

Can Air Raids Cripple Germany's Capacity to Sustain War?

By B. T. RICHARDSON

OTTAWA.—No one in Canada has yet, as far as the record shows, considered the full implications to this country of airpower. Yet the greatest debate on the fundamental problems of winning the war rests on the competing claims of airpower against land and seapower as the decisive weapon of this conflict.

For Canada, airpower is a peculiarly suitable weapon, for which its advocates claim the assurance of greatly shortening the war if it is to be used properly against Germany. Certainly airpower has been the decisive factor in virtually all battles and campaigns so far in this war. Its advocates go further and claim that airpower carries the only reasonable guarantee of victory over Germany. To these claims may be added this, that airpower is the most economical, in manpower and resources, way to victory.

Had the concept of airpower prevailed in Canada at the outset, our war effort would have been vastly different from what it is today. But the concept of airpower has emerged from this war. It has moved from the books of theorists to the established facts of war experience. If Canadians had rightly foreseen their country's capacity to mobilize airpower, we would doubtless have declared that air fighting would be our special task in this war, and our resources would have been entirely devoted to that end. We could have done that and we would have inflicted more damage on the enemy by now; we would have brought victory closer. But to say so now is waste air that has passed through the slipstream of time.

'Chubby' Is Convert

No one is saying these things in Canada yet. Our most notable convert to the airpower school of thought is Hon. C. G. Power, air minister, who expressed his views briefly at a press conference after his return from England. Yet if the airpower view is to prevail, it would revolutionize completely the perspective of Canada's role in the war, calling for a review of Canadian war policy in several vital fields.

Airpower means, in terms of immediate war plans, the abandonment of concepts of global war that involve hacking at the fingers and toes of German military power, in favor of a concept of cutting the German throat direct.

Extravagant claims for airpower have obscured in controversy many facts that today, late in 1942, have been established by experience. They will be as common as history to the next generation. By airpower, its advocates mean the power, through use of planes, to get at the enemy and proceed with the task of destroying him. This is the final aim of strategy. The case can be stated briefly.

The target to be attacked is the enemy's war effort, upon which his armies depend

for sustenance in administering their campaigns. This includes industrial cities, factories, homes of workers, communication systems that transport workers and materials to factories and carry finished munitions to the armies. A master plan of bombing Germany would include about two score primary targets. The Associated Press recently listed 24 German cities that have been heavily bombed. Time magazine recently listed 31 such primary objectives. From such sources and the reports of destruction, a scoreboard of bombing could be worked out:

Destroyed:

- | | |
|------------|---------|
| 1. Lubeck | 3 Emden |
| 2. Rostock | |

Heavily raided, involving partial destruction:

- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| 4. Cologne | 9. Bremen |
| 5. Mainz | 10. Mannheim |
| 6. Hamburg | 11. Dusseldorf |
| 7. Kiel | 12. Essen |
| 8. Saarbrucken | 13. Munich |

Subject to heavy raids:

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------|
| 14. Augsburg | 21. Coxhaven |
| 15. Deutz | 22. Aachen |
| 16. Hamm | 23. Stuttgart |
| 17. Hanover | 24. Kassel |
| 18. Frankfort | 25. Karlsruhe |
| 19. Gelsenkirchen | 26. Flensburg |
| 20. Dortmund | |

Still to be bombed heavily:

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------|
| 27. Berlin | 34. Liepzig |
| 28. Friedrichshafen | 35. Chemnitz |
| 29. Rosenheim | 36. Pilsen |
| 30. Nuremberg | 37. Stettin |
| 31. Magdeburg | 38. Posen |
| 32. Dessau | 39. Lodz |
| 33. Halle | 40. Breslau |

How to Work It Out

The 1000-bomber raid is the sole method of destroying these targets, providing that, under favorable conditions, 3000 to 4000 explosive-laden planes could be sent. Destruction of these cities would cripple Germany's capacity to sustain the war. Total destruction would erase the places of employment, the production, the homes and the capacity to continue any existence in any way helpful to Germany's military power of 20,000,000 Germans. They are the backbone of the German war effort, the continued attack on Russia, the German sea war, and the Nazi grip on conquered territory. The co-efficient of destruction to eliminate them is about 100 of the RAF's new 8000-pound bombs, or their equivalent, to the inhabited square mile.

Outside a bombing offensive of this range—which has not yet been agreed upon by the United Nations—there is no other argument in sight that claims the key to victory. Total bombing of these cities would end the war. The airpower advocate says: "Let's see that they get it."

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