

failure. But by more modest (and one might say reasonable) standards, Bomber Command's contribution to Allied victory was vital, especially when it is remembered that Harris never received all the aircraft he asked for and the technology of the day was limited.

As Professor Rodney pointed out to the Sub-Committee, *Death by Moonlight* failed to "put into historical perspective the Command's impact on Germany's war economy or how it impinged on Hitler's strategy."<sup>(34)</sup> The bomber offensive did have an effect on the German war machine, as overall industrial production shrunk by 9% during the war. The Allies continually underestimated the elasticity of the Nazi economy (it did not even go onto a war footing until 1943) but one can legitimately ask how much more it would have grown without the efforts of Bomber Command. Perhaps more importantly, the bomber offensive performed its original function - creating a second front in the skies over Germany - remarkably well, drawing away vital men and materiel from the eastern front. Over two million men were involved in the air defence of Germany who would otherwise have been fighting against the Russians. Moreover, if the vaunted 88mm anti-tank gun had been deployed on the eastern front in greater numbers and not used so extensively as an anti-aircraft weapon defending the homeland, the balance may have been tipped against the Soviets. Between 30% and 50% of German artillery production came to be involved in defence against Allied bombers. Indeed, over half of German industry was working to meet the Luftwaffe's needs by 1944, making the job of the Allies in Normandy that much easier.<sup>(35)</sup> Albert Speer perhaps summed it up best:

The real importance of the air war was that it opened a second front. Unpredictability of the attacks made the front gigantic; every square meter of our territory was a kind of front line. To defend ourselves against air attacks, we had to produce thousands of anti-aircraft guns, stock-pile tremendous quantities of ammunition all over the country, and hold in readiness hundreds of thousands of soldiers, who also have to stay by their guns, often totally inactive, for months at a time.<sup>(36)</sup>

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(34) Proceedings, 6:32.

(35) See the testimony of Hugh Halliday, Proceedings, 6:11 and Professor (ret'd) Rodney, 6:31-32. See also R. Beaumont, "The Bomber Offensive as a Second Front," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 22 (1987), p. 15-17; K. Werrell, "The Strategic Bombing of Germany: Costs and Accomplishments," *Journal of American History*, 73, no. 3, p. 709-713.

(36) Quoted by Robert Maxwell, Proceedings, 7:95.