

12

President's Secretary's File
Subject File
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FOR THE PRESS

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OCTOBER 7, 1942

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

On August twenty-first I said that this Government was constantly receiving information concerning the barbaric crimes being committed by the enemy against civilian populations in occupied countries, particularly on the continent of Europe. I said it was the purpose of this Government, as I knew it to be the purpose of the other United Nations, to see that when victory is won the perpetrators of these crimes shall answer for them before courts of law.

The commission of these crimes continues.

I now declare it to be the intention of this Government that the successful close of the war shall include provision for the surrender to the United Nations of war criminals.

With a view to establishing responsibility of the guilty individuals through the collection and assessment of all available evidence, this Government is prepared to cooperate with the British and other Governments in establishing a United Nations Commission for the Investigation of War Crimes.

The number of persons eventually found guilty will undoubtedly be extremely small compared to the total enemy populations. It is not the intention of this Government or of the Governments associated with us to resort to mass reprisals. It is our intention that just and sure punishment shall be meted out to the ringleaders responsible for the organized murder of thousands of innocent persons and the commission of atrocities which have violated every tenet of the Christian faith.

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GERMAN POLICY OF EXTERMINATION OF THE JEWISH RACE

[Released to the press December 17]

The attention of the Belgian, Czechoslovak, Greek, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norwegian, Polish, Soviet, United Kingdom, United States, and Yugoslav Governments and also of the French National Committee has been drawn to numerous reports from Europe that the German authorities, not content with denying to persons of Jewish race in all the territories over which their barbarous rule has been extended the most elementary human rights, are now carrying into effect Hitler's oft-repeated intention to exterminate the Jewish people in Europe. From all the occupied countries Jews are being transported in conditions of appalling horror and brutality to eastern Europe. In Poland, which has been made the principal Nazi slaughterhouse, the ghettos established by the German invader are being systematically emptied of all Jews except a few highly skilled workers required for war industries. None of those taken away are ever heard of again. The able-bodied are slowly worked to death in labor camps. The infirm are left to die of exposure and starvation or are deliberately massacred in mass executions. The number of victims of these bloody cruelties is reckoned in many hundreds of thousands of entirely innocent men, women, and children.

The above-mentioned Governments and the French National Committee condemn in the strongest possible terms this bestial policy of cold-blooded extermination. They declare that such events can only strengthen the resolve of all freedom-loving peoples to overthrow the barbarous Hitlerite tyranny. They reaffirm their solemn resolution to insure that those responsible for these crimes shall not escape retribution and to press on with the necessary practical measures to this end.

House Calendar No. 53

78TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. CON. RES. 9

[Report No. 252]

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 11, 1943

Referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

MARCH 16, 1943

Referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Whereas the American people view with indignation the atrocities inflicted upon the civilian population in the Nazi occupied countries, and especially the mass murder of Jewish men, women, and children; and

Whereas this policy of the Nazis has created a reign of terror, brutality, and extermination in Poland and other countries in Eastern and Central Europe: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives*
2 *concurring)*, That these brutal and indefensible outrages
3 against million of helpless men, women, and children should
4 be, and they are hereby, condemned as unworthy of any
5 nation or any regime which pretends to be civilized:

6 *Resolved further*, That the dictates of humanity and
7 honorable conduct in war demand that this inexcusable

2

1 slaughter and mistreatment shall cease and that it is the
2 sense of this Congress that those guilty, directly or indirectly,
3 of these criminal acts shall be held accountable and punished
4 in a manner commensurate with the offenses for which they
5 are responsible.

Passed the Senate March 9, 1943.

Attest:

EDWIN A. HALSEY,

Secretary.

House Calendar No. 53

78TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. CON. RES. 9

[Report No. 252]

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Condemning outrages inflicted upon civilians
in the Nazi occupied countries and favoring
punishment of persons responsible therefor.

MARCH 11, 1943

Referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

MARCH 16, 1943

Referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be
printed

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

FOR THE PRESS

NOVEMBER 1, 1943
No. 462

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MONDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 1943. NOT TO BE PREVIOUSLY
PUBLISHED, QUOTED FROM OR USED IN ANY WAY.

STATEMENT SIGNED BY PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT, PRIME
MINISTER CHURCHILL AND PREMIER STALIN REGARDING
ATROCITIES

The United Kingdom, the United States and the Soviet Union have received from many quarters evidence of atrocities, massacres and cold-blooded mass executions which are being perpetrated by Hitlerite forces in many of the countries they have overrun and from which they are now being steadily expelled. The brutalities of Hitlerite domination are no new thing and all peoples or territories in their grip have suffered from the worst form of Government by terror. What is new is that many of these territories are now being redeemed by the advancing armies of the liberating powers and that in their desperation, the recolling Hitlerite Huns are redoubling their ruthless cruelties. This is now evidenced with particular clearness by monstrous crimes of the Hitlerites on the territory of the Soviet Union which is being liberated from Hitlerites, and on French and Italian territory.

Accordingly, the aforesaid three Allied Powers, speaking in the interests of the thirty-three United Nations, hereby solemnly declare and give full warning of their declaration as follows: At the time of granting of any armistice to any government which may be set up in Germany, those German officers and men and members of the Nazi Party who have been responsible for or have taken a consenting part in the above atrocities, massacres and executions will be sent back to the countries in which their abominable deeds were done in order that they may be judged and punished according to the laws of these liberated countries and of the free governments which will be erected therein. Lists will be compiled in all possible detail from all these countries, having regard especially to invaded parts of the Soviet Union, to Poland and Czechoslovakia, to Yugoslavia and Greece including Crete and other islands, to Norway, Denmark, Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, France and Italy.

Thus,

-2-

Thus, Germans who take part in wholesale shooting of Italian officers or in the execution of French, Dutch, Belgian or Norwegian hostages or of Cretan peasants, or who have shared in slaughters inflicted on the people of Poland or in territories of the Soviet Union which are now being swept clear of the enemy, will know they will be brought back to the scene of their crimes and judged on the spot by the peoples whom they have outraged. Let those who have hitherto not imbrued their hands with innocent blood beware lest they join the ranks of the guilty, for most assuredly the three Allied Powers will pursue them to the uttermost ends of the earth and will deliver them to their accusers in order that justice may be done.

The above declaration is without prejudice to the case of major criminals, whose offenses have no particular geographical localization and who will be punished by joint decision of the Governments of the Allies.

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 24, 1944

2886

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

The United Nations are fighting to make a world in which tyranny and aggression can not exist; a world based upon freedom, equality and justice; a world in which all persons regardless of race, color or creed may live in peace, honor and dignity.

In the meantime in most of Europe and in parts of Asia the systematic torture and murder of civilians — men, women and children — by the Nazis and the Japanese continue unabated. In areas subjugated by the aggressors innocent Poles, Czechs, Norwegians, Dutch, Danes, French, Greeks, Russians, Chinese, Filipinos — and many others — are being starved or frozen to death or murdered in cold blood in a campaign of savagery.

The slaughters of Warsaw, Lidice, Kharkov and Nanking — the brutal torture and murder by the Japanese, not only of civilians but of our own gallant American soldiers and fliers — these are startling examples of what goes on day by day, year in and year out, wherever the Nazis and the Japs are in military control — free to follow their barbaric purpose.

In one of the blackest crimes of all history — begun by the Nazis in the day of peace and multiplied by them a hundred times in time of war — the wholesale systematic murder of the Jews of Europe goes on unabated every hour. As a result of the events of the last few days hundreds of thousands of Jews, who while living under persecution have at least found a haven from death in Hungary and the Balkans, are now threatened with annihilation as Hitler's forces descend more heavily upon these lands. That these innocent people, who have already survived a decade of Hitler's fury, should perish on the very eve of triumph over the barbarism which their persecution symbolizes, would be a major tragedy.

It is therefore fitting that we should again proclaim our determination that none who participate in these acts of savagery shall go unpunished. The United Nations have made it clear that they will pursue the guilty and deliver them up in order that Justice be done. That warning applies not only to the leaders but also to their functionaries and subordinates in Germany and in the satellite countries. All who knowingly take part in the deportation of Jews to their death in Poland or Norwegians and French to their death in Germany are equally guilty with the executioner. All who share the guilt shall share the punishment.

Hitler is committing these crimes against humanity in the name of the German people. I ask every German and every man everywhere under Nazi domination to show the world by his action that in his heart he does not share these insane criminal desires. Let him hide these pursued victims, help them to get over their borders, and do what he can to save them from the Nazi hangman. I ask him also to keep watch, and to record the evidence that will one day be used to convict the guilty.

In the meantime, and until the victory that is now assured is won, the United States will persevere in its efforts to rescue the victims of brutality of the Nazis and the Japs. In so far as the necessity of military operations permit this Government will use all means at its command to aid the escape of all intended victims of the Nazi and Jap executioner — regardless of race or religion or color. We call upon the free peoples of Europe and Asia temporarily to open their frontiers to all victims of oppression. We shall find havens of refuge for them, and we shall find the means for their maintenance and support until the tyrant is driven from their homelands and they may return.

In the name of justice and humanity let all freedom loving people rally to this righteous undertaking.

REPLY BY THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT

The Soviet Government replied on October 14th, 1942, by the following Note of M. Molotov, the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, to the Note Verbale presented to it by the Czechoslovak Minister and a representative of the French National Committee on behalf of the Belgian Government, the Czechoslovak Government, the French National Committee, the Greek Government, the Luxembourg Government, the Netherlands Government, the Norwegian Government, the Polish Government and the Yugoslav Government:

(Text)

MY DEAR MINISTER,

In reply to the Note of July 23rd which I received from you and M. Garraux, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the text of the declaration by the Soviet Government on the responsibility of the Hitlerite interlopers and their henchmen for the crimes which they have committed in the occupied countries of Europe.

The Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the U. S. S. R., Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin, having acquainted himself with the collective appeal from representatives of countries temporarily occupied by Hitlerite Germany, and having given a solemn warning as to the responsibility for the crimes perpetrated by the Hitlerites on the territory seized by them, instructed the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, to bring to the notice of the Governments of Czechoslovakia, Poland, Yugoslavia, Norway, Greece, Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg and the French National Committee the following declaration of the Soviet Government: --

The Soviet Government and the entire Soviet people are imbued with feelings of fraternal solidarity and profound sympathy for the sufferings and courageous struggle of the peoples of the countries of Europe occupied by the Hitlerites.

The misery, degradation and privation inflicted on these peoples by Hitlerite tyranny is all the more understood by the peoples of the Soviet Union since the Hitlerite invaders, in the Soviet areas temporarily occupied by them, are perpetrating crimes and atrocities on a monstrous scale: mass murders of civilians, destruction of towns and villages, plunder and ruin of the population, brutal violation of women, children and the aged, enslavement of hundreds of thousands of people.

The Soviet Government once more confirms the universal and deliberate character of the bloody crimes of the Hitlerite invaders, which prove that the German Fascist Government and its accomplices, in striving to enslave the peoples of the occupied countries, to destroy their culture and debase their national dignity, have also made it their aim to carry out the direct, physical annihilation of a considerable section of the population of the territories captured by them.

- 2 -

The Soviet Government at the same time puts on record that neither by their methods of annihilation and crime, nor by their incitement to internecine strife, nor by their plunder and starvation, nor by their bloody crimes have the German Fascists succeeded in breaking the will of the European peoples to struggle against the invaders for the liberation and restoration of their independent countries.

Dauntless in the face of the inevitable sacrifices which the just, liberating struggle brings in its train, and knowing neither mercy to the enemy nor to his accomplices, the patriots of the countries oppressed by the Hitlerites are making use of all available means of struggle against the invaders, including the launching of popular guerilla warfare.

The courageous fighters for the honour, freedom and independence of the peoples oppressed by the Nazis make every effort to inflict the greatest possible losses on the Hitlerite invaders and the German war machine.

They sabotage war industry and production in occupied territories, using a variety of methods -- from slowing down output and lowering the quality of the work to the calling of strikes, to mass withdrawals from production, destruction of machinery and production, diversionist acts in workshops, power stations and mines.

They sabotage the deliveries of agricultural produce to the German oppressors. They frustrate the Hitlerite measures to recruit for Germany's factories foreign workers, doomed to slave labour on the production of guns intended for use against the Allies and the oppressed peoples of Europe.

They are fighters against the violent German brigands and imperialists and strive to despoil the war supplies and raw materials of the invaders. They break down enemy communications, tear up rails, blow up bridges, derail trains, inflict damage on mercantile and naval vessels, cut telegraph and telephone wires.

They give practical aid to operations by the Allied air force over occupied Hitlerite territory. They sabotage the measures of military and civil occupation authorities. They punish with death those guilty of organizing and carrying out Hitlerite violence and terror, as well as those traitors who give aid to the invaders.

The most substantial losses have been inflicted on the enemy in those countries where, on the lines of the great movement of people's avengers -- guerillas -- who are fighting against the invaders in temporarily-occupied Soviet territories, armies of patriots have fearlessly taken this path of armed struggle against the invader, such as has occurred in particular in Yugoslavia.

There is not the slightest doubt that the successful development of this glorious liberating struggle in all its forms will become one of the most important conditions making for the final defeat of the common enemy, and will bring nearer the retribution justly demanded by the representatives of the countries occupied by Hitlerite Germany.

- 3 -

In the note of Vyacheslav Molotov, People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the U. S. S. R., dated November 25th, 1941, on the abominable crimes of the German authorities against Soviet prisoners of war, and that dated January 6th, 1942, on the universal plunder and ruin of the population and the monstrous atrocities of the German authorities in Soviet territories captured by them, and that dated April 27th, 1942, on the monstrous atrocities and brutal violence of the German Fascist invaders in Soviet districts occupied by them and on the responsibility of the German Government and Military Command for these crimes, sent to all Governments with which the Soviet Union has diplomatic relations, the Soviet Government laid full responsibility for the inhuman and brigandly acts of German troops on the criminal Hitlerite Government of Germany.

It declared that the Hitlerite Government and its accomplices would not escape responsibility and deserved punishment for all the unprecedented atrocities perpetrated against the peoples of the U. S. S. R. and against all the freedom-loving countries.

The Soviet Government declared in addition, that its organs would make a detailed record of these crimes and atrocities of the Hitlerite Army, for which the outraged Soviet people justly demand and will obtain retribution.

Having received information about the monstrous atrocities perpetrated and being perpetrated by the Hitlerites, by order of the Government and military and civil authorities of Germany, on the territories of France, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Yugoslavia, Norway, Greece, Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg, and giving the widest publicity to the information received from these countries, the Soviet Government once more declares to the world its inflexible determination that the criminal Hitlerite Government and all its accomplices must and shall suffer deserved, stern punishment for the crimes perpetrated against the peoples of the Soviet Union and against all freedom-loving peoples in territories temporarily occupied by the German army and its accomplices.

The Soviet Government approves and shares the just desire expressed in the collective Note received, that those guilty of the crimes indicated shall be handed over to judicial courts and prosecuted, and that the sentence passed on them shall be put into execution.

The Soviet Government is ready to support all practical measures to this end on the part of Allied and friendly Governments, and counts upon all interested States giving each other mutual assistance in seeking out, handing over, bringing to court and passing sentence on the Hitlerites and their accomplices guilty of the organization, promotion or perpetration of crimes on occupied territory.

The Soviet Government is in agreement with the declaration of Mr. Roosevelt, President of the United States of America, made in his speech of October 12th, on the question of punishing the Nazi leaders, concretely responsible for countless acts of brutality, i.e., that the clique of leaders and their cruel accomplices must be mentioned by name, arrested and tried according to the criminal code.

- 4 -

The whole of mankind knows the names and bloody crimes of the leaders of the criminal Hitlerite clique: Hitler, Goering, Hess, Goebbels, Himmler, Ribbentrop, Rosenberg and other organizers of German brutalities from among the leaders of Fascist Germany.

The Soviet Government considers that, like the governments of all states defending their independence against the Hitlerite hordes, it is obliged to regard the stern punishment of the aforesaid leaders of the criminal Hitlerite clique as its immediate duty to the countless widows, orphans, relatives and friends of all those innocent people who have been brutally tortured and killed by order of the criminals named.

The Soviet Government considers it essential to hand over without delay to the courts of the special international tribunal, and to punish according to all the severity of the criminal code, any of the leaders of Fascist Germany who in the course of the war have fallen into the hands of States fighting against Hitlerite Germany.

Renewing at the present time its warning of the full weight of responsibility which the criminal Hitlerite leaders and all their accomplices bear for the monstrous atrocities perpetrated by them, the Soviet Government considers it opportune to confirm the conviction, expressed in its official declaration, that the Hitlerite Government, which recognizes only brute force, must be smashed by the all-powerful forces of the freedom-loving peoples, since the interests of the whole of mankind demand that as soon as possible the band of barefaced murderers called the government of Hitlerite Germany, shall be finished with once and for all.

Thanking you in advance, I beg you to communicate this declaration to your Government, as well as the Governments of Poland, Yugoslavia, Greece, Belgium, Norway, Holland and Luxembourg.

Please accept the assurance of my profound regard.

People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs,

V. MOLOTOV.

To M. Z. FIERLINGER,
Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of Czechoslovakia,
Kuibishev.

January 20, 1945

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT.

Trial of Nazi War Criminals

As you know, I have been holding conferences in my office with representatives of the Departments of State, War and Justice on the above subject. As a result of these conferences, I am submitting to you herewith a set of recommendations signed by Secretary Stettinius, Secretary Stimson and Attorney General Biddle.

I am also submitting separately a suggestion from the State Department as to the general kind of memorandum of international agreement which would carry out these suggestions.

We all believe that the plan here submitted would not only result in speedy and effective justice but would establish an essentially fair procedure which would meet the approval of enlightened public opinion not only of today, but of future generations.

Ambassador Davies has sat in on some of these conferences and is in general agreement with the recommendations here made -- except that he believes that the international court should not be exclusively military, but should include some civilian judges. He is submitting a memorandum to you which is hereto attached.

S. I. R.