



Hitler Assassination Plan

How did the British plan to kill Hitler?

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Introduction

In 1944 the SOE (Special Operations Executive) drew up some plans to kill Hitler. The documents you are about to look at detail two of the proposed assassination plans that formed part of Operation Foxley.

You are going back to 1944. As Head of SOE it is your job to decide which of two ways of killing Hitler should be given the go-ahead. You must look at the dangers involved and the chances of success. When these plans were revealed in July 1998 they caused world media interest. This is a unique chance to work with these original and secret documents.

Tasks

Look at Source 1

1. This is the introduction to Operation Foxley, the British plan to assassinate Hitler:
 - a) What is the 'object' of Operation Foxley?
 - b) How many different methods are put forward?
 - c) Where is the assassination likely to be carried out? Find the two places mentioned.

Look at Source 2

2. This piece of the file details the plans for assassination at Salsburg railway station:
 - a) What method of killing Hitler is described here?
 - b) What is meant by the word 'medium'?
 - c) What is meant by the word 'operatives'?
 - d) Briefly describe how the cleaners could be used to kill Hitler.
 - e) Who else could be used in this plan?
 - f) What will cause the poison to mix in the water?

Look at Source 3

3. This section of the plan describes the poison which could be used:
 - a) How much of 'I' kills?
 - b) What would 'I' not be suitable for? Why is this?
 - c) List all the reasons why 'I' is the best 'medium' to use.

Look at Source 4

4. This section of the plan details Hitler's drinking habits:
 - a) Read Hitler's drinking habits carefully. What would be the best way of poisoning him without the poison being detected

Consider the following factors in your answer:

- How likely is there to be the right opportunity to put this plan into action?
- If the plan goes ahead, how likely is it to kill rather than just injure Hitler?
- How likely is it that the people carrying out the plan will be caught?

Look at Source 5

5. This section of the plan deals with the opportunities to assassinate Hitler in Obersalzberg.

- a) How will the assassins know whether Hitler is in Obersalzberg?

Look at Source 6

6. This is a map of the area of the Berghof, Hitlers home in Obersalzberg:

- a) Study the map carefully. Where do you think would be a good place to make the assassination attempt? Why is this?

Look at Source 7

7. This section of the plan describes the opportunity to assassinate Hitler during one of his daily walks.

- a) Find Hitlers walk on the map shown in Source 6. Was this one of the locations you suggested?
- b) How well protected is Hitler on this walk?
- c) What cover does the area provide for would-be assassins?

Look at Source 8

8. This section deals with locations for the assassins.

- a) Can you work out where on the map (Source 6) the assassins should launch their attack on Hitler?
- b) What weapons should the assassins carry?
- c) What disguises are suggested?

Look at Source 9

9. If the first plan fails, what is the alternative one?

10. By comparing the plans for the attempts on Hitler's life, you should be able to decide which plan has the greatest chance of succeeding

- a) Write a report to the Prime Minister outlining which of the assassination plans should go ahead. Give full reasons for your choice.

Background

Throughout Hitler's career as a politician and as leader of Germany he was at danger from assassination attempts. Indeed, a number of attempts were made on his life but he survived them all. Bombs were left in a variety of places that either failed to go off, or Hitler changed his plans at the last moment. In 1944 Hitler was actually injured in an attempt on his life which really should have killed him. He managed to survive only with damage to his hearing. After this attack Hitler claimed he was 'invulnerable and immortal'. Any attempts on his life by members of his own staff or enemies were brutally dealt with. In May 1942, one of his most senior Gestapo officials had been assassinated by SOE-trained Czechs. In the reprisals that followed 5,000 civilians were murdered.

The SOE had been created in 1940 by the British to undertake 'all action by way of subversion and sabotage against the enemy overseas' now that much of Europe was under German occupation. The SOE began planning Operation Foxley in 1944 despite some opposition from within their ranks. Some people argued it was better to leave Hitler alive as he was making so many blunders. Nevertheless, a plan was put together and SOE began looking for recruits to perform the attempts. The Allied successes of 1945 overtook the planned assassination attempt and SOE concentrated its energies elsewhere. The existence of such a plan does, however, excite much interest as had it gone ahead and succeeded, it could have changed the course of the war and perhaps history.

Teachers Notes

The lesson involves quite a lot of reading, and the use some unfamiliar words and terms. However, the pupils are given a rare opportunity to work with some of the most exciting documents to be released for years. This should fire pupils' imagination and interest in History. It is advised that you familiarise yourself with the documents and the questions, so that you can provide help and guidance.

The task can be extended in a variety of ways:

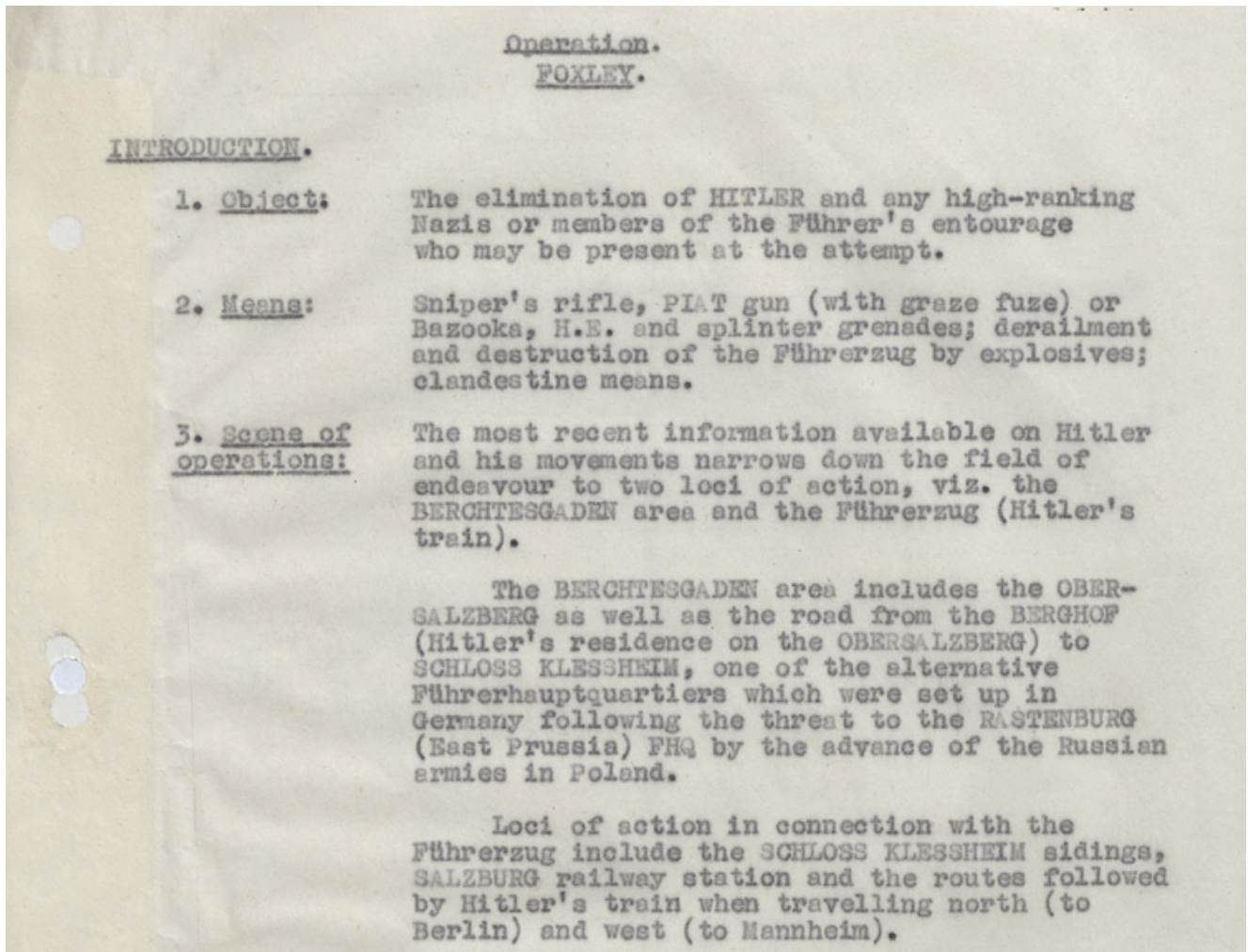
- It would suit group work to help the pupils cope with the volume of the material.
- Pupils could also compare their findings and debate which is the best plan and why.
- An interesting angle for the pupils to look at is why it might have been better to let Hitler live; again this could be debated in class.
- For homework, the pupils could be set the task of finding out about other assassination attempts on Hitler, in particular the one in 1944 in which he was injured.

Schemes of Work

Hot war, cold war why did the major twentieth-century conflicts affect so many people?

Key Stage 3, Unit 18.

Source 1 : Introduction to Operation Foxley 1944 (HS 6/624)



Source 1 : Transcript of Introduction to Operation Foxley 1944 (HS 6/624)

Operation.

FOXLEY.

INTRODUCTION.

1. Object : The elimination of HITLER and any high-ranking Nazis or members of the Führer's entourage who may be present at the attempt.

2. Means : Sniper's rifle, PIAT gun (with graze fuze) or Bazookas, H.E. and splinter grenades; derailment and destruction of the Führerzug by explosives; clandestine means.

3. Scene of operations : The most recent information available on Hitler and his movements narrows down the field of endeavour to two loci of action, viz, the BERCHTESGADEN area and the Fuhrerzug (Hitler's train).

The BERCHTESGADEN area includes the OBERSALZBERG as well as the road from the BERGHOF (Hitler's residence on the OBERSALZBERG) to SCHLOSS KLESSHEIM, one of the alternative Fuhrerhauptquartiers which were set up in Germany following the threat to the RASTENBURG (East Prussia) FHQ by the advance of the Russian armies in Poland.

Loci of action in connection with the Fuhrerzug include the SCHLOSS KLESSHEIM sidings, SALZBURG railway station and the routes followed by Hitler's train when travelling north (to Berlin) and west (to Mannheim).

Source 2 : At Salzburg Railway Station - Operation Foxley 1944 (HS 6/624)

2. At Salzburg railway station.

Fig. 62 and 63 show the station and sidings at Salzburg. Hitler's train is still, it is believed, occasionally serviced at Salzburg station where it was reported in July 1944 as occupying the position shown in Fig. 62 (alongside v. Ribbentrop's train).

Only the sides of the coaches of special trains are washed; the tops of the coaches, it would appear, are not cleaned. This job is performed by 6 French workers (female) dressed in black overalls (knee length, buttoned) without distinguishing badge. Interference with the drinking and cooking water is the only clandestine means which offers itself. The only point at which the water can be "doctored" is the tank above the kitchen of the MITROPA dining car, since it appears quite definite that water trolley wagons are not used (as in this country) for taking on drinking water.

Whether or not it would be possible for one of these cleaners to get at the tank immediately above the kitchen of the MITROPA dining car (Fig. 64) during the final wash that special trains are given shortly before proceeding on a journey is doubtful. They are apparently approachable (see C. above) and an attempt to suborn one of them might be worth while.

It might be possible for an operative to introduce the medium at night,^x provided the guards, as in the case of v. Ribbentrop's train, consisted of only a couple of Bahnpolizei, specially if the latter's attention could be diverted for the necessary time by a second operative. (The lighting at Salzburg station is described as extremely poor).

The medium which is described in Appendix V would best be introduced into the tank in the form of a strong solution which the jolting of the train as soon as it got into motion would tend to distribute evenly in the water.

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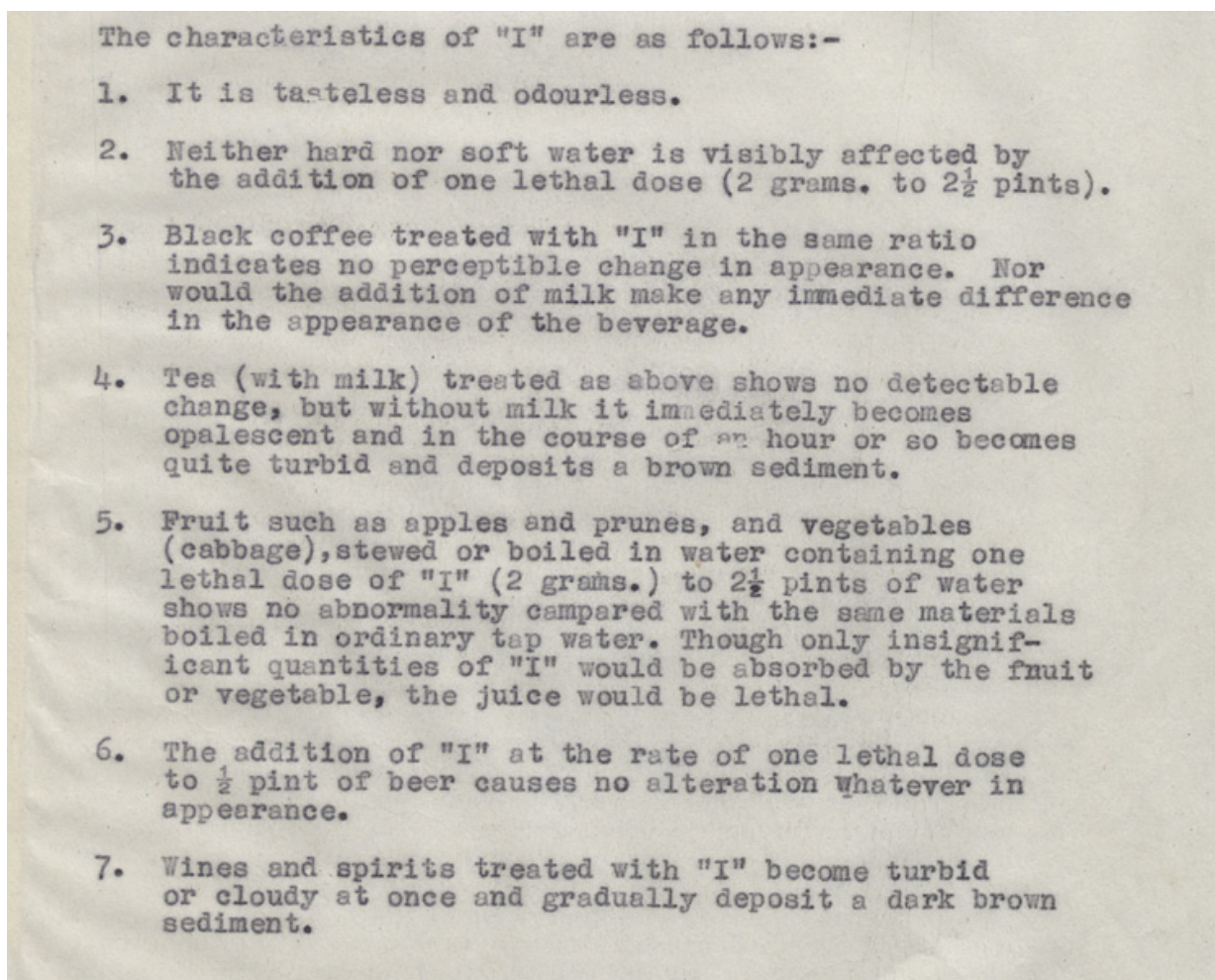
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Source 3 : The Properties of 'I' - Operation Foxley 1944 (HS 6/624)



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The characteristics of "I" are as follows:-

1. It is tasteless and odourless.
2. Neither hard nor soft water is visibly affected by the addition of one lethal dose (2 grams. to 2½ pints).
3. Black coffee treated with "I" in the same ratio indicates no perceptible change in appearance. Nor would the addition of milk make any immediate difference in the appearance of the beverage.

4. Tea (with milk) treated as above shows no detectable change, but without milk it immediately becomes opalescent and in the course of an hour or so becomes quite turbid and deposits a brown sediment.
5. Fruit such as apples and prines, and vegetables (cabbage), stewed or boiled in water containing one lethal dose of "I" (2 grams.) to 2½ pints of water shows no abnormality compared with the same materials boiled in ordinary tap water. Though only insignificant quantities of "I" would be absorbed by the fruit or vegetable, the juice would be lethal.
6. The addition of "I" at the rate of one lethal dose to ½ pint of beer causes no alteration whatever in appearance.
7. Wines and spirits treated with "I" become turbid or cloudy at once and gradually deposit a dark brown sediment.

Source 4 : Hitler's drinking habits - Operation Foxley 1944 (HS 6/624)

Hitler, according to reliable information, is a tea addict. He always drinks it with milk. Since the milk is poured first into the cup, it is unlikely that the tea's opalescence (see 4. above) would be noticed as it came from the teapot.

Hitler is said to be extremely fond of apple juice.

The reports that he drinks enormous quantities of black coffee, which have appeared in the popular press from time to time, are denied by P/W who was body-servant to Hitler from 1936 to 1940, although a dining car attendant from von Ribbentrop's train declares this is not so and that he personally served the Führer with coffee (and milk) at the Berghof. Hitler may well have formed the habit in the course of the war.

Apart from such table waters as FACHINGER and APOLINARIS the only other beverage Hitler takes is his "near beer". This beer is said to be a special product of the HOLZKIRCHEN brewery, Munich, whose lorry makes a delivery once a month to the Berghof. (It is difficult to see how this beer could be treated outside the brewery, i.e. before bottling).

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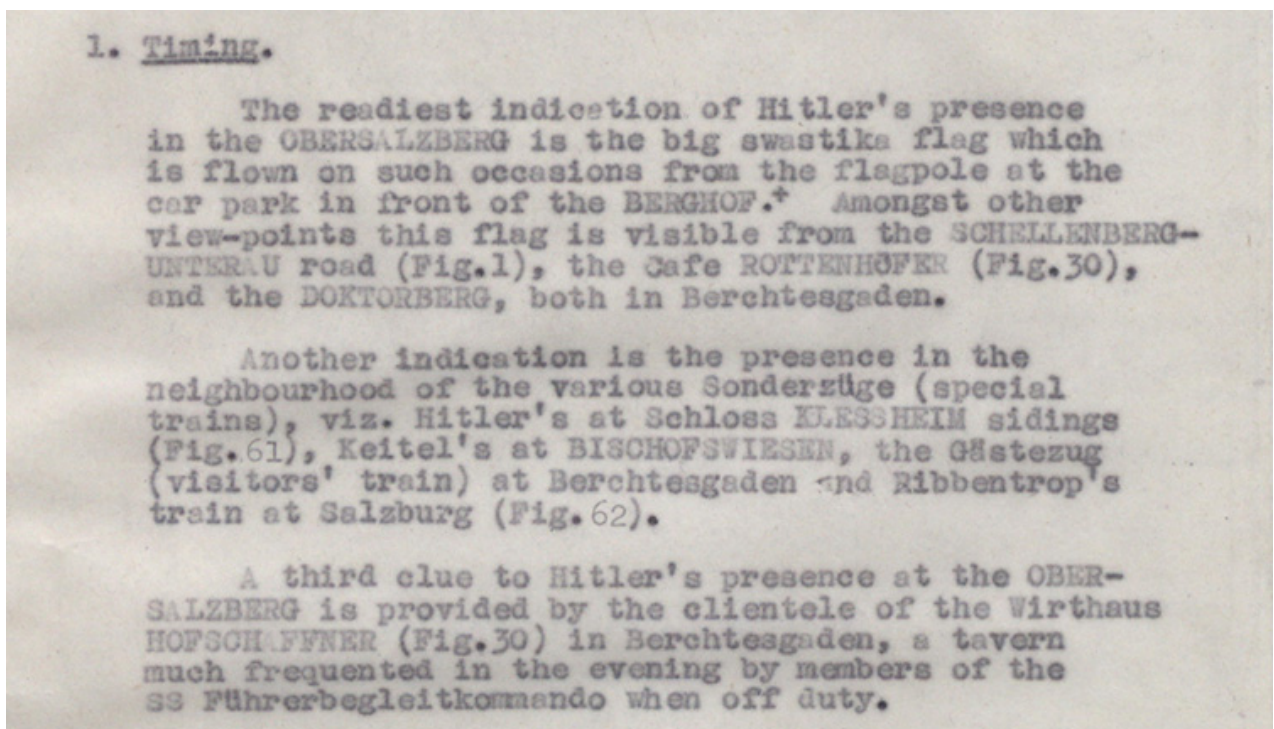
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Source 5 : The timing of the attack - Operation Foxley 1944 (HS 6/624)



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1. Timing.

The readiest indication of Hitler's presence in the OBERSALZBERG is the big swastika flag which is flown on such occasions from the flagpole at the car park in front of the

BERGHOF. Amongst other view-points this flag is visible from the SCHELLENBERGUNTERAU road (Fig.1), the Cafe ROTTKNHOFER (Fig.30), and the DOKTORBERG, both in Berchtegaden.

Another indication is the presence in the neighbourhood of the various Sonderzuge (special trains), viz. Hitler's at Schloss KLESSHEIM sidings (Fig.61), Keitel's at BISCHOFSWIESEN, and the Gastezug (visitors' train) at Berchtegaden and Ribbentrop's train at Salzburg (Fig.62).

A third clue to Hitler's presence at the OBERSALZBERG is provided by the clientele of the Wirthaus HOFSCHAFFNER (Fig.30) in Berchtegaden, a tavern much frequented in the evening by members of the SS Fuhrerbegleitkommando when off duty.

Source 6 : Berchtesgaden : Hitler's Walk 1944 (HS 6/624)



Source 7 : Action at the Mooslaner Kopf - Operation Foxley 2944 (HS 6/624)

(a) Action at the MOOSLANER KOPF (Fig.2). Action here is nevertheless worthy of consideration in view of the fact that whereas a considerable interval of time may elapse between Hitler's visits to Schloss KLESSHEIM and other FHqs^x the Führer rarely misses

his daily walk to the teahouse on the MOOSLANER KOPF (30 in Fig.2). Thus from the middle of March 1944, before which date the snow was too thick, Hitler went to the Teehaus nearly every day.

Hitler is reported to set out from the Berghof for the Teehaus between 1000 and 1100 hrs. following the route marked in Fig.2. Walking alone, the Führer is under observation throughout his walk by the SS patrol which follows him at a discreet distance. Hitler is also under the observation of the SS piquet at the GUTSHOF for about 1000 yards of the walk, and is visible to the SS piquets at the Theaterhalle and the Landhaus Göring as he crosses the concrete by-pass from the GBERAU road to the Führerstrasse. These piquets are, however, well over 500 yards away.

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Source 8 : Assassin locations - Operation Foxley 1944 (HS 6/624)

(i) Approach: From the LAROSBACH (Fig.2) through the woods to the wire fence near the point at which the concrete by-pass cuts the route followed by Hitler in his walk. The operative or operatives (supposing two snipers are employed) should be in position, (say) between this point and the teahouse, not earlier than 1000 hrs. (to give RSD dog patrol time to have passed). The position taken up should be within 100-200 yards of the route.

(ii) Weapon and equipment: Mauser sniper's rifle, telescopic sight (carried in pocket), explosive bullets in magazine, wire-cutters (for making hole in wire fence), H.E. grenades carried in haversac for close protection and assistance in making get-away.

(iii) Disguise: Gebirgsjäger uniform. The great majority of the patients at the Lazarett (military hospital) in the PLATTERHOF are mountain troops. (Gebirgsjäger). Since the SS Führerbegleitkommando, the RSD (when not in mufti) and the SS Wachkompanie Obersalzberg all wear this type of uniform (Fig.35a) in winter (with slight modifications), impersonation on these lines would obviously facilitate approach to within striking distance.

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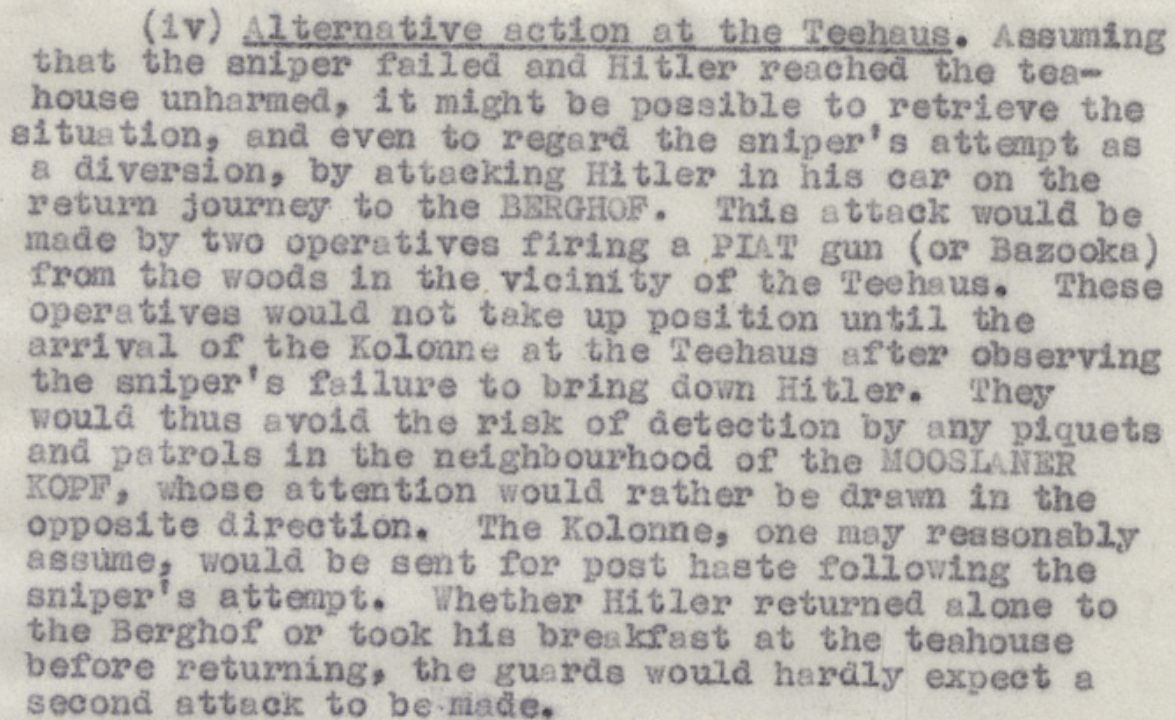
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Source 9 : Alternative plans - Operation Foxley 1944 (HS 6/624)



(iv) Alternative action at the Teehaus. Assuming that the sniper failed and Hitler reached the tea-house unharmed, it might be possible to retrieve the situation, and even to regard the sniper's attempt as a diversion, by attacking Hitler in his car on the return journey to the BERGHOF. This attack would be made by two operatives firing a PIAT gun (or Bazooka) from the woods in the vicinity of the Teehaus. These operatives would not take up position until the arrival of the Kolonne at the Teehaus after observing the sniper's failure to bring down Hitler. They would thus avoid the risk of detection by any piquets and patrols in the neighbourhood of the MOOSLANER KOPF, whose attention would rather be drawn in the opposite direction. The Kolonne, one may reasonably assume, would be sent for post haste following the sniper's attempt. Whether Hitler returned alone to the Berghof or took his breakfast at the teahouse before returning, the guards would hardly expect a second attack to be made.

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