

'AMERICAN PHASE' OF WAR HELD NEAR

**Berne Observers Find Signs
That Second Front Threat
Is Delaying Nazi Drive**

RUNDSTEDT'S SHIFT CITED

**Marshal Now Said to Command
Coast From Norway's North
Tip to Spain's Frontier**

By G. H. ARCHAMBAULT

By Telephone to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

BERNE, Switzerland, April 22—
News of a new British Commando
action at Boulogne-sur-Mer sup-
ports the growing opinion in for-
eign military circles that the war
is about to enter what is styled
its "American phase."

That phase, it is foreseen, is
likely to be characterized by Allied
initiative in offense and greater
activity in the air. It should be-
come intense by July, and Western
Europe again looms as the battle-
ground.

These observers point to signs
in Axis countries that the possi-
bility has not escaped attention
there. One of the most significant
may be the recent appointment of
General Field Marshal Karl Rudolf
Gerd von Rundstedt, generally ac-
cepted as one of the brains of the
German Wehrmacht, as command-
er not merely in occupied France,
as first supposed, but of all coastal
sectors from Northern Norway to
Bayonne on the Franco-Spanish
border.

The return of Pierre Laval to
power in France may furnish an-
other sign. Reading between the
lines of German comment on the
change in the Vichy government,
one may discern an admission that
an appreciable portion of the
French populace might side with
the British, should a "second front"
be created. The presence of M.
Laval at the head of the govern-
ment is therefore regarded as a
form of insurance against such an
eventuality.

As indications have emerged
that the Nazi Spring offensive will
not materialize in Russia this
Spring, it was felt in competent
quarters that considerations of a
"second front" might not be alien
to the delay, and the greater the
delay the deeper the impression.
The British Commando raid on St.
Nazaire on March 27 and the Royal
Air Force raid on Luebeck, Ger-
many, two days later came to con-
firm it.

Indeed, these two actions are
considered by some to mark the
opening of the "American phase."
In any case, their importance was
proved by the great publicity given
them by the inspired German
press. There is reason to believe,
moreover, that the casualties and
damage at Luebeck were greater
than even the British imagined at
first, with the numbers killed, seri-
ously wounded and slightly wound-
ed each running into four figures.

It is pointed out, furthermore,
that both German and Italian
sources are stressing the defenses
being raised along the coastline
the German High Command occu-
pies on the North Sea as well as
the Atlantic. It is suggested by
these sources that this is a sort of
new West Wall, as modern as it is
invulnerable. That may be, but
the fact remains that it is some
6,000 miles long.

With any idea of a German land-
ing in Great Britain apparently
abandoned, with operations in Rus-
sia still resembling "a war of
movement without movement" and
with the R. A. F. ever more active,
military observers are more and
more watchful for confirmation
of the opening of the "American
phase." It is postulated on aggres-
siveness and mastery of the air.

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