of talks between Wolff and Dulles were recorded in detail.²⁶ Wolff had believed the propaganda that the tide might still turn with the new secret weapons, such as the Dusenjaeger. “His trips to Switzerland had sufficed to clear his mind of this fog, and that he was now convinced in his mind as to what he must do for his homeland and that he was prepared to stand or fall by the enterprise in which he was engaged.”

²³ Dulles, *Secret Surrender*, pp. 107-11.

²⁴ To: Berne, Confirmation: NN, 15 Mar. [1945], p. 2. Glavin and p. 110. Sunrise. Crossword to Lemnitzer and Airey from SGS, AFHQ, personal from General Morgan. Record Group 226, Entry 139, Box 60, Folder 554 - Telegrams Outgoing.

²⁵ To: Berne, Confirmation: TSR, 15 Mar. 1945, p. 1. To Glavin and p. 110. Sunrise. Crossword to Lemnitzer and Airey from SGS, AFHQ. Record Group 226, Entry 139, Box 60, Folder 554 - Telegrams Outgoing.

²⁶ Conversation between Critic, p. 110 and p. 476, who was later joined by G. 19 Mar., 11.00 - 13.00 hours. Record Group 226, Entry 110, Box 2, Folder 16 - misc. memoranda.

Wolff disclosed the forces under his control. As Hoechster SS u. Polizei-Fuehrer (Higher SS and Police leader), Wolff commanded "15,000 Germans, 20,000 Russians (Cossacks, Don Kubans and Turcomans), 10,000 Serbs, 10,000 Slovenes, 5,000 Czechs and Indian Legion, and 100,000 Italians, militia, black shirts and the X mas." As Bevollmaechtingter General der Deutschen Wehrmacht (plenipotentiary for the German Wehrmacht) in Italy, Wolff commanded 10,000 Germans as well as under his tactical command 55,000 German service, supply and similar troops.

General Kesselring had been replaced as Wehrmacht commander in Italy by General von Vietinghoff, who Wolff described as "a non-political soldier" who "would not be an easy man to gain over to a political action unless he had support of others in the Wehrmacht." Wolff was friendly with the newcomer but had not discussed surrender with him.

Wolff was willing to give Dulles extremely sensitive information. The following exchange is illustrative:

110 [Dulles] remarked that his military friends had never understood why the Germans had continued to maintain a large force in North Italy, given the present German military situation. Critic [Wolff] then repeated and expanded what he had previously said, viz. that the orders had been all prepared and approved by Hitler for an evacuation of a large part of North Italy in September 1944.

These in effect were the arguments they used at that time and Hitler swung over and subsequently had been opposed to evacuation for the same reasons that impelled him to hold on in Norway and other such areas. Hitler was afraid of what they call a Raeumungs-psychose, fearing that this would become epidemic after the complete defeat in France and lead to a complete breakdown.

Wolff told Dulles that he refused to obey Kaltenbrunner's demand to end any contacts in Switzerland in favor of Kaltenbrunner developing his own peace feelers. Wolff also refused to meet with Kaltenbrunner in Innsbruck because he was needed in the absence of Kesselring. Wolff regarded "the idea of a German reduit in the Alps" as "madness" which would "only bring untold and unnecessary suffering on the German people," exclaiming that "everything must be done to prevent it."

Dulles stated that complicated military matters must be settled to effectuate a surrender. "It was easy to start a war but difficult to stop one." Preliminarily, prisoners could be delivered to the Allies. This would be a perfect cover for Wolff, for if "any question ever arose as to the reasons for his trips to Switzerland, he would state that it was in connection with prisoner exchange matters."

Dulles repeated much of the above conversation in a telegram to Donovan.²⁷ As Dulles clarified, Wolff did not wish to initiate isolated action without coordination with the OKW (German Armed Forces High Command), as he would be caught between German armies in the north and south. He had not had a chance to discuss surrender with Vietinghoff. "Hence Critic [Wolff] proposed proceed immediately to Emperor's [Kesselring] headquarters and endeavor get Emperor and Westphal [his chief of staff], whom he highly regarded, to join in common action, which case he felt sure Vietinghoff would go along." Wolff realized the military situation left little time, as "German headquarters Italy expected an offensive before end of month. (To our 511 [Swiss Intelligence] contact Critic mentioned that they were expecting attack about March 25th.)"

Wolff crossed the border back to Italy that evening (March 19) with the intent to travel by car to meet with Kesselring. Dulles believed that Wolff was "sincere in his desire to effect immediate German surrender" and in his opposition to "the German reduct plan," which would "merely cause untold additional useless destruction and slaughter."

On March 20, Airey reported military intelligence to AFHQ gained from the meeting with Wolff. He sized up Wolff as "a strong personality, active and intelligent," but "has crafty appearance, three chins, and fat fingers with diamond rings. . . . Disillusioned and takes realistic view of situation." Besides giving the above description of forces under his command, "Critic handed in useful map giving German idea of Partisan order of battle and dispositions." Wolff explained that Hitler cancelled his plan to evacuate Italy thinking that the line could be held, food supplies and industry there

²⁷ Telegram 7329, Mar. 20, 1945. Peterson, pp. 478-80.

²⁸ OSS Incoming Message [Mar. 20, 1945], 2677th Regt., Action: TSR, Eg Files, Triple Priority, Sunrise. AFHQ for G-2 from Airey. Record Group 226, Entry 110, Box 1, Folder 13 - Telegrams.

remained valuable, the airfields must not be open to the Allies, and retreat would lead to a defeatist psychology. Airey commented on Wolff's opposition to a national redoubt in the south: "Understand that coachman's [Kaltenbrunner] representative has also referred to existence of such a plan and states that [Steyrwerke] all being put underground."²⁸

Lemnitzer reported by radio to Field Marshal Alexander at AFHQ additional details about the Wolff meeting, explaining:

Throughout the whole meeting, Critic made no reference to any conditions of surrender and did not attempt to bargain. He was prepared to go either to Vietinghoff or Emperor [Kesselring] with proposals of surrender, and was also prepared to take in our wireless operators, which was arranged to take effect on his return. It seemed possible, therefore, that he had considerable confidence in obtaining support, and we gained the impression that he had already gone further with Emperor than he had previously admitted.²⁹

Lemnitzer followed up with another message to AFHQ on March 21. Arrangements were being planned to meet near Lucerne with Wolff and staff officers of Kesselring and/or Vietinghoff.³⁰

Donovan summarized the Ascona meeting to Roosevelt on the 21st, emphasizing that "Wolff has stressed particularly that it would be a crime against the German people if the 'reduit plan' were realized, since it would merely cause untold further useless destruction and slaughter."³¹

Meanwhile, bitter notes were being exchanged between the Americans and the Soviets, highlighted by Molotov's charge on March 23 that the Anglo-Americans were negotiating behind the back of the Soviets and demanding that the "Bern" negotiations be ended.³²

²⁹ OSS Incoming Message, 2677th Regt., 20 Mar. 1945, Copy 2 of 4, From: Berne, Action: TSR, Eg Files, Sunrise. For SGS AFHQ from Lemnitzer. Record Group 226, Entry 110, Box 1, Folder 13 - Telegrams.

³⁰ OSS Incoming Message, 2677th Regt., 21 Mar. 1945, From: Berne, Action: TSR, EG Files, 541, Sunrise. Lemnitzer for SGS AFHQ., Part two. AFHQ for G-2 from Airey. Record Group 226, Entry 110, Box 1, Folder 13 - Telegrams.

³¹ Donovan to Roosevelt, 21 Mar. 1945. PSF-OSS, FDR Library.

³² Smith & Agarossi, *Operation Sunrise*, p. 104.

On March 24, Roosevelt wrote the first of three letters to Stalin on Sunrise. (The letters were actually drafted by Admiral Leahy with the assistance of Secretary Stimson and General Marshall, and approved by the President with minor revisions.³³) The first letter responded to Molotov's demand that the investigation in Switzerland of a possible surrender of the German Army in Italy be stopped because of lack of participation by Soviet officers. Roosevelt responded that Field Marshal Alexander was authorized to send officers to Switzerland to determine whether surrender proposals were genuine, "and if it appeared to be of sufficient promise, to arrange with any competent German officers for a conference with Field Marshal Alexander at his headquarters in Italy to discuss details of the surrender. Soviet representatives would, of course, be present if such a meeting could be arranged."³⁴

Roosevelt stated that the Soviet Government was immediately notified of the investigation in Switzerland, and was later informed that Soviet officers could be present at any meeting with German officers to discuss a surrender at Caserta. While attempts to arrange a meeting had been unsuccessful, any possibility of surrender would be pursued to avoid loss of life in the American Forces. The Soviets would do the same if the opportunity arose. "In such a surrender of enemy forces in the field, there can be no political implications whatever and no violation of our agreed principle of unconditional surrender."

The same day as the above letter, the OSS in Switzerland had more practical issues in mind. Dulles, his wife, and Gaevernitz traveled to Lucerne "to determine with Major W—[Waibel] the possibility of the use of ambulance for Critic and party to come to LU— [Lucerne] for meeting."³⁵

OSS Bern reported at the same time that the majority of the Austrian SS wished to liquidate the Nazi party and transfer rule to the Western Powers. SS elements wanting to continue the war, together with Bormann supporters and a number of the Gauleiters, would have to be eliminated. The informant (Hoettel) alleged that the "Alpine reduit would be finished and stocked in about three months, that

³³ *Id.* at 108.

³⁴ Roosevelt to Stalin, Mar. 24, 1945. Franklin D. Roosevelt Files, Map Room, Container 9, FDR Library. Hereafter cited "Map Room, FDR Library."

³⁵ Plan for As—only, 24 Mar. 1945. Record Group 226, Entry 110, Box 2, Folder 16 - misc. memoranda.

Steyrwerke is already underground and producing particularly such defensive weapons as Panzer Faeuste. It is intended that Wehrmacht units as well as SS be taken into reduit including families of fighting men.”³⁶

The source of the above was “Picasso,” Prince Auersperg, who had met with Hoettel, Kaltenbrunner’s right-hand man. OSS Bern commented that “certain SS elements are trying to save their skins by turning to west, dropping their attacks against local anti-Nazi movements or even favoring them and preparing to follow line which will obviate necessity of their joining diehards in last ditch struggle in reduit. . . . It seems to me that these trends offer possibility of checkmating any effective organization German reduit.”³⁷

OSS Bern noted on March 25: “A report from a reliable Swiss source states that the Nazis have lost control of the situation and that separate individual authorities have superseded the United Command. According to this report, various Wehrmacht units are depending for supplies and equipment only on materials available in zones adjacent to their individual localities. . . . It is further stated that no single authority has control. It would be impossible for Germany to surrender as a whole. Collapse is imminent.”³⁸ Lemnitzer and Airey sized up the situation as follows:

Not only does Glazier’s [von Vietinghoff] command comprise many of the best divisions in the German army but it may soon be the only German army group left intact in the West and South. It is likely moreover that this force has been earmarked for eventual withdrawal into, and more prolonged resistance in, the national redoubt. Therefore, if Glazier can be persuaded to surrender as a result of action by critic [Wolff] and emperor [Kesselring] it may be feasible to forestall continuation of war in Austria and South Germany.³⁹

³⁶ From: Bern, Switzerland, To: OSS, 24 Mar. 1945. #7589. Bern-Washington., #5619. Record Group 226, Entry 90, Box 7, Folder 86.

³⁷ Unprocessed Report, 25 Mar. 1945, “Picasso.” Record Group 226, Entry 110, Box 1, Folder 13 - Telegrams.

³⁸ Unprocessed Report, 25 Mar. 1945, OSS-Bern Report, Source: Z. Record Group 226, Entry 110, Box 1, Folder 13 - Telegrams.

³⁹ OSS Incoming Message, 2677th Regt., Action: (Bern) Genesis, Eg, Files, Genesis #9. Record Group 226, Entry 110, Box 1, Folder 13 - Telegrams.

A March 27 message to OSS Bern stated: “Nazis believe Kesselring will be able to hold off allied armies while party leaders withdraw to mountain strongholds: But old line officers are persuaded army cannot stand further losses.” It added that von Rundstedt had been dismissed for his note to Hitler that the situation was hopeless and advising an unconditional armistice. “This note said to have arrived at Fuehrer’s HQ just as Himmler had produced evidence von Rundstedt’s son was implicated in 20 July Affair.” That affair was, of course, the 1944 attempt on Hitler’s life. Von Rundstedt was confined on the family estate and his son was imprisoned.⁴⁰

Donovan wrote an assessment of the situation to Roosevelt on March 27, repeating several of the above transmissions.⁴¹ “Through two emissaries, Kaltenbrunner reports the existence of an opposition group within the Austrian SS which is anxious to liquidate the Nazi Party in Austria and to arrange for the orderly transfer of administrative functions to the Western Powers.” The group wished to serve as a “transitional regime” and not join “the Nazi die-hards in a last-ditch struggle in the German ‘redoubt.’” Dulles—identified as “the OSS representative”—saw this as an opportunity “to drive a wedge into Nazi leadership and thereby reduce the effectiveness of German ‘redoubt’ plans.”

Catholic and Social Democratic opposition groups in Austria would support anti-Communist elements wishing to end the war. These elements desired “to open to the Western Allies the route to Vienna via Zagreb in the hope of avoiding a Soviet occupation of the Austrian capital.” Hoettel had declared that:

. . . the Alpine “redoubt” would be finished and stocked in about three months. The Steyrwerke, he said, is already underground, producing such defensive weapons as Panzer Faeuste. The Nazis intend to take Wehrmacht as well as SS units into the “redoubt,” he added, and even the families of the troops.

⁴⁰ OSS Outgoing Message, 2677th Regt., 27 Mar. 1945, To: Berne, Confirmation: TSR, EG Files, #525, Sunrise, Ryan to Glavin, Further to our #520. Record Group 226, Entry 110, Box 1, Folder 13 - Telegrams.

⁴¹ Donovan to Roosevelt, 27 Mar. 1945. PSF-OSS, FDR Library.

The possibility of a redoubt continued to be taken seriously. Dulles analyzed the situation thus:

However, some sort of reduit seems inevitable from the force of circumstances, and some stocking of this reduit has been carried out. Elaborate fortifications are not in themselves necessary to make a mountain area, such as the Tyrol and Bavarian Alps, a formidable fortress if defended by resolute men with training in mountain warfare. Very possibly, the Nazis can still find and pull together in the Alps enough of these troops, plus some determined and fanatical SS divisions . . . to make a determined stand.⁴²

Stalin responded to Roosevelt's March 25th missive on the 29th,⁴³ complaining that "the Soviet representatives were refused participation in the discussions in Bern with the Germans regarding the possibility of capitulation of German troops and opening the front to Anglo-American troops in Northern Italy." Stalin worried that the Germans would "use these negotiations for shifting of their troops to other sections of the front and, first of all, to the Soviet front." He alleged that the negotiations had in fact allowed the Germans to shift three divisions from Northern Italy to the Soviet front. Stalin claimed that the German troops in Northern Italy did not face annihilation and yet sought negotiations, proving that "they have different, more serious aims relating to the fate of Germany." He was right in that the Germans feared Soviet occupation more than Western occupation. Stalin concluded that if a similar situation opened the Eastern Front to Soviet troops—an unlikely scenario—he would not hesitate to "inform immediately the Anglo-American Military Command and to request it to send their representatives for participation in negotiations as in such cases the Allies should have no secrets from each other." Yet it seems preposterous to assume that the Soviets would not have accepted any major German surrender without first summoning the Anglo-Americans to participate in the talks.

⁴² Radiotelephone Transmission No. 290, Mar. 27, 1945. Peterson, p. 485.

⁴³ Stalin to Roosevelt, Mar. 29, 1945. Map Room, FDR Library. See also *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers 1945*, Vol. III (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1968), pp. 739-740. Hereafter cited as "FRUS."

Far from shifting troops to the Eastern Front, Donovan wrote Roosevelt about intelligence from Dulles that “Hitler intends to use the bulk of the German forces in Italy for the defense of the German ‘redoubt.’”⁴⁴ The talks with Wolff could nip that plan in the bud.

OSS Bern reported on March 29 that certain groups were aware of and interested in the success of Sunrise. This included “certain elements of Swiss Intelligence Service (and therefore very possibly members of the Swiss government) and finally a few persons in North Italian Commercial and Industrial Circles.” Noting “the cordial cooperation on part of Swiss intelligence officer,” it added that “Swiss are clearly interested in peaceful surrender in North Italy both because they wish to avoid pressure against their frontier by disorganized German and fascist troops and to preserve their commercial relations with Italy and regain use of port of Genoa.”⁴⁵

Why did German forces which would have furnished a major portion of “national redoubt” forces wish to surrender? “It seems possible now that influential army and SS circles realize futility and unnecessary destruction involved in conception of last stand in redoubt and wish to save Austria and Bavaria from becoming battlefield. They may also wish to prevent destruction of divisions while on Italian front or alternatively to prevent their being cast piecemeal by Hitler to maelstrom in Germany.”

Roosevelt responded to Stalin on March 31, insisting: “No negotiations for surrender have been entered into, and if there should be any negotiations they will be conducted at Caserta with your representatives present throughout.” The meeting in question, while so far fruitless, was solely to contact German officers, not to negotiate. Negotiations would not allow the Germans to transfer forces elsewhere, and Alexander with his seventeen divisions, opposed by twenty-four German divisions, would continue the offensive and seek to prevent withdrawal of German forces from Italy.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Donovan to Roosevelt, 29 Mar. 1945. PSF-OSS, FDR Library. See Dulles, Telegram 7699 to London, Mar. 28, 1945. Peterson, p. 485.

⁴⁵ OSS Incoming Message, 2677th Regt., 29 Mar. 1945, Copy 2 of 4, From: Berne, Action TSR, EG Files, Sunrise. For SGS, AFHQ from Nicholson and McNeely. Record Group 226, Entry 110, Box 1, Folder 13 - Telegrams.

⁴⁶ Roosevelt to Stalin, Mar. 31, 1945. Map Room, FDR Library.

As for Stalin's accusation that negotiations allowed the Wehrmacht to move three divisions from Italy to the Eastern front, Roosevelt pointed out that this took place "weeks before anybody heard of any possibility of a surrender. It is therefore clearly evident that the approach made by German agents in Bern occurring after the last movement of troops began could not possibly have had any effect on the movement."

Roosevelt added an argument that did not reflect awareness of the emerging conflict within the German leadership. "This entire episode has arisen through the initiative of a German officer reputed to be close to Himmler," and thus possibly "his sole purpose is to create suspicion and distrust between the Allies. There is no reasons why we should permit him to succeed in that aim." As events would prove, Wolff was pursuing the surrender initiative contrary to Himmler's orders.

On April 1, Dulles passed on a report by Zimmer, Wolff's aide.⁴⁷ Wolff made his way to Kesselring's headquarters when "hell had already broken loose. First conversation took place only 15 km. from our advancing forces. Critic [Wolff] presented his plan for Italian surrender and Emperor [Kesselring] advised him to go through with it." However, Kesselring could not surrender as he "found himself largely surrounded by strangers whom he did not trust. Zimmer gained impression from Critic [that] Emperor was half a prisoner." The report continued:

While in Germany and one of reasons for delay, Critic was summoned by Himmler, who asked him to explain his surrender of British agent Tucker. Critic replied that he was arranging an exchange and he wanted to give the Fuehrer Wuensche as birthday present. Himmler also accused him of having been in Switzerland and asked the reasons. Critic answered that he had a contact in Milan who promised to bring him in touch with Allies and that he was acting pursuant Fuehrer's recent secret order to seek any possible contact with Allies. . . . Himmler ordered Critic to wait around for a couple of days as he wanted to think the matter over. However, Himmler was suddenly called urgently to

⁴⁷ D'etat, Triple Priority Commercial, Top Secret, Annemasse, London, Lummy Poppy 832(9) Wash 800(9). 1 April 1945. Record Group 226, Entry 110, Box 2, Folder 16 - misc. memoranda.

Hungary and referred Critic to Kaltenbrunner. Himmler told him that he should not leave Italy and particularly that he should not go to Switzerland. Critic did not see Kaltenbrunner but left for Italy.

Kesselring said to Wolff that “our situation is desperate, nobody dares tell truth to Fuehrer who surrounded by small group of advisers who still believe in a last specific secret weapon which they call ‘Verzweiflung’ weapon. Emperor believed this weapon can prolong war but not decide it, but might cause terrible blood bath on both sides. Emperor said if Fuehrer gave him order to use weapon he would surrender his command.”

Also on April 1 a succession of messages were received from Wolff’s headquarters. They implored: “Do not attack the remaining German centers of resistance in the cities. Surrender will be arranged from here.”⁴⁸ A further message stated: “In spite of promise that was given, today at 2000 hours an air attack on Gen. Wolff’s Bolzano HQ from low-flying planes. We ask again that this cease.”⁴⁹ Still another: “The bombing of HQ at Bolzano on the evening of the 29th scored no direct hit. Bombs fell 50 meters to one side. The SS are mad.”⁵⁰ Further: “Since 2000 there have been repeated night bombings of Wolff’s HQ. Will you please ask cessation of any attack on West side of Bolzano in as much as it makes our task far more difficult.”⁵¹

At a planned second meeting in Ascona on April 2, Dulles, Lemnitzer, and Airey hoped to meet with Wolff, but disappointingly only Parrilli appeared instead. Yet the intelligence was valuable. Dulles would inform the OSS hierarchy the next day about Himmler’s activities seeking to make his own deal with the Allies and to negate Wolff’s progress. Parrilli reported that Himmler had ordered Wolff not to leave northern Italy and had moved Wolff’s family within his clutches.⁵²

⁴⁸ From: Fairbury, Action: TSR, 1 April [1945], 2000, #16. Record Group 226, Entry 110, Box 2, Folder 14 - telegrams.

⁴⁹ From: Fairbury, Action: TSR, #9. Record Group 226, Entry 110, Box 2, Folder 14 - telegrams.

⁵⁰ Operational Priority, From: Fairbury, To: TSR, #4. Record Group 226, Entry 110, Box 2, Folder 14 - telegrams.

⁵¹ From: Fairbury, Action: TSR, #2. Record Group 226, Entry 110, Box 2, Folder 14 - telegrams.

⁵² D’etat, Top Secret, London, Lummy Poppy 836(9) Watch 802(9). 3 April 1945. Record Group 226, Entry 110, Box 2, Folder 16 - misc. memoranda.

According to Wolff, Vietinghoff saw it as “nonsense to go on fighting” but “received instructions in case of general Allied attack to withdraw to Alps fighting (*kaempfend abzusetzen*) destroying as they went.” Kesselring knew that combat could continue only a few more days and that “Germany was facing catastrophe.” Wolff asked Parilli to tell Dulles that in ten days “they could hand over North Italy on silver platter.”

Dulles sent Parilli back to Wolff to admonish that military surrender must be quick, that northern Italy not be destroyed, and that Allied and partisan POWs be protected. Noting that “Himmler from possible German reduct might increasingly exercise terroristic influence,” Dulles implored that any delay in surrendering would only worsen matters.

On April 3, Stalin answered Roosevelt's second letter,⁵³ referring to the “negotiations in Bern” which allegedly had “ended in an agreement with the Germans, on the basis of which the German commander on the Western Front - Marshal Kesselring, has agreed to open the front and permit the Anglo-American troops to advance to the East, and the Anglo-Americans have promised in return to ease for the Germans the peace terms.” This was somehow proven by “the fact that the Anglo-Americans have refused to admit to Bern representatives of the Soviet Command for participation in the negotiations with the Germans.”

Further demonstrating how misinformed he was, Stalin cited how the British had remained silent, “although it is known that the initiative in this whole affair with the negotiations in Bern belongs to the British.” As a result of the separate negotiations, concealed from the Russians, “the Anglo-American troops get the possibility to advance into the heart of Germany almost without any resistance on the part of the Germans,” for “the Germans on the Western front in fact have ceased the war against England and the United States. At the same time the Germans continue the war with Russia, the Ally of England and the United States.”

Dulles later reflected that “what worried the Russians most was that we might get into Trieste and Venezia Giulia before they did.”⁵⁴ Stalin wished to discourage the Anglo-American advance also to enhance Soviet occupation in Germany.

⁵³ Stalin to Roosevelt, Apr. 3, 1945. Map Room, FDR Library.

⁵⁴ Dulles, *The Secret Surrender*, p. 150.

William D. Leahy requested a memorandum from General Marshall on which to base a reply to Stalin, adding: "This is a new statement of the Soviet suspicion which might be answered by telling U.J. [Uncle Joe] something about the difficulties that Eisenhower encountered in disorganizing the German Armies on the Rhine." Stalin would not have been persuaded.

Roosevelt's response to Stalin on April 4⁵⁶ expressed "astonishment" with the assertion that Bern agreements permitted Anglo-American troops to advance in return for easy peace terms. Roosevelt repeated that "no negotiations were held in Bern" and that Soviet officers would be welcomed at any meeting to discuss unconditional surrender. After tributes to U.S.-Soviet friendship and the collapse of the German resistance, Roosevelt insisted: "I am certain that there were no negotiations in Bern at any time, and I feel that your information to that effect must have come from German sources which have made persistent efforts to create dissension between us in order to escape in some measure for responsibility for their war crimes. If that was Wolff's purpose in Bern your message proves that he has had some success."

After expressing fear that "one of the great tragedies of history" could occur from "such distrust," Roosevelt concluded: "Frankly I cannot avoid a feeling of bitter resentment toward your informers, whoever they are, for such vile misrepresentations of my actions or those of my trusted subordinates."

Negotiations were indeed not taking place. Donovan informed Roosevelt: "Wolff is convinced that if he were now to make a false move or to leave his headquarters for Switzerland, his whole project for a surrender in North Italy would fail and he would be liquidated. He believes that Himmler has given special instructions that he be watched. Accordingly, he feels it is impossible for him to come to Switzerland now." He warned against delay, "since from the 'redoubt' Himmler may exercise an increasingly terroristic influence."⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Leahy to Marshall, Apr. 4, 1945. Map Room, FDR Library.

⁵⁶ Roosevelt to Stalin, Apr. 4, 1945. Map Room, FDR Library.

⁵⁷ Donovan to Roosevelt, 4 Apr. 1945. PSF-OSS, FDR Library.

British Prime Minister Churchill, in an April 5 letter to Roosevelt, observed that “the Soviet leaders . . . are surprised and disconcerted at the rapid advance of the Allied armies in the west and the almost total defeat of the enemy on our front especially as they say they are themselves in no position to deliver a decisive attack before the middle of May. All this makes it the more important that we should join hands with the Russian armies as far to the east as possible and if circumstances allow, enter Berlin.” Churchill recalled that “we proposed and thought we had arranged six weeks ago provisional zones of occupation in Austria, but since Yalta the Russians have sent no confirmation of these zones. Now that they are on the eve of taking Vienna and very likely will occupy the whole of Austria, it may well be prudent for us to hold as much as possible in the north.”⁵⁸

On April 6, Dulles wrote to Donovan that the press may have exaggerated the extent of the German *reduit*, but that evidence existed that “sufficient supplies and weapons have been stored in inner *reduit* to equip with light arms and feed approximately 25,000 men for period of year.” The inner *reduit* included an area southwest of Salzburg around Berchtesgaden, and an area extending to the Feldkirch area based on the Swiss frontier. An outer *reduit* would stretch from parts of Austria and northern Italy to the Swiss frontier southwest of Munich.⁵⁹

Dulles also wrote Donovan that Swiss Intelligence chief Roger Masson enquired whether Dulles wished to contact Shellenberg of the German SD, apparently with the idea of “opening west front but holding east front.” Dulles “told Masson west front was already opened up without Shellenberg help,” and reiterated the unconditional surrender mantra. However, “Masson had information that Kesselring has already abandoned his command as hopeless,” and Swiss Intelligence “intercepted message for FHP/FHQ to German Generals on West Front to act on their own responsibility as they might not be able receive orders from HQ for several days. Maybe they are moving to the *reduit*?”⁶⁰

⁵⁸ *FRUS*, pp. 746-747.

⁵⁹ From: Bern, Switzerland, To: OSS, 6 Apr. 1945. #8349. 109 from 110. Record Group 226, Entry 90, Box 7, Folder 86.

⁶⁰ OSS Incoming Message, 2677th Regt., 6 Apr. 1945, From: Berne, Action: TSR. formation: HMC, WPM, EG, Files, #629, (Washington #813, London #924, Paris #852), From 110. Record Group 226, Entry 110, Box 1, Folder 13 - Telegrams.

Stalin responded to Roosevelt's letter on April 7.⁶¹ He insisted that "at any meeting with the Germans on questions of capitulation by representatives of one of the Allies arrangements have to be made for the participation in this meeting of representatives of the other Ally." However, the Americans and English "rejected the Russians the right of participation in the meeting with the Germans in Switzerland," something the Russians would never do. Stalin asserted that the Germans were resisting in the East but not the West:

They continue to fight savagely with the Russians for some unknown junction Zemlianitsa in Czechoslovakia which they need as much as a dead man needs poultices, but surrender without any resistance such important towns in Central Germany as Osnabrück, Mannheim, Kassel. Don't you agree that such a behavior of the Germans is more than strange and incomprehensible.

If the Germans may have been fighting the Russians harder, it would have had nothing to do with the conversations in Switzerland. The Germans well knew that the Communists would be a far more brutal occupier, not to mention that the Russians would seek revenge for the German excesses in the East.

An April 7 report from OSS London noted that Kaltenbrunner could not approach the Western Powers without Schellenberg and Himmler finding out. "Source thinks it probable Himmler using Kaltenbrunner and Hoettl in hope of embroiling western powers with negotiations likely to become known. Hoettl known to have been in close touch summer 1944 with Hungarian and Slovak circles in contact with Russia."⁶²

Meanwhile, the Americans and Swiss were exchanging broader intelligence than that related to Sunrise. Airey sent Dulles intelligence on the Italian, Yugoslav and Austrian Fronts, promising weekly updates. "You may release if you wish items of intelligence to Swiss should this be likely to help you as bargaining factor."⁶³ He

⁶² Secret, Special Report #67, 7 Apr. 1945, From: London. From 110. Record Group 226, Entry 110, Box 1, Folder 13 - Telegrams.

⁶³ OSS Outgoing Message, 2677th Regt., Top Secret, Copy #2 of 6, 7 Apr. 1945, To: Berne, Confirmation: #596, 597, 598. formation: EG, Files, Personal 110 From Airey. Record Group 226, Entry 110, Box 1, Folder 13 - Telegrams.

added in a later dispatch, “No objection to giving our Swiss friend snippets from summaries if done discreetly and whole picture is not given him at any one time.”⁶⁴

After receiving a message from Wolff through Parrilli, Dulles reported on April 9 that “Sunrise matter has revived”—Wolff had reported meeting with Vietinghoff and his Chief of Staff, Roettinger, and that “principle of unconditional surrender not questioned provided it can be honorable surrender.” The Germans “confirmed that they will do everything possible to prevent destruction, limit warfare against partisans, and protect prisoners and hostages.” Wolff recognized the “futility and uselessness of further fighting,” but “Vietinghoff is old line soldier and insists that surrender be dressed up so as to be compatible with his ‘military honor’ and not place him in position of being traitor.” Dulles concluded that it was “difficult to tell whether they playing for time or have serious intentions to surrender.”⁶⁵

Yet on the morning of April 10, Roosevelt wrote to Stalin, thanking him for “your frank explanation of the Soviet point of view of the Bern incident which now appears to have faded into the past without having accomplished any useful purpose.” Abhorring any future “mutual distrust and minor misunderstandings of this character,” Roosevelt predicted that “when our armies make contact in Germany and join in a fully coordinated offensive the Nazi armies will disintegrate.”⁶⁶ Roosevelt died later that same day.

Reflecting the above view, Lemnitzer warned Dulles on April 11 that Wolff’s outreach was only a ruse. “Germans are endeavoring to make Russians believe negotiations have been and are going on in Berne behind their backs.” Their release of Parri was only “a plot to further that end.” Moreover, the “Swiss newspapers were informed through German sources that Parri and others had been released to Switzerland in connection with negotiations going on there.” The message concluded:

⁶⁴ To: Berne, Confirmation: WPM, 13 Apr. 1945, #629, 110 from Jigsaw. Record Group 226, Entry 139, Box 60, Folder 554 - Telegrams Outgoing.

⁶⁵ From: Bern, Switzerland, To: OSS, 9 Apr. 1945. #8499. Bern to Washington, #9529 . . . For 109, Forgan, Armour, Gamble only, from 110. Record Group 226, Entry 90, Box 7, Folder 86.

⁶⁶ Roosevelt to Stalin, Apr. 10, 1945. Map Room, FDR Library.

There is certain evidence that this plot to prove to Russians that negotiations are already in progress behind their backs has already achieved considerable success. We feel that it is very doubtful that Critic [Wolff] did in fact visit Emperor [Kesselring] and we believe that he has acted, possibly on behalf of Himmler, with the dual object of feeling us out for possible terms of surrender in North Italy and at the same time attempting to obtain ammunition to embroil us with the Russians.⁶⁷

Despite such discouragement, Dulles moved forward. He responded to Lemnitzer that Gaevernitz should meet with the Germans to expedite the surrender. Dulles noted: "Your Ascona host is sincerely convinced that if allowed to make trip he could have real influence in persuading Glazier [Vietinghoff] of necessity of immediate and complete capitulation. His arguments are impressive and whether or not he succeeds in that particular task intelligence obtained might be valuable." Fending off use of the word "negotiations," Dulles concluded that the "idea that at this stage and with Germans thoroughly beaten we would stoop to negotiations is in itself ludicrous and hence any attempt to exploit his trip from this angle [is] not likely to have any repercussions."⁶⁸

Dulles wrote Lemnitzer again on April 12, assuring him that "Nothing in writing has been or will be given" and acknowledging that "we must play our cards close to our chest." Dulles queried Lemnitzer, "If there is satisfactory evidence that Critic did not visit Emperor this would naturally throw grave suspicion on entire Crossword. It would be helpful to know whether your doubt is based on evidence or deduction." Noting that six months ago he would have believed that Wolff was "merely maneuvering," Dulles wrote: "Today I consider at least 50 percent chance it is genuine but agree sufficient margin of doubt to make every precaution necessary. Swiss SI [Secret Intelligence] have rarely been fooled by Nazis in such matters."⁶⁹

⁶⁷ To: Berne, Confirmation: TSR, 11 Apr. 1945, Urgent. 626(9). To 110 for his eyes only from AFHQ from Nicholson. Crossword. Record Group 226, Entry 139, Box 60, Folder 554 - Telegrams Outgoing.

⁶⁸ Telegram 6689 to Caserta, Apr. 11, 1945. Peterson, p. 496.

⁶⁹ Telegram 6719 to Caserta, Apr. 12, 1945. Peterson, pp. 497-98.

Lemnitzer replied with an argument based not on facts, but on policy with the Russians: "Our doubt based on operational situation which prevailed in west at time of his alleged visit and fact that period during which visit was supposed to have made was used to make mischief with Russians. We believe that there is always an even chance that Germans will in any case attempt [to] make trouble between allies whatever happens."⁷⁰

At the same time, Bern OSS reported that anti-Nazi exiles had formed a committee "apparently with tacit Swiss approval entitled 'Das Demokratische Deutschland.'" Prominent members of the group "are well known to us." It acquired the German colony newspaper *Deutsche Zeitung in Der Schweiz*, which "will now turn complete somersault."⁷¹

For radio communication with Wolff, Dulles surreptitiously sent the Czech radio operator Vaclav Hradecky, nicknamed "Little Wally," to Wolff's headquarters. Dulles warned Caserta that "any message from him will be material received from Critic, Parilli, Zimmer etc. and all messages must therefore be carefully scrutinized as possible plants or double-cross." However, it would provide quick communication "in event they wish [to] send parliamentarians or advise us re sending couriers here"⁷²

On April 14, the British Embassy demanded to the U.S. Department of the State that the Sunrise talks be terminated due to Soviet objections:

His Majesty's Government feel that there is no object in any Allied representatives remaining in contact with German emissaries in Switzerland. Having regard to the effect which this matter has had upon the Soviet Government, His Majesty's Government therefore regard it as essential that all contact should at once be discontinued.⁷³

Prime Minister Churchill wrote to President Truman the next day supporting the Soviet objections to Sunrise. The Truman

⁷⁰ To: Berne, Confirmation: TSR, 13 Apr. 1945, 110 from Nicholson, Crossword. Record Group 226, Entry 139, Box 60, Folder 554 - Telegrams Outgoing.

⁷¹ Telegram 8567, Apr. 12, 1945. Peterson, p. 498.

⁷² Telegram to Caserta, Apr. 13, 1945. Peterson, p. 499.

⁷³ *FRUS*, p. 757.

Administration then began the termination of Sunrise without having consulting the OSS or Caserta.⁷⁴ Meanwhile, Dulles met in Paris with Donovan, who informed Dulles of the details of the recent Soviet machinations to eliminate Sunrise.⁷⁵

On April 17, Caserta wrote Dulles: "Heavy pressure is now being applied on Italian front and if Critic and Glazier ever needed a prod to make them act that prod is now being vigorously applied on our front where everything including kitchen stoves are being thrown at Germans."⁷⁶ It was reported that "in the Eastern sector enemy has resisted stubbornly but forced back," and that "orderly withdrawal begun."⁷⁷

Dulles answered that "Himmler may now either eliminate Critic or attempt use him to help Himmler himself establish some contact." While Dulles stated that he would have nothing to do with Himmler, "Possibility that Critic might still be used to help effect General or Italian Theater capitulation not completely excluded."⁷⁸

Dulles wrote Caserta on April 18 that, "While Critic's trip North will make us doubly circumspect in any Crossword contacts, there still remains interesting intelligence possibilities." Dulles urged:

It seems obvious and from their viewpoint natural that Russians should do everything possible to block realization of Crossword. Its success would mean that our forces Italy would probably be first to occupy Trieste, which from various indications received here now constitutes an even more important objective for Russians than Berlin. If Crossword or something like it fails and Germans retreat fighting to Adige line, then in all probability Russians will reach Trieste ahead of us. In my opinion this largely explains Russian susceptibility re Crossword about which I obtained additional info when in Paris.

⁷⁴ Smith & Agarossi, *Operation Sunrise*, p. 130.

⁷⁵ Dulles, *Secret Surrender*, pp. 144-47.

⁷⁶ To: Berne, Confirmation: TSR, 17 Apr. 1945, #662, Sunrise-Crossword, Glavin to 110 from AFHQ from Nicholson. Record Group 226, Entry 110, Box 2, Folder 14 - telegrams.

⁷⁷ To: Berne, Confirmation: TSR, 17 Apr. 1945, #655-657 to Berne. Record Group 226, Entry 110, Box 2, Folder 14 - telegrams.

⁷⁸ From: Bern- Caserta #699(9), 17 Apr. 1945. 5. From 110. Record Group 226, Entry 110, Box 2, Folder 14 - telegrams.

While I realize we will deal openly and fairly with our Russian Allies, this should not preclude us from doing everything possible to bring about quick surrender which would save the lives of our troops and bring us into the heart of German reduit.⁷⁹

While Wolff could be playing games with the connivance of Hitler and Himmler, the unconditional surrender of the Germans in Italy remained the goal. The Germans would face the “alternative of surrender to our forces or to Russians or possibly scrambling back into reduit if transportation still exists.” Most would prefer surrender to the Western Allies. Further, common action by Kesselring, von Vietinghoff, and Wolff “would help checkmate any reduit possibilities.”

In his book on Sunrise, Dulles expanded on the above. If there was no quick surrender “and the Germans, still fighting, fell back in a tight defensive knot west of Venice under the shadow of the Alps, then Communist forces, either Soviet troops coming across Hungary or Tito’s followers reaching up out of Yugoslavia, supported by the pro-Communist partisans, would be in Trieste and possibly west of there before we arrived.”⁸⁰ According to Rudolf Rahn, German intelligence intercepted a message from Stalin urging Tito to attack across Northern Italy to the French border. Joining with French Communist partisans, this could have led to Communist control of France and Italy.⁸¹

On April 20, OSS Washington cabled Dulles that the “JCS [Joint Chiefs of Staff] directs that OSS break off all contact with German emissaries at once. 110 [Dulles] is therefore instructed to discontinue immediately all such contacts.” Alleging that the Germans in Italy did not intend to surrender on acceptable terms, the message concluded that, “especially in view of complications which have arisen with Russians, the US and British governments have decided OSS should break off contacts; that JCS are so instructing OSS; that whole matter is to be regarded as closed and that Russians be

⁷⁹ Sunrise. Berne-Caserta #710, Berne-Paris #952. Glavin from 110 for Nicholson. April 18, 1945. Record Group 226, Entry 110, Box 2, Folder 14 - telegrams.

⁸⁰ Dulles, *Secret Surrender*, p. 147.

⁸¹ *Id.* at 147 n., citing Silvia Bertoldi, *I Tedeschi in Italia* (Milan, 1964), p. 186.

informed through Archer and Deane.”⁸² (The latter two were Allied Military Representatives in Moscow.)

Dulles read the above on arriving at his office on the morning of April 21.⁸³ He also received a note from Caserta still hoping that “the vast expenditure of effort on this project will one day bear fruit and hasten the surrender of German forces in North Italy which must inevitably take place. If the effort so expended results in saving of a single allied life it will not have been in vain.”⁸⁴

A not-so-sympathetic message from Caserta ordered that Dulles “advise when you have succeeded in breaking off all contacts, so we may tell JCS orders have been carried out.”⁸⁵ Dulles responded that he was “taking immediate steps” to do so, noting however that intermediary Parilli was expected to arrive soon with a report. Dulles opined that “we are breaking this contact a couple of days too soon and just at movement when we could judge whether or not something can be achieved,” but would follow orders. He would do so in a manner not to alienate a valuable resource:

This contact, originally initiated for intelligence purposes, was largely developed through outstanding, competent and Allied friendly Swiss officer who has charge of Swiss intelligence work directed toward Germany, and who is rendering us vital services in matters affecting reduit. I have task of effecting break in manner not to alienate this contact which is potentially the most useful and important we have for developing work directed against reduit.⁸⁶

Caserta responded that, while the Washington directive “puts an end to Sunrise-Crossword,” they remained interested in any information “the Swiss may gather from contacts with these forbidden

⁸² #5429. To Bern, Switzerland (Out 9333), #19479. To Ustravic, London (Out 9334), 20 Apr. 1945. 106 and Cheston to 109 and 110 only. Record Group 226, Entry 90, Box 7, Folder 86.

⁸³ Dulles, *Secret Surrender*, pp. 162-63.

⁸⁴ To: Berne, Confirmation: TSR, 21 Apr. 1945, Sunrise, #681, Glavin to 110 from Nicholson, Crossword. Record Group 226, Entry 110, Box 2, Folder 14 - telegrams.

⁸⁵ To: Bern Switzerland, From: OSS, 21 Apr. 1945, #5519. Cheston to 110 only. Record Group 226, Entry 90, Box 7, Folder 86.

⁸⁶ From: Bern, Switzerland, To: OSS, 21 Apr. 1945. #9119. Sunrise Crossword. 106 and Cheston only from 110. Record Group 226, Entry 90, Box 7, Folder 86.

characters”⁸⁷ Moreover, there was “no criticism on part of JCS [about] the way you have handled negotiations, but protest from 1 of our Allies for not being brought into the negotiations in the beginning brought about the decision.”⁸⁸

Dulles acknowledged that “I am taking immediate steps for full compliance. At present have no contact with Crossword personalities” Further, “I shall advise Parrilli that I have no further time to give to matter which now has dragged beyond all bounds and has failed to effect only objective we had in mind, viz., immediate unconditional surrender.” However, “Swiss intelligence for their own purposes will probably desire to retain contact with Parrilli et al., but over this I have no control and it is solely their concern.”⁸⁹

However, on April 23, Caserta objected that Dulles’ statement about the Swiss “might be construed as continuation of Sunrise negotiations and should not be pursued.” The message added:

We assume your reference to Swiss intermediaries relates to the past and not to any continuing relationship on this question, but it is important that you confirm this assumption, If, however, . . . the Swiss are acting completely on their own and not as your intermediaries, any approaches by Sunrise personalities to Swiss is a Swiss affair. Information coming to you from Swiss, acting wholly in their own interests, and without instigation by you, direct or indirect, should properly be transmitted.⁹⁰

Events had gone too far just to turn off the spigot. April 23 would become “the longest day” for Sunrise. Dulles urgently wrote that “Waibel telephoned from Chiasso that Critic and others have left for Lucerne” and that “Glazier’s representative has serious and important mission and powers.” “I told Waibel that pending further instructions I would not see Critic or Glazier’s representative but that if he, Waibel,

⁸⁷ To: Berne, Confirmation: TSR, Sunrise, #680, Ryan and Newhouse for Glavin to 110. Record Group 226, Entry 110, Box 2, Folder 14 - telegrams.

⁸⁸ To: Bern Switzerland, From: OSS, 22 Apr. 1945. #95019. 110 only from Cheston. Record Group 226, Entry 90, Box 7, Folder 86.

⁸⁹ From: Bern, Switzerland, To: OSS, 22 Apr. 1945, #9189. Glavin from 110 for Nicholson. #681. Record Group 226, Entry 90, Box 7, Folder 86. Also in Peterson, pp. 509-10.

⁹⁰ From: OSS, To: Bern, Switzerland, 23 Apr. 1945. #5549. Cheston to 110. Record Group 226, Entry 90, Box 7, Folder 86.

had info to communicate to me I would receive it.” Dulles added “For Washington. Waibel is officer Swiss intelligence”⁹¹

Caserta responded that Dulles must continue strictly to comply with the order to break off contact with Wolff, but that SACMED was recommending to the Combined Chiefs of Staff (CCS) in Washington that Dulles be authorized to contact German officers in Switzerland with full powers to surrender. The message continued, “Will be grateful if you will keep us informed of any intelligence which may be obtained via Swiss intermediaries.”⁹²

Dulles later notified his superiors that Wolff, his adjutant Wenner, and Lt. Col. Viktor von Schweinitz had arrived at Waibel’s house in Lucerne. That night Dulles “advised Parrilli in presence of Waibel and Husmann that on basis of info before us matter was no longer of interest to us” Parrilli revealed that Wolff and Schweinitz were ready to go to Allied Headquarters in Southern Italy to execute the surrender. Dulles told his superiors that he could offer no guarantee, “but Waibel’s statement carries much weight with me as to their willingness to do so.” If his superiors were not interested, Dulles dryly noted, “advise so that I may merely confirm that break is final and that there is not interest in having above emissaries go South.”⁹³

Caserta responded to Dulles: “Suggest you do everything you can to have Waibel and Husmann parry for time with Critic and Schweinitz until CCS make decision on SACMED’s request to lift restriction on your contact with them.”⁹⁴ Dulles responded that OSS Bern did not necessarily need “independent or substantive contact with them leaving such contact to you in South where if you desired Russians could be present from beginning with no background of separate conversations here to trouble them.” Dulles and “our Swiss

⁹¹ From: Berne, Action: TSR, 23 Apr. 1945, #749, Sunrise, Glavin from 110 for Nicholson. Record Group 226, Entry 110, Box 2, Folder 14 - telegrams.

⁹² To: Berne, Action: TSR, 23 Apr. 1945. #691, Sunrise, Glavin to 110 from AFHQ from Nicholson, Crossword. Record Group 226, Entry 110, Box 2, Folder 14 - telegrams.

⁹³ From: Berne, Action: TSR, #756(9), Lummy #1025(9), Wash # 929(9). Record Group 226, Entry 110, Box 2, Folder 14 - telegrams.

⁹⁴ To: Berne, Confirmation: TSR, 24 Apr. 1945, #698, Sunrise. Glavin to 110 from AFHQ from Nicholson, Crossword. Record Group 226, Entry 110, Box 2, Folder 14 - telegrams.

friends” believed that the German emissaries had full power to surrender. Waibel advised that, given Dulles’ refusal to see them, Wolff and Schweinitz would return to Northern Italy.⁹⁵

Dulles’ intelligence mill was yielding striking results. He revealed “info given by Critic to Waibel and Husmann” on April 23, summarizing Wolff’s visit to Berlin:

1. Critic on first day of his visit to Berlin April 18 saw first Himmler alone then after Himmler and Kaltenbrunner both meetings lasting many hours. Kaltenbrunner appeared well informed on Critic’s 2 visits to Switzerland for which K attacked Critic furiously. As to Hitler’s and his own personal future Himmler spoke of 3 possibilities. A. Fight it out at Berlin. B. Retreat to Northern redoubt. C. Retreat by plane to Berchtesgaden. As to last possibility Himmler added that Hitler now did not like to fly but might do so in emergency.

2. On second day of visit Critic saw Hitler in a bunker about 2 hours motor ride from center of Berlin. Hitler seemed in low spirits but not hopeless and stated substantially “we must fight on to gain time. In 2 more months the break between Anglo Saxons and Russians will come about and then I shall join party which approaches me first it makes no difference which.” Critic tried to put in a word about senselessness of further destruction in Italy to which Hitler did not react.⁹⁶

Caserta was grateful for the above information, and informed Dulles: “Our battle moving very fast. Troops of 5th army approaching southern exits of Brenner Pass. Germans have been so decisively defeated South of Po that resistance to our troops north of river is slight so far.”⁹⁷

⁹⁵ From: Berne, Action: TSR, 25 Apr. 1945, #761(9), Sunrise. Glavin from 110 for Nicholson - Crossword. Record Group 226, Entry 110, Box 2, Folder 14 - telegrams.

⁹⁶ From: Berne, Action: TSR, #758(9), Wash #931, London #1030. Glavin from 110 for Nicholson. 24 April 1945. Record Group 226, Entry 110, Box 2, Folder 14 - telegrams.

⁹⁷ To: Berne, Confirmation: TSR, 25 Apr. 1945, #702, Glavin to 110 from AFHQ from Nicholson - Crossword. Record Group 226, Entry 139, Box 60, Folder 554 - Telegrams Outgoing.

Dulles then passed on more detailed intelligence “furnished us by Waibel.” Schweinitz had been involved in the July 20 assassination conspiracy against Hitler, and his American-born grandmother was a direct descendent of John Jay, one of the first chief justices of the U.S. Supreme Court. “Waibel considers he has excellent store of knowledge which would be useful to us in connection with surrender and post surrender procedure.” Wolff also reported on the explosive tension between the neo Fascists, communists, Wehrmacht, SS and other troops in Northern Italy. Key Wehrmacht players were ready to act as a unit, including even Gauleiter Hofer:

Hofer addition considered particular importance as he had been charged with organizing werewolf formation Tyrol mountains. These formations to be created partly from local population and partly from retiring soldiers particularly in case of soldiers whose homes are overrun by Russians, who dare not return home and have nothing to lose. Waibel points out that Hofer as descendant of Andreas Hofer could command considerable prestige and if forced to become leader of mountain bands might cause us considerable trouble. If we keep him in our camp it would probably open one gate into reduit.⁹⁸

On April 26, Dulles telegraphed Lemnitzer and Donovan that “Waibel reports [the] following” intelligence:

1. As result of my refusal to have any contact with Critic. Latter returned Northern Italy late evening April 25. His return further motivated by Critic’s belief that his presence Northern Italy essential to control situation there, especially to be certain that his personal orders to SS forces to protect political prisoners and to avoid destruction Italian factories, power plants, etc. are complied with, according to promise given to me in March. Critic also stated to Waibel that he is facing possibility of Hitler and/or Himmler suddenly arriving by air in his territory with attempt to take over command for which even he had to prepare counter-measures.

⁹⁸ From: Berne, Action: TSR, 25 Apr. [1945], 762(9), Sunrise. Glavin from 110 for Nicholson Crossword. Record Group 226, Entry 110, Box 2, Folder 14 - telegrams.

2. Schweinitz and Wenner remain at Waibel's house Luzern. Prior to departure Critic left for Wenner full powers written on official stationary to act and sign on his behalf. Both Schweinitz and Wenner are prepared to proceed immediately to AFHQ with powers if desired by you.⁹⁹

Wolff would propose to Vietinghoff a proclamation that the forces in Northern Italy and South Tyrol were separated from the high command and "therefore independent action will be taken to end fighting, to avoid useless bloodshed, destruction and futile mountain warfare in redoubt." Wolff would urge Vietinghoff to send parliamentarians across the lines, but "Waibel does not favor this alternative as he thinks Schweinitz particularly suited for task to go to AFHQ."

Finally, at 22:50 hours on April 26, Colonel Glavin cabled Dulles that the Combined Chiefs of Staff had authorized him to arrange for Wenner and von Schweinitz to proceed immediately to Allied Force Headquarters at Caserta. A plane would pick them up at Annecy.¹⁰⁰

Lemnitzer wrote Dulles: "Reference my conversation before leaving Berne, strongly suggest party be accompanied here by 476 [Gaevernitz]. Consider Waibel also would be of great assistance if diplomatic reasons do not prevent his accompanying party."¹⁰¹ In a further clarification, Lemnitzer stated: "CCS instructions prescribe that there will be no bargaining or negotiating whatever in Switzerland. Wenner and von Schweinitz must either proceed immediately to AFHQ or else all contact must be discontinued."¹⁰²

Donovan telegraphed Dulles from Washington stressing that "there would be no conference or discussion in Suisse. Critic and companion must go AFHQ at once or entire deal is off. Russians have

⁹⁹ From: Berne, Action: TSR, 26 Apr. 1945, #769, Sunrise. Glavin from 110 for Nicholson. Record Group 226, Entry 110, Box 2, Folder 14 - telegrams.

¹⁰⁰ Summary of the Operation Sunrise, p. 17.

¹⁰¹ To: Berne, Confirmation: TSR, 26 Apr. 1945, #709, Sunrise. Glavin to 110 from AFHQ from Nicholson. Crossword. Record Group 226, Entry 110, Box 2, Folder 14 - telegrams.

¹⁰² To: Berne, Confirmation: TSR, 26 Apr. 1945, #710, Sunrise. Glavin to 110 from AFHQ from Nicholson. Record Group 226, Entry 110, Box 2, Folder 14 - telegrams.

been told fact that this is done on request of Germany, and SACMED has been instructed to invite a Russian representative to meeting.”¹⁰³

However, Dulles notified Caserta on April 27 that, according to Waibel, Wolff was back in Switzerland and, with Schweinitz and Wenner, was en route to the frontier at Buchs. Dulles believed Schweinitz and Wenner could be intercepted near the border so that they could proceed to Annecy for the surrender.¹⁰⁴ The interception was successful, and Dulles reported: “Schweinitz Wenner Waibel and 476 [Gaevernitz] will reach Geneva late tonight. They will all proceed Caserta early Saturday subject to Waibel’s making necessary arrangements as to his trip which he feels confident he can do.” Also, Waibel telephoned from Buchs stating that Wolff, who was “determined to conclude matters immediately,” left there by car for Innsbruck to meet with Kesselring.¹⁰⁵

On April 28, Dulles reported that Schweinitz, Wenner, and Gaevernitz would land at Caserta at any moment. “Waibel had difficulty obtaining certain permission which are required view stringent rule that no Swiss officer can leave country without formal approval. Permission obtained at 1200 hours and if plane has already left he can follow tomorrow. Consider his presence with you extremely desirable.” Finally, Wolff arrived at Bolzano and, with his associates, were awaiting the results of the trip by Schweinitz and Wenner.¹⁰⁶

At Caserta on April 28-29, an unconditional surrender document was quickly drafted. Generals Lemnitzer and Airey were present, as was Russian Major General A.P. Kislenko. Terms were dictated by the Allies. It was agreed that to maintain discipline, German officers could keep their side arms until the surrender was complete. However, German troops would be interned in prison camps, and would not just be demobilized and allowed to return to Germany.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ From: Washington, Action: TSR, 26 Apr. 1945, #3282(9), Sunrise. 109 to 110 only, Berne #558. Record Group 226, Entry 110, Box 2, Folder 14 - telegrams.

¹⁰⁴ From: Berne, Action: TSR, 27 Apr. [1945], 773(9), Sunrise. Glavin from 110 for Nicholson. Record Group 226, Entry 110, Box 2, Folder 14 - telegrams.

¹⁰⁵ From: Berne, Action: TSR, 27 Apr. 1945, #778(9), Sunrise. Glavin from 110 for Nicholson. Record Group 226, Entry 110, Box 2, Folder 14 - telegrams.

¹⁰⁶ From: Berne, Action: TSR, 28 Apr. 1945, #783. . . , Sunrise, Glavin from 110 for Nicholson. Crossword. Record Group 226, Entry 110, Box 2, Folder 14 - telegrams.

¹⁰⁷ Dulles, *Secret Surrender*, pp. 200-12 (reprint of Gaevernitz report).

For the formal surrender, Lt. General W.D. Morgan stood at one end of a long table, and Schweinitz and Wenner at the other end. The instrument of surrender, to be effective May 2, was signed. Its first paragraph stated: "The German Commander-in-Chief Southwest hereby surrenders unconditionally all the forces under his command or control on land, at sea, and in the air and places himself and these forces unconditionally at the disposal of the Supreme Allied Commander, Mediterranean Theatre of Operations."¹⁰⁸

Caserta notified Dulles that Schweinitz and Wenner had three copies of the instrument of surrender, and "should proceed [to] Bolzano quickest possible way traveling through Switzerland during evening and night. Please make necessary arrangements." Waibel arrived just after they departed and would remain for the present.¹⁰⁹ From there Waibel transmitted through OSS information to Swiss Captain Mayr, warning that certain retreating Wehrmacht troops may attempt to reach the Swiss border.¹¹⁰

On April 30, Dulles telegraphed Caserta: "476 [Gaevernitz] and his two companions [Schweinitz and Wenner] passed thru Bern about midnight and expected at Buchs Frontier before dawn. Waibel's associates Meyer and Barnes awaiting them there and making preparations [to] speed their further journey."¹¹¹ However, Dulles later reported: "Schweinitz and Wenner reached frontier early this morning where temporarily detained due [to] new Swiss order absolutely preventing crossing the frontier in any direction without approval highest Swiss authorities so that even approval Waibel proved inadequate. I presented matter [to] high Swiss political authority and approval asked about 1000 hours and party should have crossed immediately thereafter."¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ *Id.* at 208-10.

¹⁰⁹ To: Berne, Confirmation: TSR, 29 Apr. 1945, #732. Sunrise. Glavin to 110 from AFHQ from Nicholson. Crossword. Record Group 226, Entry 110, Box 2, Folder 14 - telegrams.

¹¹⁰ To Bern, 30 Apr. 1945, #734, From: AFHQ from Nicholson, To: Bern for 110 pass to Captain Mayr from Waibel. Sunrise. Crossword. Record Group 226, Entry 110, Box 2, Folder 14 - telegrams.

¹¹¹ From: Berne, Action: TSR, 20 Apr. 1945, #796(9), Sunrise. Glavin from 110 for Nicholson. Record Group 226, Entry 110, Box 2, Folder 14 - telegrams.

¹¹² Flash, From: Bern, Action: TSR, #799(9), Sunrise, Glavin from 110 for Nicholson. Record Group 226, Entry 110, Box 2, Folder 14 - telegrams.

In fact, Schweinitz and Wenner, surrender papers in hand, were prevented from crossing the hermetically-sealed border, and not even Waibel's men could order a waiver. As Dulles later related in his book, Gaevernitz telephoned Dulles at 7:00 a.m. explaining the situation. Dulles telephoned head of the Division for Foreign Affairs Walter Stucki, and the two met immediately. Dulles noted that "up to this point I had not disclosed to any member of the Swiss government what I was doing, nor to the best of my knowledge had Waibel." Dulles explained that the Germans must cross the border to effect the surrender and avoid further violence in Northern Italy, including possible guerrilla war in the mountains around Switzerland and a potential flood of desperate soldiers attempting to flee into Switzerland. The situation was too urgent for consultations. Stucki forthwith ordered the passage of Schweinitz and Wenner across the frontier.¹¹³

Field Marshal Alexander addressed General Von Vietinghoff directly in a message transmitted through "Little Wally" on April 30. He noted that Schweinitz and Wenner left Caserta for Switzerland, but because of the Allied advance towards Innsbruck, they may have difficulty delivering the Instrument of Surrender—"honorable terms of unconditional surrender of all armed forces, land, sea and air under your command and control to take affect at 1200 hrs Greenwich Mean Time on 2 May." Alexander admonished Vietinghoff to "avoid further useless bloodshed by ordering surrender agreed upon."¹¹⁴

But chaos suddenly flared up in the German command. Owing to Hofer's betrayal, on April 30 Kesselring relieved Vietinghoff of his command. The order to cease hostilities according to the surrender by the commander of the 10th and 14th Armies, Air General Pohl, and Wolff resulted in an order for their arrest. Wolff requested an Allied rescue action with parachute and/or armored troops. He also

¹¹³ Dulles, *The Secret Surrender*, 214-15. Dulles described Stucki as "Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs," but he was actually head of the *Abteilung für Auswärtiges* (Division for Foreign Affairs). The Department of Foreign Affairs itself, the Ministry, was then and until the 1970s called the *Eidgenössisches Politisches Departement*.

¹¹⁴ To: Walter personal to General Von Vietinghoff, From: Field Marshal Alexander, 30 Apr. 1945. Record Group 226, Entry 110, Box 2, Folder 14 - telegrams.

disclosed the location of 160 prominent hostages, including relatives of Churchill, Molotov, and Stauffenberg.¹¹⁵

After further machinations, Vietinghoff sent an urgent message to Alexander that he had been restored to his command by Kesselring, and asking "why are hostilities being continued from the allied side," given that the Germans had given orders "for the cessation of hostilities in accordance with the terms agreed upon."¹¹⁶

Dulles then received a message from Wolff that, after four hours of a heated telephonic discussion with Kesselring, Wolff dispatched the radio signal: "For the sphere of command C in C South West, I have subscribed to both the written and the verbal conditions of the Armistice Agreement. For particular reasons, I request that all public announcement must be withheld for 48 hours."¹¹⁷

Alexander responded to Vietinghoff through Little Wally that "have issued orders for cessation of Hostilities in accordance with terms agreed upon. They are being strictly enforced."¹¹⁸

In fact, on May 2 at 4:00 a.m., Kesselring approved the surrender. At 2:00 p.m., Wehrmacht troops in Italy and the western areas of Austria began to lay down their arms. Operation Sunrise was an accomplished fact.

In the days that followed, the principals evaluated the accomplishment. Caserta wrote Dulles that Sunrise "spells the end of Nazi domination in Europe."¹¹⁹ Sunrise was "an outstanding feat which has saved lives and brought us all closer to swift conclusion of combat of this European War."¹²⁰

¹¹⁵ From: Fairbury, To Marshal Alexander and to Dulles, 2 May 1945, Action: TSR, 2 May 1945, #18, Sunrise. Record Group 226, Entry 110, Box 2, Folder 14 - telegrams.

¹¹⁶ From: Fairbury, To Alexander, Action: TSR, 2 May 1945, #27. Record Group 226, Entry 110, Box 2, Folder 14 - telegrams.

¹¹⁷ From: Fairbury, Action: TSR, 2 May 1945, #21, Sunrise, An Dulles Von General Wolff. Record Group 226, Entry 110, Box 2, Folder 14 - telegrams.

¹¹⁸ To: Fairbury, Confirmation: TSR, 3 May 1945, #29. Sunrise. Record Group 226, Entry 110, Box 2, Folder 14 - telegrams.

¹¹⁹ To: Berne, Confirmation: TSR, 3 May 1945, #755, Sunrise. Glavin to 110 from AFHQ from Nicholson, Crossword. Record Group 226, Entry 110, Box 2, Folder 14 - telegrams.

¹²⁰ To: Berne, Confirmation: TSR, 3 May 1945, #758. Glavin to 110: Re Sunrise. Record Group 226, Entry 110, Box 2, Folder 14 - telegrams.

Dulles and Gaevernitz wrote to Wolff: “We have visited AFHQ and reviewed the steps taken to carry out the unconditional surrender as discussed at conversations we first held almost two months ago. We believe that the work there initiated and the steps taken thereafter have materially contributed to an early cessation of hostilities and the sparing of needless slaughter and destruction and feel that we can all view with satisfaction the result thereby achieved.”¹²¹

Donovan wrote: “By this action on the part of the OSS, the war in Europe has been brought to a successful conclusion much earlier than would have otherwise been possible, with the consequent saving of many lives and much treasure.”¹²²

Initial press reports falsely pictured Sunrise as a British initiative, although that was quickly corrected. The Swiss role also became known. Dulles noted to Lemnitzer: “Swiss attitude re publication including mention name of Waibel has undergone substantial change and even Waibel now wishes his part to be known. In general, Swiss desire to get some credit for what they did and questions of neutrality now play little role.”¹²³ Dulles advised Washington that “Swiss no longer have objection to mention their participation and recent articles in Zurich paper has covered this point quite fully.”¹²⁴

Dulles and Gaevernitz wrote in their report on Sunrise that OSS efforts achieved “the complete and unconditional surrender of the forces of the German Wehrmacht Italy and the western areas of Austria” “Through its early and successful persuasion of Colonel General Heinrich von Vietinghoff and SS General Karl Wolff, the two commanders of the Italian front, to ignore Hitler’s and Himmler’s injunction to fight to the end, the Office of Strategic Services was directly responsible for German troops and installations remaining

¹²¹ From: Paris, To Glavin and Ryan, 6 May 1945, Caserta from 110 and 476, Paris #871 (4). Record Group 226, Entry 110, Box 2, Folder 14 - telegrams.

¹²² Major General William J. Donovan, Office of Strategic Services, Washington, D.C., 15 May 1945. Record Group 226, Entry 139, Box 60, Folder 553 - Sunrise.

¹²³ Incoming Message, From: Berne, D.T. Origin 05213, 6 June 1945, Action: TSR. formation: EG Files, #901 (Washington #1068), Glavin from 110 For Lemnitzer. Record Group 226, Entry 110, Box 2, Folder 15 - Telegrams.

¹²⁴ From: Washington, 19 June 1945 22132, Action: TSR, Eg Files #3731(4), Further Reference your 5248(4). Record Group 226, Entry 110, Box 2, Folder 15 - Telegrams.

intact, throughout the long, preliminary stages of negotiations.” This resulted in the surrender of six to nine hundred thousand enemy soldiers, which encouraged the general German surrender. Moreover, the surrender in Italy preserved Italy and Austria from scorched-earth operations, protected political prisoners, and otherwise prevented major loss to life and property.¹²⁵

On this sixtieth anniversary of the surrender, it is worth remembering the role of Swiss intelligence in expediting the unconditional surrender of the strongest remaining German force on any front. In hindsight, Nazi preparations for extended resistance in an Alpine redoubt were insufficient.¹²⁶ But without the process leading to the surrender in Italy, German forces could have been shifted and a bloody mountain guerilla resistance could have extended the war and the loss of life. Plans for a Nazi “werewolf” resistance to the occupation could very well have been realized, as today’s Iraq war exemplifies. In this episode and others, Switzerland helped to shorten the war.

By the same token, American intelligence managed to pull off the great surrender despite interference from Washington. While Roosevelt initially stood firm to Stalin, the British did not, and the new Truman Administration was sufficiently clueless to order the OSS to appease the Soviets by ordering the cessation of any contact with the key German leaders who were attempting to deliver the surrender on a silver platter. While this may have very briefly prolonged the war, the events were so far in progress that the reluctant American leaders had to be knocked on the head by the silver platter to recognize that it meant the end of the war.

Going beyond the queries of who helped to shorten or to prolong World War II, it is worth noting that the Americans beat the Soviets to Trieste, helping to block Communist domination in Italy and beyond. Dulles recognized Stalin’s expansionist motives in opposing a surrender such as Sunrise on the Western front. Switzerland was threatened by Soviet designs in Central Europe, and Swiss intelligence in Sunrise played a role in assisting the Western powers to bloc the spread of Soviet totalitarianism in Europe.

¹²⁵ Summary of the Operation Sunrise, p. 21.

¹²⁶ See Stephen G. Fritz, *Endkampf: Soldiers, Civilians, and the Death of the Third Reich* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2004), excerpt at <http://www.kentuckypress.com/0813123259excerpt.cfm>.

If Sunrise revealed tensions that would quickly culminate into the Cold War, the German surrender in Northern Italy saved Russian lives as well as those of Anglo-Americans and Germans. Partly because of the Sunrise talks, Wehrmacht troops were not transferred to fight on the Eastern Front. Further, the Sunrise surrender presaged the general surrender celebrated as Victory in Europe Day. For this, Switzerland is owed a debt of gratitude for the assistance of her intelligence service in ending World War II.

~ *Stephen P. Halbrook*
Washington, D.C.