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Kesselring's Strategic Leadership in  
a  
Contested and Capricious  
Environment

by

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## Kesselring's Strategic Leadership in a Contested and Capricious Environment

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### Abstract

The ex-ante evaluation of German Field Marshal Albert Kesselring's strategic leadership competencies after the 1942 Allied TORCH landings in Africa depicts the impact of his skills on the successful denial of a swift Allied victory in the Mediterranean theater. The evaluation further illustrates that Kesselring's failing comprehensiveness of competencies influenced the Axis powers' ability to regain unity of effort and strategic initiative. Kesselring's ability to apply his technical leadership competencies enabled a swift response to the crisis and the creation of integrated and synchronized supporting systems. Both aspects allowed the Axis powers to halt the Allied offensive and shaped the conditions for delaying future Allied operations in the Mediterranean. Kesselring's failing conceptual and interpersonal leadership competencies prevented him to obtain an Axis powers' unity of effort and to develop a strategic focus. This evaluation of Kesselring's strategic leadership competencies provides valuable insights for strategic leaders in the necessity of a comprehensive application of the whole scheme of and the human factor within strategic leadership competencies.

## **Kesselring's Strategic Leadership in a Contested and Capricious Environment**

German Field Marshal Albert Kesselring's application of strategic leadership competencies in the Mediterranean theater allowed the Axis powers to react successfully to the 1942 Allied operation TORCH landings in North Africa. He denied the Allies a swift victory, however, failed to regain unity of effort and strategic focus for the Axis powers. The reconstruction and evaluation of Kesselring's leadership skills portray the importance of the human factor within and the comprehensiveness of the strategic leadership competencies.

The U.S. Army War College (USAWC) examines General Dwight D. Eisenhower's, Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force in Europe, strategic leadership extensively in its curriculum and explores his initial struggles with managing coalition warfare in the Mediterranean episode. If we can learn from Eisenhower, what can we learn from his adversary? During the Mediterranean period, Eisenhower's antagonist was the German Supreme commander South or *Oberbefelshaber Süd* (OBS): Field Marshal Albert Kesselring. Both men worked in a coalition construct and strove for strategic supremacy in the Mediterranean theater. Although the Allies ultimately succeeded, it was a hard struggle, and the Axis powers delayed a Mediterranean triumph up until 1945. The German response to the Allied North African landings in November 1942 hampered the aimed quick Allied victory and stressed Eisenhower's leadership. Kesselring, like Eisenhower, acted on his coalition's political and operational threshold in the Mediterranean theatre. Their opposed struggle opts this evaluation of Kesselring's strategic leadership.

The core of this paper is a closer examination of Kesselring's application of leadership competencies in the turbulent last quarter of 1942. The extensive focus on General Eisenhower's leadership, paired with the fact that there are few adversary-oriented publications studied at the USAWC, stimulated this closer study of Kesselring's command. The TORCH landings depict a swivel point in the strategic situation as the Axis alliance's supremacy eroded under stress. This capricious period in which strategic leadership was explicitly contested, required a rebuilding of consensus in the Axis alliance, the reorganization of its available forces, and a reshaping of the environment and its conditions. All these aspects fit General George Casey's definition of strategic leadership.<sup>1</sup> Kesselring is known for his strategic mastery in the Mediterranean theater, but also for his role in the pre-war shaping of the *Luftwaffe* (German Air Force), war crimes in Italy, the bombing of urbanized areas, and for his post-war political activities.<sup>2</sup> Most publications about Kesselring portray his actions or question his war crimes; few writings address his leadership skills. How can we get insights into Kesselring's competencies?

This exploration of Kesselring's leadership begins with a section titled, 'Ex-ante deduction of strategic leadership,' which addresses the aspects of strategic leadership which were used to reflect upon his performance, and how that reflection considered his historical context and the limitations of available sources. The next section, 'Smiling Albert,' delves deeper into the life and personality of the man, Kesselring, to include: his background, individual characteristics, and behavior. A third section, 'Tunisian development,' examines strategic leadership characteristics through the historical development of the Axis' realignment, revision, and changes from an Axis perspective.

The next section, 'Comprehensive human competencies,' displays the deduced strategic leadership competencies, and how they failed to obtain a unified effort for the Axis powers. This section depicts the importance of the human factor and the competencies' comprehensiveness. All of this leads to the conclusion titled 'Catalysts for success,' which reiterates that competencies are a decisive game changer. To trace how that conclusion was reached, let us first look at the concepts and methods used to arrive at it.

#### Ex-ante deduction of strategic leadership

This section defines the method used for the ex-ante evaluation of Kesselring's competencies. Stephen J. Gerras' concepts of strategic leadership as taught by the USAWC, form the basis for this analysis. Critically juxtaposing these concepts with the historical events and actions that occurred in the theater allows the reconstruction of Kesselring's leadership competencies.

To develop strategic leadership skill and competencies, every leader should reflect on his competencies and actions and study those of other leaders. This paper provides such insights, by reflecting Kesselring's leadership, and intends to benefit USAWC students. Therefore, it touches upon the similar reference points employed in the USAWC curriculum: Gerras' Strategic Leadership Primer. In his Primer, Gerras depicts three common characteristics of strategic leadership: alignment, vision, and change. Strategic leadership involves establishing a comprehensive assessment and understanding of the environment, shaping conditions, and leading and managing transition towards the intended vision.<sup>3</sup> The TORCH landings provided the strategic requirements for an application of strategic leadership characteristics and the changed situation by the end of 1942 seemingly portrays their use.

Assuming that Kesselring fulfilled the necessary leadership characteristics sets forth this question: which leadership competencies enabled him to succeed in aligning, envisioning, and changing the strategic environment? Gerras' Primer provides a reference point for answering this question through three significant categories: conceptual, technical and interpersonal competencies. Conceptual competencies include the ability to assess the complicated situation, frame the problem and envision the projected end state.<sup>4</sup> Technical competencies include the ability to understand the systems and structures in operation and their interwoven relations.<sup>5</sup> The interpersonal competencies include abilities to interact with, shape and influence the internal and external environments.<sup>6</sup> Identifying Kesselring's abilities is done by reconstructing them based on the outcomes, results, and interpretations of his actions. This identification required an understanding of the person Kesselring, how he was educated and formed through the years towards the period under study. Using this understanding allowed a reconstruct of his actions to identify strategic leadership characteristics and competencies. The final step was to evaluate Kesselring's competencies, to deduce whether he applied them in a manner befitting a strategic leader.

Another USAWC reference work by Gerras stipulates the necessity of critical thinking, of which source criticism is of particular interest for this evaluation.<sup>7</sup> Kesselring's original journals from that period vanished during the war. The primary sources covering the 1942 period are post-war and written from narrow perspectives. These perspectives, including Kesselring's, depict the period through particular lenses: arranging facts afterward, denouncing or neglecting war crimes and National-Socialist politics, and blaming or absolving persons or events, depending upon the author's

preference, Kesselring's or German Field Marshal Erwin Rommel's wartime achievements.<sup>8</sup> Other post-war publications and authentic war journals and messages in the German national archives concerning the Mediterranean operations provide some objective insights.<sup>9</sup> Any analysis of Kesselring thus requires stringent source criticism in deducing the applied perspectives and a careful corroboration of facts.

Using the available sources, juxtaposing them critically and looking at them through Gerras' competencies framework allows an evaluation of Kesselring's strategic leadership performances. Who was Albert Kesselring?

#### 'Smiling Albert'

Although an ex-ante reconstruction of Kesselring's personality is not the focus of this paper, in order to assess his application of competencies, a better understanding of the person is required. Gerras identifies the skills of a strategic leader as those natural traits and abilities, which are completed or shaped by education and reflective experiences.<sup>10</sup> Thus, what were Kesselring's qualities and characteristics, and what or who formed him through education, training, and experience?

There are few biographies on Kesselring: the self-written eulogizing memories of Kesselring, those by the revisionist/apologist Frans Kurowski, the military operations-oriented portraits by Pier Paolo Battistelli and Kenneth Macksey, and the recent law of war focused study by Andrew Sangster.<sup>11</sup> Kesselring, born November 30<sup>th</sup>, 1885 in Marktsteft Germany, grew up in an affluent middle-class environment. As a boy, he grew up in a patriotic and nationalist infused environment, which shaped his military ethos. He joined the army as an artillery officer in 1904. He was described as hardworking, technologically adept, and with a natural influence on and authority over his subordinates. During the First World War, Kesselring served on the Western and

Eastern Fronts and was awarded the Iron Cross First and Second class. After the war, he worked for and was influenced by Hans von Seeckt, the strategic visionary of the *Wehrmacht* (German Army). After his transfer to the *Luftwaffe* in 1939, Kesselring's technological aptitude and staff skills allowed him to rise quickly through the ranks. He played an essential role in the *Luftwaffe's* construction in which he commanded units as a general in the *Blitzkrieg* and the initial attacks on Russia. His army background enabled him to integrate the air and land aspects of warfare.<sup>12</sup>

Kesselring's charisma, likable character, and appearance nicknamed him 'Smiling Albert' which indicated his ability to interact easily with others. Although in the *Interbellum*, while working for the German State Secretary of Air Kesselring failed to work smoothly with high profile personalities. Von Seeckt's influence on him seems to have reshaped this competency. Sangster describes this as the origin of the non-political but militarily effective posture of Kesselring: influencing, maneuvering diplomatically and exploiting his pleasant personality.<sup>13</sup> Kesselring applied these traits while participating in the background during the construction of the *Luftwaffe*. It was during this period that his interest in technology and his relentless work ethos allowed him to master his organizational and logistical skills. Kesselring's most powerful traits were optimism, technological aptitude, organizational skills, and a relentless work ethic. According to the biographies, contemporaries regarded Kesselring a soldier's general, amiable, highly observant, meticulous in detail, but also over-confident, as seen in his negative traits: opportunism, neglect of risks, and an overestimation of results. Sangster depicts aggressive and ruthless traits used to explain Kesselring's role in atrocities such as the strategic bombings of urban areas. Although not

undisputed, Kesselring after the war depicted himself as a professional soldier, who followed his duty and pledge.<sup>14</sup>

'Smiling Albert' is portrayed as an amicable, opportunistic, and charismatic personality, shaped by education and experiences into a leader capable of organizing and managing complex situations and relations. Paradoxically, his strength created his weaknesses: over-confidence and opportunism. Kesselring's traits form the foundation and influence his leadership. Now let's look at the historical development and see how Kesselring acted after the TORCH landings.

#### Tunisian developments

After the TORCH landings, the Axis powers recovered relatively quickly from their initial surprise. They swiftly countered and rebuked the Allied offensive. Kesselring promptly assessed the situation, acted and formulated his operational ways upon his re-envisioned end state towards the Mediterranean situation. He realigned and changed several means fitting the re-envisioned end state. The following paragraphs depict the response, vision, and realignment of the systems.

#### Asses and Respond

The German and Italian supreme commands in Berlin and Rome assessed that the convoys they observed approaching the Mediterranean in November 1942 would land in France or were relief convoys intended for Malta or Alexandria. The landings on November 8<sup>th</sup> in Vichy French Algeria and Morocco instead took them by surprise.<sup>15</sup> The western attack combined with Rommel's cumulation at El Alamein resulted in a drastic change in the strategic situation. The Allied landings in the French dominions undermined the fragile German dominated Franco-German coalition, pushed the already pressed Axis powers' lines of communication towards the Northern African

coast, and the active U.S. ground forces engagement altered the balance of forces. All three requiring and emphasizing a strong Axis powers' coalition in the Mediterranean. Kesselring responded swiftly by pushing two fighter squadrons to Tunisia. This push depicts the starting point for the Axis powers moving forces over to Tunisia, initially creating a new panzer corps in Tunisia, establishing a blocking position, to ultimately protect Rommel's rear.<sup>16</sup>

Kesselring understood the importance of in theater support and enforced a constructive relationship with the French and the Arabic indigenous communities in Tunisia. On November 9<sup>th</sup> he established a liaison with the French resident general, to allow stationing of Axis powers' forces in Tunisia.<sup>17</sup> He ordered Parachute Regiment 5, the OBS guard battalion and Parachute Brigade Ramcke to create bridgeheads in Tunis en Bizerte. Hitler made OBS supported command, which allowed Kesselring to sent several small vessel units from the German Navy Command Italy to Tunisia, while submarines from the German Submarine Command Italy and Supreme Commander of Submarines attacked the Allied landing sites.<sup>18</sup> Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini, following Kesselring's request, released reserves: two divisions of the Italian XXX Corps and the German 10<sup>th</sup> Panzer Division, Herman Göring Division, and 334 Infantry Division. These units and all intended Rommel's Africa Corp's reinforcements came under Kesselring's command.<sup>19</sup> This massive build-up in Tunisia needed a command structure, for which Kesselring formed Panzer Corps XC, led by Generalmajor Walther K. Nehring.<sup>20</sup> This corps halted and repulsed the Allied advance and established a secure bridgehead. The above crisis response was the result of decisions and actions, infused by Kesselring's leadership, and his direct interventions.

## Revision

Kesselring in the previous months understood the importance of the lines of communication between Italy and Africa and the threat the British stronghold of Malta imposed on them. His vision was to reinforce these lines by defeating Malta and then pushing forward to Alexandria. He disagreed with Rommel, who succeeded in aligning Hitler with his tactical plans which focused on Alexandria and neglected rear area operations like Malta's.<sup>21</sup> Kesselring deduced the operational importance of the lines of communications, but more importantly, he understood the necessity of reimbursing the Italian Franco relation within the strategic context. An strengthened Franco-German-Italian connection prevented the French from breaking away from the Axis powers. This complex relation was troublesome because the Franco Italian relationship was unstable, and the Germans needed both. The TORCH infused crisis created an additional problem: a second front in the Mediterranean, a front involving the French and Italians.<sup>22</sup>

Following the TORCH landing, Kesselring redefined his vision on the situation. He understood the strategic importance of holding on to the Mediterranean for Germany, and he envisioned that gaining time and unifying Axis capacities against the dual-threat was necessary.<sup>23</sup> Based upon a reconstruction this revision comprised the following five aspects:

- Synchronise the Axis powers' efforts and activities in the Mediterranean and aim them to retain the present position with a Vichy French accepted and supported Axis powers' presence in French dominions.<sup>24</sup>
- Establish Axis powers' control of the sea and airports in Tunis and Bizerte.<sup>25</sup>

- Halt the Allied eastward advance as quickly as possible and create a secure and defensible bridgehead with sufficient maneuver space.<sup>26</sup>
- Link-up with the Italian-German Panzer Army Africa to support them logistically or allow their retreat.<sup>27</sup>
- Strengthen logistical lines of communication.<sup>28</sup>

A message from Kesselring's to the German Navy Commander in Italy, dated November 11<sup>th</sup>, contains the core of the above and exemplifies that Kesselring grasped that time, space, and limited resources were critical and that he needed to act to influence the developing situation.<sup>29</sup> In essence, he envisioned an offensive operation aimed at gaining time and space to create operational maneuver space allowing him to obtain preferable strategical conditions.

To achieve his vision, Kesselring understood that he had to create a unified effort. The *Wehrmacht*, *Luftwaffe*, and *Kriegsmarine* (German navy) stovepipes and the separated Italian structures were not effective. Kesselring recognized the importance of the Italian based lines of operation. He started organizing arrangements needed to facilitate unity of effort and to establish alignment across all domains: a more joint command structure, and better-integrated communication, intelligence and logistical systems. He acted as a catalyst and an integrator of the Axis powers' systems, which allowed him to achieve initial success in theater against the Allies.<sup>30</sup>

#### Unified Tunisian command

Kesselring established a new command structure, which allowed a more concerted effort in Tunisia, but failed to achieve a theater-wide unified command. As OBS he had no command relationship to Rommel's Africa Corps, or the to Italian led

Panzer Army Africa. His direct command responsibilities were entirely within the *Luftwaffe* line. As OBS he was aligned with the Italian command structures, commanded the *Luftflotte 2* (2<sup>nd</sup> Air Fleet) and the Italian based logistical systems and was supported by the German naval forces in Italy.<sup>31</sup> He used these relations to realign the Tunisian related capacities. Gaining political commitment and operational alignment was the most significant issue to solve, and Kesselring interacted actively with both Hitler and Mussolini and used his peer relations within the *Luftwaffe* and the Italian supreme command. A new more unified structure was proposed to Hitler and Mussolini which was accepted on November 16<sup>th</sup>. Kesselring got authority over the German and Italian air force and army units available for the eastern Mediterranean theater. The *Kriegsmarine* and dedicated Italian navy units remained separate but supported OBS.<sup>32</sup> The command structures in Tunisia itself were chaotic, with squadrons, regiments, platoons, individuals and weapon systems getting sent across. Kesselring realized a clear Tunisian command structure by subordinating the German and Italian Tunisian based forces to General Nehring. Nehring became subordinated to Kesselring.<sup>33</sup> The command structures towards the Italians and Rommel in western Africa remained cumbersome. Rommel kept his separated command through his relationship with Hitler, and the Italians retained their separate command structure for the Panzer Army Africa. For establishing the Tunisian unity of effort this was enough, but for the long term, this remained an issue. However, at least for the western part of the theater, he established a unified joint command structure.<sup>34</sup> This unique joint construct allowed him to unite the Tunisian focussed efforts and to contain the imminent danger in the western

part of the theater. Achieving unity of effort implied more than just the command system.

### Integrated theater communications

Kesselring needed a communication system to support his command structure. The German network consisted of the Supreme Command of the Army (*Oberste Kommando der Wehrmacht* (OKW)) strategic network, supplemented with the *Wehrmacht*, *Luftwaffe*, *Kriegsmarine* tactical networks which fed into the OKW's. These four cooperated, but their lack of geographic cohesion made them ineffective.<sup>35</sup> Kesselring did not use the Italian networks and had no authority over the *Kriegsmarine* and OKW systems.<sup>36</sup> He used the communication assets of supporting navy units and his own *Luftflotte 2* to link the Tunisian command to the OKW-network. He widened the network of his *Luftflotte 2* signal units, implementing a Mediterranean area covering long-range radio and telephone radio gauge system. Kesselring personally assigned orders to deconflict these issues, prioritized signal troops for Tunisia and revoked procedures for communication. This more effective communication system kept struggling with limited capacity in Tunisia, bottlenecks in the navy system, internal frequency deconfliction, and enemy interception.<sup>37</sup> The improved system transmitted and relayed information, like orders and intelligence, through the theater.

### Realigned intelligence

The intelligence system also needed improvement, which Kesselring realized. The fragmented and British focussed intelligence system neglected the Vichy Colonies.<sup>38</sup> The systems two primary processes were gathering data and analyzing information. Both operations were separately organized and further fragmented along

the *Wehrmacht*, *Luftwaffe*, *Kriegsmarine*, and Italians and also knew separated geographical orientations within these elements.<sup>39</sup> Kesselring acted by strengthening the gathering capacity of *Luftflotte 2*, constructing radios listing posts in a triangle Sicily, Sardinia en Tunisia. He integrated *Luftwaffe* and *Kriegsmarine* gathering and analysis capacity and synchronized with the available intelligence systems of the more French 'adversary' oriented Italian army and navy commands.<sup>40</sup> He also strengthened the intelligence system in Tunisia by forwarding the panzer reconnaissance squadron 190, *a Brandenburger SpecialKommando* (special forces company), a counterintelligence section and the application of French and Arabs as special agents. The use of these German oriented French and Arabs, however, stressed the French relation. The successful changes of the intelligence system and its effectiveness is exemplified by the message traffic between OBS and Tunisia.<sup>41</sup> Kesselring regained his situational awareness, but to react and influence he needed capacity in the theater.

#### Ameliorated logistics

The central and crucial achievement of Kesselring were his improvements to the logistical system. Before TORCH, the Germans identified that the Italians could not supply the Panzer Army Africa. The opposition posed by Malta and the lacking access to the Tunisian harbors hindered the Axis logistical effectiveness. Kesselring had already increased pressure on Malta and installed a German General as logistical coordinator for the Mediterranean. He pressed the German military attaché in Rome to negotiate with the Vichy government about using Tunisian harbors.<sup>42</sup> Kesselring deduced that the Tunisia crisis and Rommel's quick retreat westwards affected the logistical network by doubling its requirement.<sup>43</sup>

Kesselring, in his own words, noted the importance of changing the logistical system across three areas: the trans-Mediterranean, the Tunisian subsystem and that of the Panzer Army Africa.<sup>44</sup> Wanting to utilize the shorter distance to Tunisia and the required establishment of a bridgehead there, Kesselring redirected capacity to strengthen the new route codenamed *Panthersprung* (Panther Jump). He allocated *Luftwaffe* and *Kriegsmarine* transport assets to the *Panthersprung* and coordinated with the supporting Italian navy and air force. The Italians required in return an allotment of the available capacity for their African based units. During this period, in parallel with the German airbridge to Stalingrad, Kesselring commanded 50% of all German *Luftwaffe* transport capacity. Although he achieved success, losses were enormous, in November alone amounting to 14% of the total German capacity. Kesselring managed the Italian based German and Italian logistical systems by installing trustees in charge of the planning.<sup>45</sup> In Tunis, he invested a quartermaster Tunis, who synchronized operations from the receiving side for the *Panthersprung*. Kesselring intervened personally in the transports if necessary. This intensified control and capacity boosted the effectiveness of the trans-Mediterranean traffic.<sup>46</sup>

Kesselring also raised the receiving side in Tunisia. In the initial days, he acquired, through a liaison with the French, control of the harbor facilities and used an envoy for local acquisition of fuel and supplies.<sup>47</sup> The use of the harbors became political: Arabs refused to work for Italians, and the resident Italians saw themselves too much as victors refusing to do labor. Kesselring solved this by installing *Seetransportstellen* (naval control agencies) en *Hafenkommandos* (Harbor commands).

This German control allowed better use of capacities and workforce but led to tensions with the Italians, who disputed German authority of the harbors.<sup>48</sup>

With supplies and troops coming in quickly the next problem was getting them to the frontlines and Rommel. The *Seetransportstellen* coordinated local coastal sea transport, trucks and railway transport. Kesselring forwarded specialists and *EisenbahnBetriebsKompagne 205* (railway operating company) to support the latter and to re-establish the rail line Tunis-Sousse-Sfax, enabling transport to Rommel. Kesselring pounded Nehring in orders to establish and maintain this lifeline to Rommel.<sup>49</sup>

The improved logistics depict Kesselring's organizational skills at his best. Kesselring's role in gaining awareness, command, control and getting capacity up front is evident. As OBS he promptly assessed the situation, projected a swift response, formulated his ways upon a re-envisioned end state, and masterly organized and unified his systems towards the crisis. However, was he capable of regaining a unified strategic effort?

#### Comprehensive human competencies

The evaluation of Kesselring's competencies depicts the importance of human factor within, and necessity of the comprehensiveness of the skills when acting in a capricious and contested environment. Kesselring's operational success and his strategical failure to unite an Axis powers' effort can be related to his strategic leadership competencies. Gerras' framework provides the reference point for a reconstructed evaluation of the human infused competencies. Kesselring's technical leadership competencies enabled a stabilizing response to the TORCH crisis. His less effective conceptual and interpersonal skills failed to unite the Axis powers' efforts and

to re-establish their initiative and favorable conditions. The next paragraphs address, following Gerras' framework and its inherent elements, Kesselring's conceptual, technical and interpersonal competencies.<sup>50</sup>

### Conceptual competencies

Kesselring's conceptual skills themselves were restricted and limited by the conditions. Gerras' group of conceptual competencies contains three main elements: how to develop reference, how to envision the future, and how to tackle problems. He offers three attributes as essential in reference: a mind that is open to other perspectives, a reflection of one's perspective, and the ability to take a holistic approach to a problem.<sup>51</sup>

As seen before in Kesselring's biography, he had a broad background, engaged vividly with German strategic thinkers such as Von Seeckt and in 1942 served in a wide variety of positions which allowed him to develop his conceptual attributes. During his response to TORCH, Kesselring engaged with peers, subordinates and political leadership about the situation. The available sources indicate that Kesselring questioned and reflected on the tactical and operational conditions with them. For this, he frequently traveled to Africa.<sup>52</sup> Kesselring actively engaged and reflected, developing his reference. However, did he apply this to envision a future, fitting the conceptual competency?

It is assumed that Kesselring talked with Hitler and Rommel about the strategic situation. Kesselring ex-ante revealed his 'strategic vision' on the Mediterranean, it is, however, questionable as to whether serious strategic reflections or discussions with others took place in 1942.<sup>53</sup> Going through the sources on the TORCH related

meetings at Hitler's and *Wehrmacht* headquarters, these mostly reflected the tactical and operational problems.<sup>54</sup> With no sources revealing Kesselring's active portrayal of strategy in 1942, his display of strategic vision is doubtful. This doubt requires a critical note. The deduction's basis is an anachronistic application of the layered strategic, operational and tactical command concept; which in those days was non-existing. This anachronism could explain Kesselring's bias on the 'operational level' and his superiors inability to engage the strategic levels. With Hitler and his staff and headquarters focusing on the execution, there was less room for a more strategical influx.<sup>55</sup> Kesselring was not able to infuse a more strategic discussion, failed to obtain the necessary strategic guidance, and thus, anachronistically, stayed in the 'operational and tactical weeds.'

Within these weeds, Kesselring understood the danger of the unfolding situation and the necessity to manage this problem. As mentioned in the previous chapter he re-organized the systems and structures, to contain the crisis and to shape conditions regaining freedom of movement and initiative. In his revision, he clearly understood the necessity of the prerequisites of his command and control, intelligence, communications and logistic conditions and related the impact of his vision to the coalition and the Panzer Army Africa's future.<sup>56</sup> These understandings show his ability to think beyond the problem and his grasp of its derived effects, and it also illustrates his proactive conceptual mindset, wanting to evade reactivity and to try to influence his adversary's decisionmaking.

Proactive in mindset, Kesselring's conceptual competencies enabled him to contain the crisis. Although he envisioned a broader picture, he stayed at the

tactical/operational level, partly hampered by his higher commands neglect of a strategy. One could say that Kesselring was conceptually able to envision the denial of an Allied triumph. However, he failed to envision an Axis powers' victory. Is this failure linkable to other competencies?

### Technical competencies

Kesselring's technical competencies were solid, he managed and fostered the Axis powers' systems, structures and relationships and their social and political implications. Gerras' technical skills include the ability to understand systems, structures, and their immediate relations.<sup>57</sup> As seen before, Kesselring altered and reshaped the conditional structures and systems after TORCH. He comprehended their workings and fostered their conditions to optimize their effectiveness. Did he apply the relational aspect of Gerras' framework? Kesselring actively engaged and encouraged the political, social and coalition relations. He involved himself vividly, or ordered interaction, in the Axis powers' command structures and with French and even Arab relationships. Kesselring understood the importance of maintaining the coalition with the Italians and that he had to retain French and indigenous Arabic assistance or at least prevent their shift towards active resistance or support of the Allies. His actions or directions for subordinates in Rome and Tunis exemplify this.<sup>58</sup> His discretion during the disarmament of French forces in Tunisia exemplifies the understanding and mastering of the prudent Vichy French posture and its domestic relations.<sup>59</sup> Kesselring's technical competencies, including the relational aspects, can be qualified as exceptional and active. The effectiveness of the relationships and contacts depends, however, on the interpersonal skills.

## Interpersonal competencies

Kesselring's amicable posture and interaction enabled him to communicate quickly, but his interpersonal effectiveness showed some deficiencies. He failed to obtain consensus and a unified team. Gerras depicts three essential aspects of interpersonal skills: consensus building, negotiation, and communication. These three aspects are about human interaction. How did Kesselring portray these skills? <sup>60</sup>

Kesselring engaged actively to gain agreement with peers and others, but he clashed with Rommel. Rommel and Kesselring developed a complex and contested relationship, given Rommel's aggressiveness and Kesselring's optimism which strengthened Germans' successes at times. However, during times of crisis, these same characteristics led to mutual blaming and shaming, which prevented both men to gain consensus. Kesselring's optimism led him to allow Rommel too much influence and say, and temporarily, to maintain a peaceful relation, accepted a subordinated supporting role. Contrary to this, Kesselring more and more openly doubted Rommel's stamina and condition to command.<sup>61</sup> This arduous relation ultimately led to a persistent and contested command relation.<sup>62</sup> At some point, Hitler had to ratify their command relationship, after which Rommel and Kesselring kept separated commands which resulted in the loss of unity of effort in theater.<sup>63</sup> What lays beneath this persistent team relation?

Kesselring's and Rommel's relationship relates back to the human aspect of leadership in a changing environment. John P. Kotter's framework for leading changes depicts as an essential factor for success: the creation of a coalition/team with power and leadership emplaced. These constructs require leadership which contains egos,

avoids distrust and solves personal problems before acting in conjunction as a whole.<sup>64</sup> Due to the TORCH crisis, previously failed logistics and air support, and the El Alamein debacle, Rommel's and Kesselring's interpersonal problems increased and undermined their team-effectiveness. These problems led to a further hollowed-out relationship, fed with distrust, up towards Kesselring's doubt of Rommel's suitability to command. This decay of the relationship is noted in several sources.<sup>65</sup> These interpersonal problems resulted in a dysfunctional command structure, with powers dispersed and Kesselring's failure to obtain the needed unity of effort in the whole Mediterranean theater. The importance of balancing the interpersonal competencies aimed at creating trust within a team are common knowledge today, incorporated in several studies and doctrinal publications.<sup>66</sup> The TORCH crisis exemplifies the essences of the current day crisis action planning elements: relations between commanders, the interaction between these leaders, and the establishment of transparent command structures.<sup>67</sup>

Kesselring and Eisenhower struggled in the Mediterranean with their teams. Both men worked in a command context with an imposed complex multinational command structure and with diverging egocentric personalities, both these factors create conditions which stress team cohesion and unity. Where Eisenhower succeeded in at least unifying the effort <sup>68</sup>, Kesselring failed to achieve both: unity and cohesion. Fed by his troublesome relationship with Rommel, Kesselring although amicable, lacked a people-focused leadership towards Rommel. This lack displays the importance of Stephen J. Gerras' and Murf Clark's people-focused behavior concepts, which point out the underestimated effects of people focused leadership: stimulating team atmosphere and coherency, settling internal issues, realizing behavioral norms, and maintaining

amiability and constructiveness.<sup>69</sup> Kesselring, although engaging Hitler and Rommel, failed to shape his team and to negotiate a united command structure.<sup>70</sup> This failure dragged him further into the operational depths of the theater, versus the strategic necessities.

The present-day methods of handling crisis at the strategic level provide a better and enforced interaction between strategic leadership levels, encompassing the national intents and objectives within the strategic military environment. As within present-day mechanisms, the human factor, and leaders' specific competencies are crucial factors for creating success.<sup>71</sup> The systems, structures, and relations may enable individuals to interact, but it is their conceptual, technical and interpersonal competencies which shape the environment and conditions which allow them to succeed as a team in a capricious and contested environment.

The historical evaluation of Kesselring's leadership competencies during the TORCH crisis depicts the importance of a comprehensive application of the strategic leadership competencies, and primarily how the human element within the applied leadership ultimately defines success and failure of leadership.

#### Catalysts for success

This paper deduces the importance and comprehensiveness of strategic leadership competencies through a historical analysis Kesselring's handling of a capricious and contested environment in the 1942 Mediterranean theater. Scarce and partially colored historical sources allowed a reconstruction of the changes that occurred after TORCH. Juxtaposing these changes and assessing them using Gerras' strategic leadership competencies allowed an ex-ante reconstruction of Kesselring's leadership and his application of traits and competencies. Kesselring was amicable,

opportunistic and charismatic and capable of organizing and managing complex situations and relations. Kesselring's strategic position as OBS enforced him to apply his strategic competencies to lead Germany's response to the Allied TORCH landings. In his response he reshaped the Axis powers' conditions, denying his Allied antagonist Eisenhower a quick success in the Mediterranean.

The reconstruction and evaluation of Kesselring's leadership during the TORCH crisis depicts the importance of the human factor, and the integrated and synchronized strategic leadership competencies. The application of Kesselring's technical and conceptual skills enabled him to reshape the environment and to obtain temporary 'strategic' successes, containing the crisis. Kesselring's failure to integrate all competencies and to exploit his interpersonal skills to the utmost, in the end, overshadowed this success ultimately leading towards strategic collapse. This failure emphasizes the importance of the human factor and its interpersonal competencies within strategic leadership. The comprehensiveness of all strategic leadership competencies either making the leader a catalyst or retard for success.

This historical case study helps to understand the importance of the strategic competencies, portrays how they influence failure or success and exemplifies the significance of their development for future strategic leaders. Historical studies like these act as a catalyst for the creative and critical thinking processes, essential for strategic leadership, fitting the author's motto: Study history, envision the future and act today.

## Endnotes

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<sup>2</sup> Andrew Sangster, *Field-marshal Kesselring, Great Commander or War Criminal?* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 2015); Pier Battistelli, *Albert Kesselring* (New York: 2012); Kenneth Macksey, *Kesselring, German Master Strategist of the Second World War* (London: 1978); Kenneth Macksey, *Kesselring, The making of the Luftwaffe* (Barnsley: 1987).

<sup>3</sup> Gerras, *Primer*, 2-3.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 28-30.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 32-33.

<sup>7</sup> Stephen J. Gerras, 'Thinking critically about critical thinking: A fundamental guide for strategic leaders' (Carlisle Barracks, PA: August 2008), 3.

<sup>8</sup> Sangster, *Field-marshal Kesselring*, 2-3.

<sup>9</sup> The German Bundesarchiv, Abteilung Militairgeschichte, in Freiburg has a selection of WWII German war journals, telegraph messages and message transcripts from the specific period and area. The content used for this paper consisted mainly of subordinate units or supporting units to OBS. All material is noted in the footnotes using their 2005 archive numbering system.

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<sup>11</sup> Albert Kesselring, *Gedanken zum Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Bonn: 1955); Frans Kurowski, *Generalfeldmarshall Albert Kesselring, Oberbefelshaber an allen Fronten* (Berg am See:1985); Battistelli, *Albert Kesselring*; Macksey *German Master Strategist*; Sangster, *Field-marshal Kesselring*; Albert Kesselring, *The memoirs of Field Marshal Kesselring*, (London: 1953).

<sup>12</sup> Battistelli, *Albert Kesselring*, 5-8; Kurowski, *Kesselring*, 25; 33, 35, Sangster, *Field-marshal Kesselring*, 15, 23.; Macksey, *Making of the Luftwaffe*, 11, 15.

<sup>13</sup> Sangster, *Field-marshal Kesselring*, 38.

<sup>14</sup> Kurowski, *Kesselring* 33, 35, 314; Sangster, *Field-marshal Kesselring*, 17, 20, 31, 37-38. 221; Otto Moll, *Die Deutschen Generalfeldmarschälle*, (Rastatt: 1961), 61, 63, 66; David. Irving, *Rommel, The trail of the fox*, (Hertfordshire: 1999), 160; Walter Warlimont, *Im Hauptquartier der Deutschen Wehrmacht 1939-1945*, Band 2 (Augsburg: 1990), 326; Kesselring, *Gedanken*, 192.

<sup>15</sup> Walter Warlimont, *Im Hauptquartier der Deutschen Wehrmacht 1939-1945*, Band 1 (Augsburg: 1990): 279; Percy Schramm, *Kriegstagebuch des Oberkommandos der Wehrmacht, 1942 Teilband II* (München: 1982), 891, 901, 902; Albert Kesselring, *The Memoirs of Field-Marshal Kesselring* (New York: Skyhorse publishing inc., 2016), 139.

<sup>16</sup> Playfair, *Mediterranean*, 152, 170-171; L. Koeltz. *Une campagne que nous avons gagnée Tunisie 1942-1943*, (Paris: 1959), 60, 61; P. Carell, *Die Wüstenfuchse, Hamburg: 1958*, 365; C. Shores, H. Ring, W.N. Hess, *Tunesien 42/43 Luftkämpfe über Fels und Wüste*, (Stuttgart: 1981), 63; RH 21-5-70, KTB IA XC AK 16.11.42 –30.11.42 (Freiburg, Bundesarchiv, Abteilung Militairgeschichte), 3-4; J. Prien, *Jagdgeschwader 53, A history of the "pik As" geschwader, volume 2: May 1942-january 1944* (Atglen: 1998), 502, 505-506; K. Mehner, R. Teuber, *Die Luftwaffe 1939-1945, Band 2, Schriftenreihe Führung und Truppe* (Norderstedt: 1996), 45, 187; H.G. von Eisebeck, *Das Deutsche Afrika Korps* (München: 1975), 183-184.; RM 36-43 KTB des Befelshabers des Deutschen Marine-Kommandos Italien 1 bis 15 nov 42. (Freiburg, Bundesarchiv, Abteilung Militairgeschichte), 85, 109; Schramm, *Kriegstagebuch*, 936-938; Waldis. Greiselis, *Das Ringen um den Brückenkopf Tunesien 1942/1943, Strategie der,, Achse" und Innenpolitik im Protektorat* (Frankfurt am Main:1976), 97; C. Eckhard, 'Considerations at Supreme Headquarters Concerning the Overall Conduct of the War in North Africa after the Allied Landing in French North Africa in November 1942', MS D-145, in: Detwiler, D.S., ed., *World War II German Military Studies*, Volume 14, Part VI, The Mediterranean Theatre, continued, (New York: 1979), 11-12.

<sup>17</sup> H. Boog, *Der Globale Krieg 1941-1943*, Militärgeschichtlichen Forschungsamt, Band 6, *Das Deutsche Reich und der Zweite Weltkrieg* (Stuttgart: 1990), 721; RH 21-5-70, 8; Greiselis, *Brückenkopf*, 94-95, 102; W. Heckmann, *Rommels Krieg in Afrika* (München: 1976) 448; I.S.O. Playfair, *The Mediterranean and Middle East*, Volume IV, (London: 1966), 170-171; W. Paul, *Panzer-General Walther K. Nehring, Eine Biographie*, (Stuttgart: 2002), 143.

<sup>18</sup> RM 36-43, 86, 96, 66,75-76, 97, 99, 108; Kenneth Macksey, *German Master Strategist*, 133; RM 36-123 Geheime kommandosache T2 Tunis-Organisation (Freiburg, Bundesarchiv, Abteilung Militairgeschichte), 3, 14; RM 36-127 Geheime Kommandosache T6 Tunis Lagemeldungen (Freiburg, Bundesarchiv, Abteilung Militairgeschichte), 26; Frans Kurowski, *Endkampf in Afrika* (Leoni am Starnbergersee: 1982), 136-137, 139-141; RH 21-5-70, 10.

<sup>19</sup> Greiselis, *Brückenkopf*, 101; H. Greiner, 'Notes on the Situation Reports and Discussions at HITLER's Headquarters from 12 August 1942 to 17 March 1943', MS C-065a, in: Detwiler, D.S., ed., *World War II German Military Studies*, Volume 9, Part IV, The OKW War Diary Series, Cont., (New York: 1979), 117; Kurowski, *Endkampf*, 48, 81-82; RH 2-438 OKW Tunis 10.11.42 bis 2.5.43 (Freiburg, Bundesarchiv, Abteilung Militairgeschichte), 9-11, 14, 22.

<sup>20</sup> Frans Kurowski, *Brückenkopf Tunesien* (Herford: 1967), 7. Paul, *Nehring*, 141-142.

<sup>21</sup> Carell, *Wustenfuchs*, 235; J. Pimlot, *Rommel and his Art of War* (London: 2003), 89; Kenneth Macksey, *Why the Germans lose at War* (London: 1996), 156; Kesselring, *Gedanken*, 96-97.

<sup>22</sup> Albert Kesselring, 'Concluding remarks on the Mediterranean campaign', MS C-014, in: Detwiler, D.S., ed., *World War II German Military Studies*, Volume 14, Part VI, The Mediterranean Theatre, continued, (New York:1979) 40-41; Macksey, *German Master Strategist*, 135; Albert Kesselring, *Soldat bis zum letzten Tag* (Bonn: 1953), 189; Albert Kesselring, 'The War in the Mediterranean area, part 2: The fighting in Tunisia and Tripolitania', MS T-3 P1, in: Detwiler, D.S., ed., *World War II German Military Studies*, Volume 14, Part VI, The Mediterranean Theatre, continued, (New York: 1979), 3-4.

<sup>23</sup> Kesselring, *Gedanken*,98-99; Kesselring, *Memoirs* (2016), 139-140.

<sup>24</sup> W. Görlitz, *Der Zweite Weltkrieg 1939-1945* (Stuttgart: 1951), 380; Kesselring, 'War in the Mediterranean, part 2', 1-4, 78-80; Irving, *Trail*, 220; Kesselring, *Memoirs*, (1953), 140-141; Kurowski, *Brückenkopf*, 25, 37; Boog, *Der Globale Krieg*, 712.

<sup>25</sup> Kesselring, *Soldat bis*, 189; Kurowski, *Brückenkopf*, 7; RM 36-43, 84; Macksey, *German Master Strategist*, 135; Kesselring, 'War in the Mediterranean, part 2', 3-4.

<sup>26</sup> Albert Kesselring, 'The War in the Mediterranean area, part 1', MS T-3 P1, in: Detwiler, D.S., ed., *World War II German Military Studies*, Volume 14, Part VI, The Mediterranean Theatre, continued, (New York: 1979),3-4; Macksey, *German Master Strategist*, 135; Kurowski, *Endkampf*, 49-50; RM 36-43, 84; Kesselring, *Soldat bis*, 189; Kesselring, 'War in the Mediterranean, part 2', 3-4.

<sup>27</sup> Kurowski, *Brückenkopf*, 36, 43; Kesselring, 'War in the Mediterranean, part 2', 3-4; RH 21-5-70, 11.

<sup>28</sup> Kurowski, *Endkampf*, 49-50; RM 36-43, 84; Kesselring, *Soldat bis* 189; Kesselring, 'War in the Mediterranean, part 2', 3-4.

<sup>29</sup> RM 36-43, 84. ". . . Die Entwicklung der Lage in Nordafrika macht es erforderlich in Tunesien einem neuen Brückenkopf der Achsenmächte zu schaffen, der im Wetlauf mit den von Algerien erwartenden feindlichen Verbänden gewonnen und gehalten werden muss. Alle überigen Massnahmen im Mittelmeerraum sind der schnellen Gewinnung und Festigung dieser Brückenkopfstellung in Tunesien unterzuordnen. Der Brückenkopf ist in Anbetracht der vorläufig nur geringe Kräfte in engster Anlehnung an Verteidigungsfähiges Gelände auf möglichst kurzer Linie einzurichten, muss aber von den hauptsächlichen Versorgungshafen in Tunis genügendweit abgesetzt sein."

<sup>30</sup> Jan Brouwer, *Schaduw en over de woestijn* (The Hague: 2001), 376-377; Moll, *Generalfeldmarschälle*, 66-67; Kesselring, 'Concluding remarks', 10, 33, 35-36; H.W. Wynter, 'The history

of commandos and special service troops in the Middle East and North Afrika', in: *Public record office, Special Forces in the Dessert War 1940-1943*, (London: 2001), 394-397.

<sup>31</sup> Kurowski, *Kesselring*, 129, 130.

<sup>32</sup> Greiner, 'Reports and Discussions', 118-119; Schramm, *Kriegstagebuch*, 956-957; RM 36-123, 16, 31; Kenneth Macksey, *Crucible of power, The fight for Tunisia 1942-1943*, (London, 1969), 82; E. von Rintelen, *Mussolini als Bundgenosse* (Stuttgart: 1951, 181; Boog, *Der Globale Krieg*, 123; G. Wagner, *Lagevoträge des oberbefelshabers der Kriegsmarine vor Hitler 1939-1945* (München: 1972) 425; RM 36-43, 113; RM 36-127, 33-34; RH 21-5-70, 5, 10, 15 ; RH 21-5-31 Tätigkeitsbericht Abt Ia Panzer AOK vom 15.11.42-31.12.42 (Freiburg, Bundesarchiv, Abteilung Militairgeschichte); RH-2 482 Tagesmeldungen OKH West 1.11-31.11.1942 (Freiburg, Bundesarchiv, Abteilung Militairgeschichte), 22-23; Kurowski, *Brückenkopf*, 26-27; Kurowski, *Brückenkopf*, 26, 37; Paul, *Nehring*, 142; E. Thiel, *Rommels verheizte armee* (Vienna: 1979), 95-97;; Air Ministry UK, *The Rise and Fall of the German Air Force 1933-1945* (London: 1983), 145; Kesselring, *Gedanken*, 99.

<sup>33</sup> RM 36-123, 1-2, 9, 18, 19a, 20; RM 36-43, 93; W. Baum, E. Weichold, *Der Krieg der Achsenmächte im Mittelmeer-Raum*, (Göttingen: 1973), 305; Kurowski, *Endkampf*, 151; RM 36-127, 36-37.

<sup>34</sup> Warlimont, *Im Hauptquartier*, Band 2, 325; Kesselring, *Memoirs* (2016), 140; Kesselring, *Gedanken*, 103.

<sup>35</sup> A. Winter, 'The German Armed Forces High Command', MS T-101, in: Detwiler, D.S., ed., *World War II German Military Studies*, Volume 4, Part III, Command Structure (New York: 1979), 3-11, 25-31, 79-93; Schramm, *Kriegstagebuch*, 889.

<sup>36</sup> Winter, 'German High Command', 3-11, 25-31.

<sup>37</sup> Görlitz, *Weltkrieg*, 453; J. Schultz, *Brückenkopf Tunis* (Eltville: 1975), 16; RM 36-136 Geheime kommandosache IV0 Organisation und zusammenarbeit mit *Luftwaffe* und Italienischen Dienststellen 21.12.41-3.12.42 (Freiburg, Bundesarchiv, Abteilung Militairgeschichte), 331-335, 361; Kurowski, *Brückenkopf*, 24, 38; RM 36-123, 6; Paul, *Nehring*, 144-145; RM 36-127, 42-44, 35, 98, 101a, 106, 119-124; RH 21-5-11 Panzer Aok 5 geh und geh Kdo Sache band 1 16.11.42 bis 12.1.43 (Freiburg, Bundesarchiv, Abteilung Militairgeschichte).

<sup>38</sup> K. Assmann, *Deutsche Schicksalsjahre* (Wiesbaden: 1950), 306-307; Playfair, *Mediterranean*, 135-136; Koeltz. *Une campagne*, 58.

<sup>39</sup> Winter, A, et al., 'The German Armed Forces High Command', MS T-101, annex 3, in: Detwiler, D.S., ed., *World War II German Military Studies*, Volume 5, Part III, Command Structure, continued (New York: 1979), 12, 17, 99-107; Military Intelligence division, *German tactical doctrine* (1942), 14-15; Irving, *Trail*, 224.

<sup>40</sup> J. Piekalkiewicz, *Der wüstenkrieg in Afrika* (München: 1989, 15-18; Schramm, *Kriegstagebuch*, 875, 962; Playfair, *Mediterranean*, 135-136; W.F. Craven; J.L. Cate, *The Army Air Forces In World War II, Volume Two, Europe: Torch to Pointblank* (Chicago: 1949), 70; Koeltz, *Une campagne*, 58; Rintelen, *Mussolini*, 180; Baum, *Achsenmächte*, 269; RH 21-5-11, 34; Greiselis, *Brückenkopf*, 75; G.A. Deborin, *Der Zweite Weltkrieg* (Berlin: 1960) 275.

<sup>41</sup> Greiselis, *Brückenkopf*, 102; Playfair, *Mediterranean*, 173; Carell, *Wüstenfüchse*, 370; H. Heiber, *Lagebesprechungen in Führerhauptquartier 1942-1945* (Berlin: 1962), 46; RH 21-5-11, 72, 66, 83; Macksey, *German Master Strategist*, 141; RH 21-5-3 Anlagen zum KTB II Gen Kdo XC AK von 1.12.42 bis 7.12.42, PzAOK 5 von 8.12.42 bis 31.12.42 (Freiburg, Bundesarchiv, Abteilung Militairgeschichte); Greiner, 'Reports and Discussions', 151.

<sup>42</sup> Greiselis, *Brückenkopf*, 29, 34-35, 45-52, 78; Baum, *Achsenmächte*, 256, 259-259; Greiner, 'Reports and Discussions', 107, 118-119; Macksey, *Crucible of power*, 84.

<sup>43</sup> Greiselis, *Brückenkopf*, 78, 94; H.G. Esebeck, von, *Afrikanische Schicksalsjahre* (Wiesbaden: 1950) 139; M. Creveld van, *Supplying War* (Cambridge: 1997), 199; Kesselring, 'War in the Mediterranean part 2', 8-9.

<sup>44</sup> Greiner, 'Reports and Discussions', 118-119, 124; Macksey, *German Master Strategist*, 137, 139-140; Esebeck, *Afrika Korps*, 184-185; RH 21-5-70, 44; Kesselring, 'War in the Mediterranean part 2', 8-9.

<sup>45</sup> Boog, *Der Globale Krieg*, 754; F. Halder, *Hitler als Feldherr* (Munich: 1949), 34; F. Gilbert, *Hitler directs his war* (New York: 1950), 5; W. von Warlimont, 'Die Entscheidung im Mittelmeer 1942', in: H-A Jacobsen, J. Rohwer, *Entscheidungsschlachten des Zweiten Weltkrieges* (Frankfurt am Main: 1960), 233-268; G.L. Weinberg, *A world at arms* (Cambridge: 1994), 266-267; RM 36-45 Kriegstagebuch des Befelshabers des Deutschen Marine-Kommandos Italien 16 bis 30 nov 42 (Freiburg, Bundesarchiv, Abteilung Militairgeschichte), 42-43 Greiner, 'Reports and Discussions', 118-119, 124; Macksey, *German Master Strategist*, 137, 139-140; Esebeck, *Afrika korps*, 184-185; RH 21-5-70, 44; Kesselring, 'War in the Mediterranean part 2', 8-9.

<sup>46</sup> RH 21-5-11, 62; RM 36-45, 24, 42, 45, 54-55; D. Macintyre, *The battle for the Mediterranean* (London: 1964), 204; RM 36-43, 81; Greiselis, *Brückenkopf*, 122-123; Görlitz, *Weltkrieg*, 380; J. Piekalkiewicz, *Rommel und die Geheimdienste in Nordafrika 1941-1943* (Augsburg: 1998), 200.

<sup>47</sup> Greiselis, *Brückenkopf*, 94-95; RM 36-121 Geheime Kommandosache T1 Tunis Allgemeines (Freiburg, Bundesarchiv, Abteilung Militairgeschichte), 13; L. Koch, *Rommel*, (Stuttgart: 1950), 116, (Edition with personal notes by Generalmajor Nehring owned by LTCOL (GER) A. Nehring); Macksey, *Crucible of power*, 83; RH 21-5-70, 6, 136; RH 21-5-33 Tatigkeitsbericht Abt Oqu Tunis 15.11.42 – 31.12.42 (Freiburg, Bundesarchiv, Abteilung Militairgeschichte).

<sup>48</sup> RM 36-123, 49; 62-83, 127-131.

<sup>49</sup> Kurowski, *Endkampf*, 89, 90, 71, 152; Baum, *Achsenmächte*, 287; RM 36-123, 110-119; RH-2 482, 110; Thiel, *Rommels armee*, 83; Carell, *Wüstenfuchse*, 381; Macksey, *Crucible of power*, 98; Irving, *Trail*, 221, 222; Kurowski, *Brückenkopf*, 68; Craven, *Torch to Pointblank*, 97-98; RM 36-127, 54-55, 64, 110-111; RH 21-5-45 Tatigkeitsbericht Trsp Offz Tunesien 14.11.42 31.12.42 (Freiburg, Bundesarchiv, Abteilung Militairgeschichte); RH-2 482, 46m 54-55, 118; Paul, *Nehring*, 146; Schramm, *Kriegstagebuch*, 1016, 1023; RH 21-5-70, 14, 16-17, 22; C.W. Pence, 'An interview with Genfldm Albert Kesselring', ETHINT 72, in: Detwiler, D.S., ed., *World War II German Military Studies*, Volume 3, Part II, The ETHINT Series continued (New York: 1979), 3.

<sup>50</sup> Gerras, *Primer*, 28-34.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 28-30.

<sup>52</sup> Thiel, *Rommels Armee*, 79-80, 89, 90; Carell, *Wustenfuchse*, 334-335, 397; Koeltz. *Une campagne*, 62-63; Irving, *Trail*, 226.

<sup>53</sup> Kesselring, *Gedanken*, 98-99.

<sup>54</sup> Heiber, *Lagebesprechungen*, 58-59, 62; Warlimont, *Im Hauptquartier*, Band 1, 283, 285; Warlimont, *Im Hauptquartier*, Band 2, 315-316, 324; Carell, *Wustenfuchse*, 358-359; Brouwer, *Schaduwun*, 362-363; Schramm, *Kriegstagebuch*, 956.

<sup>55</sup> Heiber, *Lagebesprechungen*, 58-59; Warlimont, *Im Hauptquartier*, Band 2, 285.

<sup>56</sup> Kesselring, 'War in the Mediterranean, part 2', 1-4, 78-80; Irving, *Trail*, 220; Kesselring, *Memoirs*, (1953), 140-141; Kurowski, *Brückenkopf*, 25, 37, 36, 43; Boog, *Der Globale Krieg*, 712; RH 21-5-70, 11.

<sup>57</sup> Gerras, *Primer*, 31.

<sup>58</sup> Thiel, *Rommels armee*, 79-80; M. Spivak, A. Leoni, J. Delmas, *La campagne de Tunisie, 1942-1943* (Château de Vincennes : 1985), 115; Koeltz. *Une campagne*, 62-63; M.L. Chaibi, 'Éléments pour l'étude de quelques comportements inter-ethniques en Tunisie durant l'occupation germano-italienne (9 novembre 1942 – 13 mai 1943)', in : *Revue d'histoire maghrébine*, année 23 no 81/82 (1996), 148; Irving, *Trail*, 160, 174; RM-36-101 KTB des Deutschen Marinekommandos Tunisie 8.12.42 bis 28.2.43.

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<sup>60</sup> Gerras, *Primer*, 31-32.

<sup>61</sup> Irving, *Trail*, 160, 233, 243.

<sup>62</sup> Kesselring, *Memoirs* (2016), 144, 149, Kesselring, *Gedanken*, 103; Warlimont, *Im Hauptquartier*, Band 2, 325; Brouwer, *Schaduwten*, 366; Irving, *Trail*, 160, 233; Pimlot, *Rommel*, 82, 187.

<sup>63</sup> Warlimont, *Im Hauptquartier*, Band 2, 299-300; Schramm, *Kriegstagebuch*, 965-957, 968, 975-976.

<sup>64</sup> Kotter, John P. *Leading Change* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2012), 61-63, 116-117.

<sup>65</sup> Basil Liddel-Hart, *The Rommel papers* (New York: 1953), 323, 348, 368, 391; Irving, *Trail*, 231, 233, 238; J. Brouwer, *Schaduwten*, 364; Carell, *Wüstenfüchse*, 334-335; H. Heiber, *Lagebesprechungen*, 58-59.

<sup>66</sup> Gerras, Stephen J. and Clark, Murf, "Effective Team Leadership: A Competitive Advantage.", Research Paper, (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, August 2011), 1, 4-10; Jones, Steven M., "Improving Accountability for Effective Command Climate: A Strategic Imperative.", U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, (September 2003): 1-3, 24-26.

<sup>67</sup> James Boling, "Crisis Action Planning," Department of Military Strategy, Planning and Operations, lecture at U.S. Army War College, February 5, 2013 (cited with permission of Professor Boling), [http://players.brightcove.net/1146543845001/BJWD1K9Zr\\_default/index.html?videoid=3840669545001](http://players.brightcove.net/1146543845001/BJWD1K9Zr_default/index.html?videoid=3840669545001) (accessed, April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2018).

<sup>68</sup> D'Este, Carlo, *Eisenhower: A Soldier's Life* (New York: Henry Holt, 2002), 354-356, 371-372, 377, 379, 380, 392-394, 400-401, 403, 406-409, 410-411, 418-419, 424, 435-442, 446-449.

<sup>69</sup> Stephen Gerras and Murf Clark, "Effective Team Leadership: A Competitive Advantage.", Research Paper, (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, August 2011): 9-10.

<sup>70</sup> Warlimont, *Im Hauptquartier*, Band 2, 325; Thiel, *Rommels armee*, 144, 156, 159; Irving, *Trail*, 252-253; Pimlot, *Rommel*, 82.

<sup>71</sup> U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Planning* Joint Publication 5-0 (Washington, DC: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, June 16, 2017), IV-3.