



5

CONTENTS

Communications from Germany

- Telegram No. 428, September 10, 1938, (760F.62/727)
- Telegram No. 431, September 12, 1938, (760F.62/751)
- Telegram No. 436, September 13, 1938, (760F.62/785)
- Telegram No. 443, September 15, 1938, (760F.62/840)
- Telegram No. 444, September 15, 1938, (")
- Telegram No. 451, September 17, 1938, (760F.62/870)
- Telegram No. 456, September 18, 1938, (760F.62/897)
- Telegram No. 457, September 18, 1938, (")
- Telegram No. 462, September 19, 1938, (760F.62/911)
- Telegram No. 471, September 22, 1938, (760F.62/986)
- Telegram No. 488, September 24, 1938, (760F.62/1085)
- Telegram No. 490, September 24, 1938, (760F.62/1087)
- Telegram No. 493, September 25, 1938, (760F.62/1090)
- Telegram No. 491, September 25, 1938, (760F.62/1088)
- Telegram No. 492, September 25, 1938, (760F.62/1089)
- Telegram No. 495, September 26, 1938, (760F.62/1106)
- Telegram No. 498, September 26, 1938, (760F.62/1117)
- Telegram No. 505, September 27, 1938, (760F.62/1176)
- Telegram No. 514, September 28, 1938, (760F.62/1268)
- Telegram No. 515, September 28, 1938, (760F.62/1260)
- Telegram No. 517, September 29, 1938, (760F.62/1277)
- Telegram No. 518, September 29, 1938, (760F.62/1283)
- Telegram No. 529, October 5, 1938, (760F.62/1495)
- Telegram No. 530, October 6, 1938, (760F.62/1506)

Communications from Germany

Despatch No. 370, October 14, 1938, (760F.62/1822)
Telegram No. 560, October 20, 1938, (760F.62/1737)
Telegram No. 565, October 21, 1938, (760F.62/1747)
Telegram No. 566, October 21, 1938, (760F.62/1747)
Despatch No. 402, November 4, 1938, (760F.62/1858)
Despatch No. 429, November 12, 1938, (762.00/215)
Telegram No. 758, December 28, 1938, (741.62/325)
Despatch No. 550, January 25, 1939, (762.00/239)
Telegram No. 79, January 31, 1939, (762.00/231)
Telegram No. 80, January 31, 1939, (")
Telegram No. 94, February 4, 1939, (762.00/240)
Telegram No. 116, February 10, 1939, (852.01/440)
Telegram No. 138, February 23, 1939, (711.62/231)
Telegram No. 141, February 24, 1939, (711.62/232)
Telegram No. 212, March 29, 1939, (760C.62/476)

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

EG

A portion of this message must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (B)

FROM

Berlin

Dated September 10, 1938

Rec'd 12:10 p.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

428, September 10, 2 p.m.



(GRAY) One. The morning papers published summaries of Praha's "fourth plan" as well as the text of the communique issued by the representatives of the Sudeten German party with respect thereto. The only editorial comment thus far noted appeared in the VOLKISCHER BEOBACHTER and the DEUTSCHER ALGEMEINE ZEITUNG which briefly stated that it was very difficult to see how the great gap between the latest Czech plan and the eight points constituting the Sudeten Carlsbad program could be bridged.

Two. Yesterday evening's BERLINER TAGEBLATT published an article by its editor of which the following passages indicate the trend.

"Through the joint deliberations of the representatives of the national groups in Czechoslovakia it has been brought home to the world that at Praha it is not of any question of the future of the Sudeten Germans but of the construction

of

760F.62/727

SEP 13 1938

FILED

CDG

-2- #428, September 10, 2 p.m. from Berlin

of the Czech state as stated therein. At a time when even small nations have awakened to a consciousness of their identity it is not possible in a nationalities state to maintain the sovereign rule of a state people which does not even represent a numerical majority. If this has not yet been fully realized in Praha today, the realization has gained ground in London and Paris as is indicated by the remarks of the TIMES and of various French papers. In Versailles twenty years ago the card of the right of self determination was thrown on the table. Thus a promissory note was issued to the nations which to this day has not yet been redeemed. One cannot prolong this note forever unless one wants to make permanent the conditions of unrest and insecurity which was created at Versailles. It is today not a question of whether the one or the other settlement would please the Versailles powers more or less, it is simply a question of vital national rights which can no longer be denied and which must be anchored in an unshakable national legal manner. This realization is today quite general at Nuremberg and for this reason further developments are here regarded with quiet and calm which is in agreeable contrast to the excitement in the political centers of the western powers.

-3- #428, September 10, 2 p.m. from Berlin

powers. It was the fatal mistake of the European politics of the past twenty years that the policies of the old entente states believed they could, with compromises save a system which was wrong in its plan and contradicted the leading ideas which were proclaimed at Versailles.

From this point of order one must today also judge the Czechoslovak question. Past methods proved unsuccessful. Now it is a question of recognizing the practical effects of the principles. He who proclaims the right of self determination as a political ideal cannot prevent its application in a question of state law. It is the essence of law to create practical orders of life. The firmer, clearer and more natural the order is, the securer is peace. Europe, however, must at last be brought to peace. Centers of unrest which have arisen out of the disregard of national facts must be eliminated. Europe needs a natural order established on the inalienable vital laws of peoples. That is the lesson which results from the policy of diplomatic compromises of the past decades and from the negotiations in Praha of the past few months. It may today be bitter for some statesmen to bow to this lesson. The present bitterness, however, will be encountered

-4- #428, September 10, 2 p.m. from Berlin

countered a thousand fold by permanent and secure peace. That is the goal towards which the policy of the Fuehrer is directed". (End Gray)

The foregoing was written at Nuremberg and it is believed that it was inspired by or at least submitted to Hitler.

WILSON

CSB

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

JR

This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (C)

FROM

Berlin

Dated September 12, 1938

Rec'd 4 p.m.

Secretary of State,

Washington.

431, September 12, 5 p.m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL



Henderson returned from Nuremberg this morning. I find his impressions of sentiment are almost identical with what I reported to you in my 425, September 8, 6 p.m.

He had the impression from various indications in his talks with men in real touch with Hitler that the latter was contemplating a relatively peaceable statement tonight. He feared that the declaration given out by Chamberlain last night will not encourage Hitler to persevere in this policy. (Incidentally he had not received a copy of this statement, nor have I, nor has it been published in the German press). He argued that Hitler feels deep resentment over the claims made in Democratic countries that the British warning of May 21 deterred him from military action and that it is unlikely that on the day following a further warning from Chamberlain Hitler will show himself conciliatory.

Henderson

760F.62/751

008

-2- #431, September 12, 5 p.m., from Berlin.

Henderson read me a memorandum of conversation on September ten between Halifax and Kennedy which the Ambassador has doubtless reported to you as well as a memorandum of a conversation between Halifax and the Russian Ambassador in which the latter urged that the British Government make a more categorical repudiation of the TIMES suggestion regarding the fate of the Sudeten Deutsch.

The Russian Ambassador apparently also suggested a joint demarche to Germany in which the United States might be induced to join. Halifax replied in respect to the first suggestion that he thought sufficient denial had been made, in regard to the second that the French had already apprised him of the Soviet suggestion.

The British manager of the American Express Company states that families of British residents are already leaving Berlin. He had discussed their departure with a Secretary of the British Embassy and the Vice Consul had stated that they were suggesting that such departure should be made.

Repeated to London and Paris.

WILSON

CSB

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

DIVISION OF
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

SEP 14 1938

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

JR

This message must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (C)

FROM Berlin

Dated September 13, 1938

Rec'd 3:48 p.m.

Secretary of State,

Washington.

436, September 13, 7 p.m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.

The Belgian Minister Davignon, one of the acutest minds in the diplomatic corps listened to Hitler's speech in Nuremberg last night.

He tells me that he is deeply convinced that Hitler meant every word he said and that there was no bluff about it. The faces of the Ministers and party leaders behind Hitler were radiant with joy as the latter spoke. On the train last night Davignon discussed this matter with the Polish and Italian Ambassadors and found them both convinced that Hitler meant every word he spoke and that the most tragic mistake would be to regard it as bluff.

Davignon told me he learned from a good source last night before the speech that the latter part had been rewritten and made appropriately more violent after hearing

760F. 62/785

800

-2- #436, September 13, 7 p.m., from Berlin.

hearing of Chamberlain's statement to the press on Sunday.

Davignon added that as he listened to the speech he came to the conclusion that stripped of its vituperation and violence of presentation Hitler had made a powerful case for the grievances of the Sudeten Germans in the light of generally accepted democratic ideals. This he thought should be given real consideration.

Davignon is urging his Government to try to persuade the British Government that the time has come to act rapidly; that the four great Powers, France, England, Germany and Italy, ^{should meet} ~~get together~~ under British chairmanship and try to find a peaceable way out of this trouble. Davignon is aware of the risk of this procedure--a German refusal would sharpen the tension--but considers it a lesser risk than letting matters drag as he is inclined to believe Germany would accept while the four powers might follow some other path. He at the moment sees only two solutions, one, that Benes accept unequivocally the Carlsbad demands of the Sudeten Germans; two, that a plebiscite be suggested under international auspices and France and Great Britain urge this on Benes. He believes that

-3- #436, September 13, 7 p.m., from Berlin.

that Benes cannot politically accept point one therefore one is reduced to point two.

In his discussion with the Italian Ambassador Davignon gained the impression that Italy would cooperate in an international effort to solve this problem.

Reports from Praha today show the shooting of three Czechs and three Sudeten Germans and declaration of martial law over a portion of the area. I do not believe that Hitler has made up his mind to armed intervention, nevertheless, I believe that Davignon is right in his further contention that only prompt action somewhere can prevent the occurrence of that type and scope of disorder and bloodshed which may provoke Hitler into intervention.

Repeated to London, Paris, Rome.

WILSON

CSB

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

JR
This telegram must be
closely paraphrased be-
fore being communicated
to anyone. (C)

FROM Berlin

Dated September 15, 1938

Rec'd 6:40 p.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

443, September 15, 1 p.m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.



In discussing the present situation with certain of
the more ^{astute} and well informed of the foreign
representatives here ^{I find relative unanimity of} ~~opinion~~
^{opinion} regarding certain of its aspects. I wish to say
at once that these men's approach to the question is that
they regard a war as the greatest possible calamity which
every effort should be made to avoid and that they speak
obviously out of personal knowledge and conviction quite
aside from what might be the policies of their respective
governments. They look upon the situation which has
developed as extremely dangerous that risk of allowing
it to drift is the sheerest folly and that something has
to be done and done quickly. They feel furthermore
that anything that is undertaken should be of a practical
nature that prejudice based upon varying national
concepts should be laid aside as far as possible and
most important that all of the factors in the immediate
disturbing

760F. 62/840

GDG

6 1938

-2- #443, September 15, 1 p.m., from Berlin.

disturbing issue should be fully recognized.

Respecting the German side of the picture considered in such terms ^{they emphasize} ~~the~~ the following.

One. The LONDON TIMES of September 7 in speaking of self-determination for the Sudeten Germans turned the entire course of the affair into new channels. Doubtless this issue was boiling beneath the surface but up to that moment it had not burst through. Whatever the validity of the TIMES' article as representing the views of the British Government or of the British people, tradition has placed the TIMES in a position where this article has been widely accepted as such. Repercussions in the Sudeten German area and in the Reich were immediate.

From that moment it has been impossible to go back. The eight points of Carlsbad have evaporated from the picture. The issue to all intents and purposes is self-determination which presumably will mean a plebiscite resulting in cession or secession. As matters have developed this has become true, possibly apart from Germany's original intentions.

Two. By all progressive standards the principle of self-determination is a just one. In any event the democratic governments cannot with good conscience
retreat

-3- #443, September 15, 1 p.m., from Berlin,

retreat from their historic position on this subject. To ignore it is of the same character. To retreat or to ignore is to admit that the real issues involved are solely those of power politics with their concomitant insincerities. The issue must be honorably faced if democratic forms of government are to retain popular respect throughout the world and gain a hoped for ultimate general acceptance. This is in effect the concept of De Valera in his Geneva speech insofar as I have seen it reported i.e. the untried concept of Article XIX of the League Covenant.

Three. The linking together of the democracies and Soviet Russia as possessed of a common ideal, which has progressively manifested itself in the western press, is a development obviously opportunist and projects a shadow of insincerity over the protestations of the directly interested democracies.

Four. Such factors have had a direct effect on German attitude. Germany had portrayed itself as a victim of a determined and permanent opposition in the field of power politics. Germans believe this without any doubt whatsoever as they survey the course of events from the Treaty of Versailles to the rise of National Socialism in the Reich. The present attitude of the

press

-4- #443, September 15, 1 p.m., from Berlin.

press of the western powers toward self-determination in Czechoslovakia and towards the form of government in Soviet Russia confirms them in this belief. This attitude has recently diminished the influence of the compromises on German policy and has greatly strengthened the position of Hitler, National Socialism, and the more radical elements of the party. These moderate elements are naturally Germans first of all. Their feeling that it is hopeless to try to be understood abroad hardens their entire attitude toward the non-German world. ~~There~~^{This} change had been observable during recent weeks to any one closely watching the situation here. It is a dangerous phenomenon.

Five. On the other hand, the foreign representatives here are fully aware of, and in varying degrees share, the recognized apprehensions concerning Germany's possible long term designs respecting Europe. They feel nevertheless that of immediate and overwhelming importance is the avoidance of any European conflict and that this tremendous issue should not be confused by speculations respecting the future however well reasoned. While the moment may occur when the states of the world will have to say no to Germany, such a decision

-5- #443, September 15, 1 p.m., from Berlin.

decision must only be taken on grounds uncontestably just.

On a practical basis they feel that the impossibility of Sudetens and Czechs harmoniously cooperating in one state has been demonstrated. They inquire whether anybody imagines that the results of a victorious war over Germany could in any way reconcile such inherent difficulties. (END SECTION ONE).

WILSON,

HTM:EMB

Garbled groups have been serviced.

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

LMS

This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (C) and (D)

FROM

Berlin

Dated September 15, 1938

Rec'd 7:06 p. m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

444, September 15, 1 p. m.

CONTINUING MY 443. (SECTION TWO)



The only dissenting voice to these general conceptions among the foreign representatives is that of Francois Poncet who believes and states frankly that we are dealing with "criminal lunatics" and that it is waste of time to apply those methods and relationships to which normal men would respond. Nevertheless to act on such a hypothesis is so stultifying as to rob millions of all hope. Hence we must predicate our dealing on the hypothesis that the leaders of the party are subject to reason and responsive to normal stimuli.

Six. I have already reported my views as to the urgency of the situation in the Sudeten area and the need of some vital and prompt step which might approach the problem from a radically new standpoint and would prevent events in this area from provoking Hitler to military intervention. The visit of Chamberlain is a courageous step.

LMS 2-No. 444, September 15, 1 p. m., from Berlin.

step. He has shown himself ready to subordinate the risk to his reputation to the necessity for accomplishing something to avert a catastrophe. It may prove to be the act which saves the situation but it is too early to form a judgment on this point.

Repeated to Paris and London except penultimate paragraph.

(END MESSAGE)

WILSON

NPL:EMB

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

NC
This telegram must be
closely paraphrased before **FROM**
being communicated to anyone.
(C)

Berlin

Dated September 17, 1938

Rec'd 9:20 a.m.

Secretary of State
Washington



451, September 17, noon.

The Military Attache who has just returned to Berlin, states that the maneuvers in East Prussia were entirely normal peacetime maneuvers. Supporting this description is the fact that they were followed by practically the entire G-2 section of army headquarters. He has heard of no unusual troop movements in South Germany. As regards Austria he has heard that there has been some military movement in the neighborhood of the border near Pressburg.

He states that the Military Attache's corps present at the East-Prussian maneuvers regarded as significant that the Franco Government's Military Attache was suddenly ordered to return immediately to Burgos, which started rumors that the French Government was considering some form of support of the Loyalist Government as an offset to the loss of French prestige resulting from recent developments in the Czechoslovak situation. I mention this rumor as an example of the speculation that is current here. I do not believe that there is any real evidence here in support of it.

WILSON

CSB

760F . 62 / 870

GE

FILED

SEP 16 1938

7108
452.00



S
Dec

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

MB
This message should be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone (D)

BERLIN
FROM Dated September 18, 1938
Rec'd 2:15 p.m.

Secretary of State
Washington

456, September 18, 2 p.m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL FOR THE SECRETARY.

I just had a long talk with Henderson who is more moved than I have ever seen him waiting in visible impatience the decision in the Cabinet in London and the results of the talks with Daladier. Chamberlain did not give Henderson a real glimpse of what was in the former's mind, contenting himself with presenting a resume of the conversation with Hitler. Henderson is extremely apprehensive of any procrastination. Indeed he said he was in despair over the fact that for four months he had preached urgency, that nobody at home had listened to him and he felt himself a "voice in the wilderness".

He did not attempt any more than did Weizsacker to give me a detailed account of the conversation at Berchtesgaden. Nevertheless the impression I got of the situation checks with what Weizsacker told me and even the same phrase "cession of territory" was used. Henderson explained that this was the phrase the Prime Minister had employed

7607.62

7607.62/897

SEP 20 1938

FILED

CONFIDENTIAL FILE

MB -2- #456, September 18, 2 p.m. from Berlin

employed and that it probably was synonymous in his mind with self-determination.

Henderson brought out the telegrams he has sent his Government in the past 48 ^{hours} (), The main points he made are as follows: The Prime Minister's coming headed off military action. Hitler has promised Chamberlain, and will keep his word barring catastrophic events in Czechoslovakia, that he will make no military move until the next meeting can be held with Chamberlain. Henderson has reported vigorously that if the western powers decline to adopt right of self-determination or even adopt it with a lot of conditions there will be no use talking to Hitler again. Indeed, the latter will march and a general European war will be the result. If, on the other hand, France and Great Britain are willing to adopt unconditionally "self-determination" they should be able in their conversations with Hitler to win certain concessions as to the method of putting this into effect. A further essential point Henderson has urged is that immediate pressure be put on Benes to accept the idea of self-determination. There is of course the grave risk that Benes will refuse or that if he accepts a revolution will break out among the Czechoslovak people. In this event there will be German intervention and a local war. (END SECTION ONE)

WILSON

GW RGC

(#) ~~Apparent omission~~

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

RR

1-1336

This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone (D)

FROM

Berlin

Dated September 18, 1938

Received 2:50 p. m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

457, September 18, 2 p. m.

Continuing my 456, Section Two.

Henderson argues and has so reported that if it must come to war the choice lies between a general war on a bad cause involving the reputation of the democratic principle of self determination or a small war of limited scope. There is no question in his mind as to what the choice should be. As he phrases the matter France and England must choose between unconditional adoption of the principle of self determination and fighting Germany. If they choose the first they will be faced with the necessity, repugnant as it may be, of coercing BENES into acceptance. If the principle is accepted some form of coercion of BENES is inevitable still either a friendly pressure by France and Great Britain or armed pressure by Germany.

HE

457 September 18, 2 p. m. from Berlin (SECTION TWO)

-2-

He is reporting as well a gathering of troops in the Austrian area north of Vienna. He believes though he is not sure, that certain military preparations are being made in the vicinity of Breslau (in this connection see my 451, September 15, noon, reporting Military Attache's summary). Our Military Attache has just informed me that the Chief of Staff and the Commander in Chief received the Military Attaches in East Prussia for dinner last night. Obviously therefore no incident was contemplated.

Henderson informed me that on the eve of his departure from Nuremberg he had received a telegram from his Government to remain and to notify Ribbentrop that an urgent communication was coming.

Inasmuch as he recognized the danger of a further warning, he neither notified Ribbentrop nor remained in Nuremberg and so informed his Government. This episode must have occurred at almost the same moment as Henderson's statement to the Press.

Henderson saw Goering Karinhall yesterday afternoon and urged him to do what he could to see that peace was maintained whatever the provocation until Chamberlain could talk again with Hitler. Goering reassured him on this,

said

457 September 18, 2 p. m. from Berlin (SECTION TWO)

-3-

said that Hitler's word had been given and that barring catastrophic upheaval in Czechoslovakia no steps would be taken until further negotiations had been started. Goering said emphatically that any conditions attached to the acceptance of "self determination" would be useless and provocative and urged Henderson so to report to his Government. Goering spoke with confidence of their state of preparation and in respect to the air said that they were stronger than Great Britain, France and Czechoslovakia put together. Henderson states that he did not bluster but his very quiet was ominous.

Goering said that he was awaiting the visits of the Polish Ambassador and the Hungarian Minister that he was expecting both of them to talk about their minorities in Czechoslovakia and to request that these be taken care of in any settlement. Goering said that he proposed to tell them that Germany was interested in the Sudeten Germans alone and not in the fate of any of the rest of Czechoslovakia.

For reasons reported in my 453 I am not (repeat not) repeating this message to Paris or London. You may desire to apprise them.

(END OF MESSAGE)

RR RGC

WILSON

REB

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

This telegram must be _____
closely paraphrased be-
fore being communicated
to anyone. (C)

BERLIN

FROM

Dated September 19, 1938

Rec'd 5:13 p. m.

Secretary of State,

Washington.

462, September 19, 7 p. m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.



In these anxious days of waiting the Italian attitude assumes a growing importance.

I have discussed with Atolico the recent indications of Italy's attitude and as we analyzed the letter to Lord Runciman the speech on Sunday and previous communications it would appear that the position is as follows:

Mussolini desires above all to avoid a European struggle if there must be a struggle between Czechoslovakia and Germany he desires it to be limited. If this appears impossible and a general war results then in his words, "Italy's place is chosen."

The two recent announcements seem to show: (a) Mussolini serves warning on the Czechoslovak Government that the Sudeten-German problem must be settled in the interest of European peace. (b) He serves warning on Germany and holds out hope to the Czechs by declaring his peaceful

760F.62/911

GDG

FILED

SEP 21 1938

Confidential File

REB

2-462, From Berlin, Sept. 19, 7p.m.

peaceful interest in and friendship for an "independent Bohemian state".

(c) HE foresees the possibility of a repetition of the same sort of danger arising in the future in respect to the Hungarian and Polish minorities and therefore desires once and for all by one more operation to eliminate future danger spots in the Danube valley.

France. He waves a red flag at France in declaring that if the war is generalized Italy's place is chosen and this is published on the day on which the French Cabinet is discussing Chamberlain's proposal.

Atolico says that the Italians are under the impression of recent events:

A month ago the British discouraged their traders from dealing with Italy.

Two weeks ago the French refused visas to travelers to Italy.

Then came Chamberlain's statement of a week ago Saturday to the effect that England in any case sides with France. This was made more specific by Eden's letter to the TIMES. In Italian eyes the guarantee that Great Britain had given, as a remnant of the Locarno undertakings, has

REB

3- 462, From Berlin, Sept. 19, 7p.m.

has changed into an out and out alliance with France. Italy is logically driven to take definite position in the opposing camp since to remain here: if Germany were destroyed it would be Italy's turn next.

The Ambassador urgently hopes that if this present crisis is surmounted it will be followed immediately by a realization of the four power pact. Without it he can see no hope for the maintenance of peace in Europe or for the avoidance of automatic and binding alliances dividing Europe into two camps. The four power pact he continues would fill the purpose originally conceived for the Council of the League of Nations by enabling the great western powers in a moment of danger automatically to consult.

It is curious that in another conversation today with Lipsky, Polish Ambassador, I found him also speculating along these same lines in respect to the Italian attitude.

He says that he is so convinced that warnings and threats to Germany are worse than useless, that he has consistently maintained the attitude in his conversations with Germans that the German Government will be driven by logic and reason to a peaceful settlement rather than

one

REB

4-462, From Berlin, Sept. 19, 7p.m.

one which will risk a European conflict.

Lipsky feels that the Germans consider the ^{Chamberlain}~~Deutschland~~ visit as a triumph for Hitler. They welcome the step with its possibility of appeasement but nevertheless they have made no public rejoicing over the triumph and indeed have shown by their courtesy and warmth of reception their appreciation of Chamberlain's attitude. Lipsky states further that in his opinion Chamberlain's visit has gone far towards soothing the wounded pride occasioned by the British warning on May 21 with its disastrous result in spurring German military preparation and stiffening their attitude.

WILSON

EMB

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

Handwritten marks and scribbles at top right.

1-1234

FROM

EG

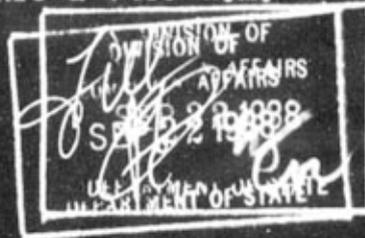
This message must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (B)

Berlin

Dated September 22, 1938

Rec'd 7:30 a.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.



471, September 22, noon.

7609.6 ✓

In a conversation yesterday with the Counsellor of the Embassy the Russian Charge d'Affaires stated that under no circumstances would Russia lend military assistance to Czechoslovakia except in common action with France. Discussing the general European situation he said that although it might remain for a time in formal existence the Franco-Russian Treaty to all intents and purposes must be regarded as dead.

Cipher text Moscow.

note 751.6111

WILSON

RGC :DDM

7609.62/986

GDC

SEP 26 1938

FILED

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

lw ¹⁻¹³³⁵ Berlin
This telegram must be close **FROM**
paraphrased before being com- Dated September 24, 1938
municated to anyone. (A)

Rec'd 5:30 p.m.

September 27 1938.

alter to Sec of Sta

DIVISION OF	
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS	
SEP 26 1938	VEJ
<i>File</i>	9/26
DEPARTMENT OF STATE	

Secretary of State
Washington

488, September 24, 6 p.m.

*7/2/38
862-20*

Military Attache reports that air defense measures for Berlin in full effect with all air fields guarded by anti-aircraft batteries in their battle positions. No major troop movements in evidence though considerable minor military activity. Troops at Potsdam and Doberitz were pursuing on Saturday morning their normal training schedules. The Potsdam garrison was granted normal week end leave at noon Saturday. Notify War Department.

WILSON

EMB

SEP 28 1938

FILED

SEP 28 1938

FILED

760F.62/1085

GG

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

lw Berlin
This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (C)

FROM Dated September 24, 1938
Rec'd 5:19 p.m.

Secretary of State
Washington



490, September 24, 8 p.m.

The past week has been of course characterized by extreme nervousness and apprehension. Although the general impression in Germany after the Berchtesgaden conversations was that the danger of general war was past, that the western powers would under no considerations back up Czechoslovakia if it resisted German aggression, apprehension grew lest Hitler, dominated by this thought, should launch an attack in an attempt to settle the matter immediately by force of arms. This bellicose attitude was exemplified by a talk between Weizsaecker and the Czech Charge d'Affaires reported in my 459, September 19, 4 p.m., where Weizsaecker warned the Czech that the calling to the colors of seven or eight ^{clashes} might have vastly different results from those of last May.

In spite of the still obscure and perhaps unsatisfactory results of the Godsberg conversations there are certain indications

SEP 27 1938
RECEIVED

760F.62/1087

lw -2- No. 490, September 24, 8 p.m. from Berlin

indications of a lessening of the tension and perhaps even of a relaxation of insistence upon unilateral action by Hitler. The German press reports the final conversation with Chamberlain in an optimistic spirit. Reports from Praha show that the Czech army was mobilized yesterday. Three or four days ago I should have expected such mobilization to be met either by a ^{most} violent denunciation or by military action on Hitler's part. Today the press denounces the mobilization but the signs of military activity in Germany are no more visible than they have been for the last week.

I can only speculate on the cause of this apparent change of temper. Possibly Chamberlain was to persuade Hitler that the danger of general conflagration was not past and that only decisions based upon international agreement including agreement with Czechoslovakia could preserve peace between Czechoslovakia and Germany and insure peace between Germany and the Great Powers.

Repeated to Paris, London, Praha, Warsaw.

WILSON

(*) ~~apparent omission~~

HPD

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

ML

This message must be close paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (C)

Dated September 25, 1938

Rec'd 7 p.m.

Secretary of State

Washington

493, September 25, 8 p. m.

CONFIDENTIAL



Henderson returned from Godesberg last night. We had a talk this morning.

Henderson opened the conversation by stating that it is now fifty-fifty between a general war and peace. All depended in his opinion upon how the present memorandum is presented by the British and French Ministers at Praha to the Czech Government--in other words what the attitude of Great Britain and France is in this connection. If these two Governments make it clear to the Czechs that if this memorandum is rejected the Czechs cannot count upon British and French assistance the Czechs will probably accept. If, on the other hand, it is presented in any less definite way he fears that the Czechs will resist. Henderson stated emphatically that Hitler has not been seen (repeat not) bluffing. Henderson is convinced that Chamberlain's first visit Berchtesgaden prevented a German attack at that time

and

760F:62/1090

FILED

SEP 27 1938

ed

ML -2- #493, Sept. 25, 1938 7 p.m., from Berlin

and that Chamberlain's second visit to Godesberg prevented an attack in retaliation for Czech mobilization.

Henderson was deeply perturbed at the growing opposition in Great Britain to Chamberlain. He feels that Churchill is ambitious to become Prime Minister and is seizing this occasion in an endeavor to throw out the present Cabinet and be summoned himself by the King. If Chamberlain falls Henderson says war is certain since a "war cabinet" will follow, probably with Eden in the Foreign Office. The policy of such a Cabinet would be to serve notice at once on Hitler warning him not to act. This would be the signal, Henderson is convinced, for immediate action on Hitler's part. Hitler would do nothing to provoke England or France but would immediately assault Czechoslovakia. Henderson further believes that if this matter is not settled by October 1, Hitler will then march into Czechoslovakia regardless of threats or risk of general war. Hitler has at last put himself into a position from which he cannot now retire.

Henderson urged me strongly to do what I could to emphasize to you that the overthrow of Chamberlain means war and that any public expression of sympathy with his objectives in this hour of uncertainty would greatly strengthen his hand in his struggle to keep peace in Europe.

Henderson

711.00

ML -3- #493, Sept. 25, 1938 7 p.m., from Berlin

Henderson says that in its essence the two plans are not profoundly different. The Czechs have accepted the first and it is incredible that having done so a war should break out over the method of application of a cession of territory already agreed upon in principle. The British plan had proposed outright cession of certain districts and plebiscites for more doubtful areas, this under international supervision. The Hitler plan proposed outright cession of certain areas and plebiscite for others and the entire area to be occupied by German forces as the Czechs retire.

Hitler proposed that plebiscites in the doubtful areas ~~and~~^{should be} held not later than November 26 and that for this purpose German troops shall be withdrawn and the plebiscite held under international auspices or by a Czech-German commission. The plebiscite can be carried out in the same manner as the Saar plebiscites. Henderson states that the areas in question do not materially differ in the British and Hitler plans.

Hitler was motivated in rejecting the British plan and urging his own by (a) his conviction that the Czechs accepted the first plan with the idea that they could profit by the delay to sabotage the concessions made and (b) his fear for the safety of the Sudeten Germans

within

ML -4- #493⁴, Sept. 25, 1938 7 p.m., from Berlin

within this area. He claims the only way in which he can assure himself of their safety is by actual presence of German troops as the Czechs withdraw.

In the course of the conversation Hitler gave Chamberlain his word of honor that if this matter were liquidated Germany would be "a satisfied power". He said they would keep up their claim on Great Britain for colonies but that nobody could imagine a German mobilization for this purpose and that they would be "satisfied as far as the continent of Europe was concerned." After Hitler had refused Chamberlain's memorandum on the grounds above outlined he presented an alternative memorandum. Chamberlain pointed out that it read like an ultimatum and Hitler thereupon stated that Chamberlain could change the memorandum in any way he saw fit if he did not (repeat not) alter the fundamentals, namely, prompt occupation by German soldiers of the disputed area. Any changes could be made in tone, et cetera. A number of changes were made and a number of statements were rejected from Hitler's memorandum.

In the first conversation Hitler had been insistent in respect to the Polish and Hungarian claims in Czechoslovakia. Chamberlain had taken the position that they were there to discuss the Sudeten German question. In the subsequent conversation Hitler did not raise the

Polish

8
ML -5- #493, Sept. 25, 1938 7 p.m., from Berlin

Polish and Hungarian questions. The matter was only raised inferentially when guarantees for Czechoslovakia were discussed. Hitler declared he was ready to give any kind of a guarantee desired "after the questions (plural) of minorities have been settled".

In closing our conversation Henderson returned again to the danger of war in a reversal of Chamberlain's policy and expressed the urgent hope that some means could be found whereby the American Government in the first instance and the French Government also could express confidence in ^{Chamberlain} ~~Hitler~~ and hopes for his success in averting catastrophe.

I am the more impressed by Henderson's conviction as to Hitler's determination to take matters into his own hands if this problem is not settled satisfactorily for him by the fact that in the past Henderson has been dubious of Hitler's intention to precipitate matters by launching attack. His present belief is undoubtedly aroused by the close contact he has had with Hitler in this recent series of discussions.

Repeated to Paris, London.

WILSON

CW:EMB

~~(#) apparent misdel. v.~~

8

Eu

MJD

GRAY

Berlin

Dated September 25, 1938.

Rec'd. 11 a. m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

491, September 25, 11 a. m.

The press this morning features the transmission of the German memorandum to Praha, the prospective trip of French ministers to London and the two speeches delivered yesterday by Mussolini.

Mussolini's speeches are interpreted editorially as a clear demonstration of the solidity of the Rome-Berlin Axis which is now described as the "spine of Europe" which Benes and Stalin are trying to break. The foreign press, particularly the British, is attacked for spreading rumors of war at the very time when Hitler and Chamberlain were agreeing upon a plan for peace in face of Czech provocation in the form of general mobilization.

The gist of further editorial comment is that the responsibility for war or peace now clearly rests with Praha which must reply with a categorical yes or no. Germany and England are in agreement upon the basic idea of self-determination for the Sudeten Germans and the only problem is

how

76265

1088

MJD -2- No. 491, September 25, 11 a. m. from Berlin

how to accomplish it; it is hardly conceivable that Praha would go to war over a matter of method. The Godesberg conversations were devoted not to a consideration of more extensive German demands but to the question of a practical execution of the right of self determination.

Almost no mention is made of Polish and Hungarian minorities and such comment as appears is confined to expressions of pained surprise that London and Paris have not better understood the claims of these nationalities.

This is the least violent tone in the German press which we have seen in weeks.

WILSON

DDM

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

ML
1-1336
This message must be closed FROM
paraphrased before being
communicated to anyone. (A)

Berlin

Dated September 25, 1938

Rec'd 7:13 p. m.

Secretary of State

Washington

492, September 25, 1 p. m.

Division of War
DIVISION OF
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
SEP 26 1938
scale 9/26
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

Military Attache reports reserves being gradually
and secretly called to colors. Normal week end leave
given Berlin garrison. The fully mobilized Eighth
Division was observed in Upper Silesia on the twenty-
fourth moving south between Cosel and Leobschutz.

Survey indicates an advance state of readiness of
of air force with four hundred bombers concentrated on
fields in Berlin. Air defense measures for Berlin very
complete. Please repeat to War Department.

WILSON

EMB

FILED

SEP 25 1938

Confidential File

760F:62/1089

GG

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

1-1336

FROM

Berlin

Dated September 26, 1938

Rec'd 12:30 p.m.

EG
This message must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (C)

Secretary of State,
Washington.

RUSH.

495, September 26, 2 p.m.

The feeling abroad in anticipation of Hitler's speech tonight appears to be more apprehensive than in Germany even though Hitler is calling a conference of his advisers on foreign affairs early this afternoon and it is impossible to reach them until evening.

I had a talk with Woerlup, told him of the tension abroad and asked whether there is any reassuring message I could send my Government. Woerlup was in general reassuring. He said he did not anticipate any unusual announcement in the speech although of course he had not seen it. He said "the word is with the Czechs and until they answer I do not believe we will do anything startling".

I asked him whether Hitler had given assurance to Chamberlain that no violent step would be taken while negotiations were pending. Woerlup replied that Hitler

had

760F.62/1106

EDC

FILED

SEP 27 1938

-2- #495, September 26, 2 p.m. from Berlin

had assured Chamberlain in the Berchtesgaden conversations that barring "catastrophic" events in Czechoslovakia he would make no move while negotiations were under way. Woerlup felt that I was safe in sending you a reassuring message. He added that Mussolini's emphasis on October 1 gave the whole matter more of the form of an ultimatum than the situation justified.

Repeated to Paris, London, Praha, Warsaw.

WILSON

RR:HPD

RBC ✓

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

1-1334

FROM

DIVISION OF
 EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
 SEP 27 1938
 DEPARTMENT OF STATE

MJD

Berlin

This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (A)

Dated September 26, 1938.

Rec'd. 3:25 p. m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

Attached handed to...
Copy paraphrased...
 DIVISION OF
 EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
 SEP 27 1938
 DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Wor

498, September 26, 7 p. m.

The Military Attache informs me that one of his assistants has reported by telephone to him from Gorlitz in Lower Silesia that on the morning of the 26th he witnessed the movement of the Eighth Corps consisting of two divisions, up to the Czech frontier between Neisse and the Polish border. This corps was accompanied by two tank regiments, the 15th and 16th, thus giving ground to the belief that the corps has been given an offensive mission.

On the afternoon of the 26th he witnessed while in the vicinity of the Gorlitz the movement of modernized columns of the Third Corps in the direction of Breslau.

Please repeat to War Department.

TILSON

CSB

FILED
 SEP 28 1938

760F.62/1117

GDG

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

ADVISER ON POLITICAL RELATIONS
MR. DUNK
OCT 1 1938
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

SEP 28 1938
NOTED

MJD

Berlin

1-1330
This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (A-1)

FROM

Dated September 27, 1938.

Rec'd. 3:45 p. m.

Secretary of State
Washington.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE
SEP 30 1938
MR. MESSERSMITH

UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
SEP 28 1938
MR. WELLES

RUSH.

505, September 27, 8 p. m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL FOR THE SECRETARY.

Just had a talk with Henderson. He believes that unless there is some startling change in the situation Hitler will order full mobilization and attack after Chamberlain's speech before the House of Commons. He said that Sir Horace Wilson had come to urge Hitler to be moderate in his speech. He can not see that the offer of a guarantee by England and France of Czech fulfillment of the British plan has made any impression on the Germans. Chamberlain, he says, is tired. He does not know what he will say in Commons tomorrow but he feels that a message to Chamberlain from President Roosevelt urging him to do his utmost to keep Great Britain from engaging in war and precipitating a general European conflagration over question already agreed upon in principle might be of some avail.

Always before Hitler has left himself a way out and until

very

7
A
PA
1
10K

760F. 62/1176

FILED

Confidential File

769
12.20

MJD -2- No. 505, September 27, 8 p. m. from Berlin

VERY recent days I have felt that such a way was ~~was~~ ^{open.} Very recently, HOWEVER, he has so committed himself and so burnt his bridges that I cannot see any hope that he will retire materially from the position taken. Hence, I am driven to the belief that only a decided change in the attitude of Czech slovakia as set forth in their answer to Hitler's memorandum will prevent a German attack within the near future. From information available here there is every indication that France and Great Britain will declare war in that event. We are thus on the eve of a full sized European war unless some dramatic and unexpected event turns the tide.

Repeated to Paris and London.

WILSON

PEG

GW

~~(7) Apparent omission~~

Handwritten initials and scribbles at top right.

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

MJD

Berlin

This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (A)

FROM

Dated September 28, 1938.

Rec'd. 4:25 p. m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.



514, September 28, 7 p. m.

I made an appointment to see Weizsaecker at 1 o'clock today. Ribbentrop was unavailable. In view of the circumstances I felt it appropriate to inquire direct from a high German authority concerning the situation. Inasmuch as I was at 1 o'clock waiting for a telephone connection with you, I sent Gilbert to the Foreign Office in my place. Gilbert reports his conversation as follows: Knowing him as I do I could feel that Weizsaecker was definitely seeking for a peaceful solution but was unable in any expression to go beyond the Chancellor's declared position. He stated that the divergence between the Czech and German positions was exceedingly narrow inasmuch as on the matter of cession no question of principle remained. He said that the Czechs had already de facto granted such cession and that all that Germany now asked was a rapid rather than a delayed implementation of that agreement. Germany he said would not object to the customarily somewhat protracted procedure were the circumstances ordinary. The circumstances were however

not

760 F. 62 / 1268
GDC

FILED

MJD -2- No. 514, September 28, 7 p. m. from Berlin

not ordinary. The Czechs after granting the cession had instituted an unnecessary regime of repression and violence in the Sudeten German area. The circumstances that two hundred thousand Sudeten Germans had already fled to Germany was evidence of this. It was self-evident that their coming could not be instigated by Germany. They came because they felt they had reason to fear the Czechs. This was a situation which was intolerable to the German people. It was one that could not be protracted. In similar circumstances any other nation would feel the same. The Czech Government seemed to fear that the German forces would not restrict themselves to the Sudeten area. Although resenting such a viewpoint Germany had suggested a "screen" of neutral troops (or perhaps of the British Legion) between the German and Czech forces. This would give Praha if it was sincere in the cession of the territory all the security necessary. He felt, however, that although Benes had granted the cession under pressure that he was now placing every obstacle in the way of its implementation in order to bring about a general war. He added that he felt that everything would have been settled long ago had it not been for Benes himself. He stated that Praha had not given a written answer to the Hitler memorandum but that a refusal had been conveyed through the medium of the
British

MJD -3- No. 514, September 28, 7 p. m. from Berlin

British Embassy.

In answer to a question whether Germany would be willing for the entire occupation of the Sudeten area pending a final settlement to be undertaken by neutral forces Weizsaecker said that the difficulty lay in the time element which was the pressing factor.

WILSON

CSB

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

SEP 29 1938
FHH
DIVISION
TELETYPE
SEP 29 1938
DEPARTMENT
Cur

REB

FROM

GRAY
Berlin

Dated September 28, 1938

Rec'd 4:55 p. m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

515, September 28, 8 p. m.

The Italian Ambassador has just informed us that Hitler has issued invitations for a meeting with him in (that?) Munich tomorrow of Mussolini and Daladier have accepted that no reply has yet been received from Chamberlain who is at present speaking in the House of Commons and that his acceptance is taken for granted.

All this is confirmed by Henderson and while I was talking to him Goering called him and obviously was urging strongly that Chamberlain accept.

Henderson says that in his conversation with Hitler this morning the Chancellor was much more moderate, that they had been working on an idea of German troops occupying the major portion of those territories predominantly Germanic with British legionaries to occupy those territories whose fate is to be decided by plebiscite.

Repeated to Rome, London, Paris, Praha, Warsaw.

WILSON

EMB

760P: 02/1260

FILED

SEP 30 1938

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

MY
This telegram must be
closely paraphrased be-
fore being communicated
to anyone. (C)

FROM

Berlin

Dated September 29, 1938

Rec'd 7:56 a.m.

Secretary of State

Washington

517, September 29, noon.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.

Geist learns from Gestapo sources that orders have
been issued by Hitler for the entire S 3 and Arbeitsdienst
to hold themselves ready to go with the Sudeten Wehrkorps
into the Sudeten area. It is planned that the occupation
will take place by these forces as police units rather
than by German troops.

Presumably this plan is predicated on a peaceful
evacuation by Czech forces as it is inconceivable that
such forces could be used for attack.

WILSON

RGC
KLP



FILED
SEP 30 1938

Confidential File

7607.62/1277
GEC

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

Handwritten notes: "AC", "7:30 P.M.", "P.P.C.", and a signature.

MY
This telegram must be
closely paraphrased be-
fore being communicated
to anyone. (B-1)

FROM Berlin
Dated September 29, 1938
Rec'd 9:40 a.m.

Secretary of State
Washington



518, September 29, 1 p.m.

Supplementing my 512, September 28, 5 p.m.

The following background on the Munich meeting today was learned at the French Embassy last night: When Francois Poncet talked to Hitler yesterday morning as a result of his urgent instructions he found the latter continued to be most violent in his tirades against the Czechs which Hitler described as "Mongols and not Slavs". Hitler told Poncet that if he had been dealing with the French on such a question no such situation would have developed as now existed in the Sudeten area and cited the Saar plebiscite as an example of how such questions could be arranged. Poncet replied that if matters had been arranged today as in the Saar question they would not be faced with the present acute crisis. In the Saar, combined international forces had been sent in first to keep order and assure a fair vote while in this case Hitler wanted German military occupation first and a plebiscite later. It was this threat of military action that was setting all the world against Germany which would find that military action against

760 F. 62/1283

EDD

SEP 30 1938

FILED

MY -2- No. 513, September 29, 1 p.m. from Berlin

Czechoslovakia would bring in England and France against her within a few days and that in Poncet's opinion would eventually bring American countries into a war against Germany. Here Ribbontrop interposed to say that Germany was strong enough to face any combination of powers. Poncet went on to suggest that if Hitler was so concerned over the disorders in the Sudeten area why would it not be possible to send French troops in to keep order until a plan could be worked out. The conversation was broken off at this point as Hitler was summoned to the telephone to talk with Mussolini. When he came back he promised not to take any action until he made a written reply to the French note which Poncet had presented (of which we are not informed respecting the precise contents). He said that he would have an important message for Poncet shortly.

Poncet returned to the Embassy and early yesterday afternoon was called urgently to the Foreign Office to see Ribbontrop who said that Hitler and Mussolini were meeting in Munich today and that Hitler would like at the same time to confer with Daladier and Chamberlain. Poncet got in touch at once with Paris and had an acceptance of the invitation by Daladier within an hour. Poncet left last night for Munich.

The French are of the opinion that the original suggestion

MY -3- No. 518, September 29, 1 p.m. from Berlin

Suggestion for the meeting came from Chamberlain but that it was actually proposed by Mussolini in his telephone conversation with Hitler yesterday morning.

WILSON

PEG

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
OCT 6 1938
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

RAW
This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (C)

FROM Berlin (part air)

Dated October 5, 1938.

Rec'd 8:30 a.m., 6th.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

529, October 5, 2 p.m. (SECTION ONE)

ONE. In a conversation which I had with Weizsaecker and in the conversations of the Counselor of this Embassy with the French and British Counselors as reported in the Embassy's 528, October 5, 1 p.m., certain problems associated with the Munich settlement were discussed.

Both the British and French Counselors spoke in strongly condemnatory terms concerning the precipitate nature and the character of Poland's action in the case of Teschen. Paris and London had protested at Warsaw and Berlin had joined in this protest. It was not known whether Rome had taken any action in this manner. Speculations were voiced concerning the reality of Berlin's protest and although there was a general inclination to credit it with good faith, there existed the possibility of its having to do with more general and undisclosed German-Polish understandings.

OCT 6 1938
RECORDED
Regarding

760F.62/1495

-2- 529, October 5, 2 p.m., from Berlin.

76066
Regarding Hungary, the French and the British feel certain that she will obtain the return of her minorities. Press reports are to the effect that Hungary has demanded, and Czechoslovakia has accepted, direct negotiations for a settlement of this question. The situation in Budapest seems, however, to be obscure concerning the extent of the territory which Hungary might desire to gain. If Hungary had wanted to take strong unilateral action she was now in any event presumably restrained by Rumania and Yugoslavia. Thus whatever might be the circumstances, while Poland had gained her ends in an outwardly discreditable manner, Hungary would probably gain hers in an outwardly "creditable" manner.

The French and British Counselors and Weizsaecker confirmed the public belief that the Slovak and Ruthenian questions had not been specifically raised at Munich. Respecting Ruthenia they were both under the impression that consistent with repeated enunciations by the Chancellor during the past year of his objection to the creation of "new minorities" and also for political and military strategic reasons, Germany did not wish the establishment of a common frontier between Poland and Hungary. As a check to Germany, Italy might desire a stronger Hungary associated with Poland by a common frontier. But it was not known whether Rome would attempt

to

-3- 529, October 5, 2 p.m., from Berlin.

to play any role in this matter. The present situation in Slovakia is not at all clear. There had long been differences in popular opinion in Slovakia but there was as yet nothing definite as to how the majorities lay, particularly as affected by the new circumstances. It was felt, however, that if Praha acted quickly and wisely respecting the granting to the Slovaks what they sought, it would be entirely possible for Praha to retain Slovakia. It was also believed without going into certain differences in the respective situation that the same was generally true regarding Ruthenia. On this score Weizsaecker spoke of the great difficulty of knowing what the Slovaks really desired. He said that the German Government had received four communications from different Slovak groups (one from Geneva) all advocating different things.

In the course of these conversations it was manifest that the French and British Embassies fully recognized that the jubilation of the public in Great Britain and France and also largely in Germany and Italy was at present almost solely based on escape from a dreaded war and that every effort must now be made by Paris and London and in fact to a degree by every capital to follow the present situation through to the

establishment

RAW
-4- 529, October 5, 2 p.m., from Berlin.

establishment of conditions in all directions which would
make for a durable peace.

(END SECTION ONE)

WILSON

RR

KLP

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

~~RDC~~
~~RAS~~
~~LE~~
~~RFC~~

REB

FROM GRAY

Berlin

Dated October 6, 1938

Rec'd 4 p. m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

DIVISION OF
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
OCT 7 1938
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

530, October 6, 5 p. m.

The general tone of the Berlin press since the announcement of the Four Power Agreement presents a marked contrast to that manifested after the incorporation of Austria. Except in the most extreme papers such as the SCHWARZEKORPS organ of the S.S. there has been virtually no expression of an attitude of defiant triumph and no crowing over the German victory. Instead the predominant note has been relief at the avoidance of war. The "broad statesmanship" and "courageous vision" of Hitler are, of course, enthusiastically heralded and he is lauded as having made possible a new era of European peace based on realistic negotiation between the Governments rather than on the detested Geneva system of collective security. Mussolini, too, is warmly praised on these grounds but at the same time homage is paid to Chamberlain and Daladier in their roles as saviours of peace. There seems to have been a deliberate desire to create

700F.62/1506

GDA

OCT 10 1938

FILED

REB

2-#530, From Berlin, Oct. 6, 5p.m.

create an impression of appreciation in Germany of their policy which would serve to strengthen the political position of these two statesmen in their own countries and to justify their action in Munich. Chamberlain's opponents in England are bitterly attacked as pseudo-liberals who either deliberately or otherwise are acting under the influence of Moscow.

Although in the light of the policy in Germany of rigid control of the press this attitude is obviously officially inspired it nevertheless seems to reflect to a large degree the viewpoint of the great mass of the German people who were appalled at the thought of a world war, whose primary reaction to the Munich agreement was one of profound relief that it had been avoided, and who are apparently genuinely ready to give full credit to Chamberlain for being to a considerable extent responsible for preventing war. Even despite the successful outcome of Hitler's policy there is still noticeable a feeling of resentment that he could bring the nation to the very brink of war.

Editorial comment with regard to Benes' resignation consists in general of a review and condemnation of his policy

REB

3-#530, From Berlin, Oct. 6, 5p.m.

policy particularly foreign policy, of the last twenty years. The hope is expressed that future Czech Governments will fundamentally alter Benes' course thus permitting friendly cooperation between Germany and Czechoslovakia, a relationship to which Germany is ready to contribute its full share.

No mention has been made editorially of the Polish and Hungarian minorities in Czechoslovakia. Prominence is daily given, however, to news despatches from Warsaw and Budapest relative to these matters.

WILSON

CSB

REVIEW OF GERMAN-CZECHOSLOVAK CRISIS OF 1938

<u>List of Headings</u>	<u>Page</u>
Hitler's Reichstag Speech of February 20.....	1
The Austrian <u>Anschluss</u>	2
The German Plebiscite Campaign	2
The British Prime Minister's Speech of March 24.....	2 - 3
Henlein's Carlsbad Eight Demands	3 - 4
The Period May 1 - May 22.....	4 - 5
The May 21-22 "Crisis.".....	5 - 7
Hitler's Decision of May 28	7 - 8
Hess' Speech of June 12	8
The Period June 12-July 26	9
Appointment of Lord Runciman, July 26	9
The "Nationality Statute" of August 10	10
Breakdown of Negotiations between the Sudetens and the Czechs	10
German Military Measures	10 - 12
Resumption of Negotiations between the Sudetens and the Czechs	12 - 14
Developments in Germany Before and During the Party Congress	14 - 17
The "Dynamic of Events" in the Sudeten Area	17 - 19
Chamberlain's Visit to Berchtesgaden	19 - 21
The Franco-British Plan	21 - 22
The Beginnings of the Polish and Hungarian Phases...	22 - 23
The Godesberg Conversations of September 21-23.....	23 - 25
The Godesberg Memorandum of September 23	25 - 26
Chamberlain's Final Interview with Hitler at Godesberg	26 - 27
Czech Rejection of the Godesberg Memorandum	28
The Second Visit to London of the French Ministers..	28 - 29

<u>List of Headings</u>	<u>Page</u>
The Sir Horace Wilson Phase	29 - 30
President Roosevelt's Appeals	30
Hitler's Speech of September 26	31 - 32
Developments after Hitler's Speech	32 - 34
The State of Feeling in Germany on the Afternoon of September 27	34 - 36
The Break-Up Leading to the Détente	37 - 38
The Arrangement of the Munich Meeting	39 - 40
The Munich Meeting of September 29 and the Resulting Agreement	41 - 43
Conclusions Regarding the Crisis	44 - 51

Hitler's Reichstag Speech of February 20.

The practical identity of the Austrian and Sudeten German questions, both of which have been forced to a solution in the year 1938, was established in the following phrases in Herr Hitler's speech of February 20 before the German Reichstag:

"Two of the countries adjoining our frontiers alone contain a mass of 10 million Germans. Up until 1866 they were still united with the whole German people in a constitutional federation. Until 1918 they fought shoulder to shoulder with the German soldiers in the World War. Against their will they were prevented by the Peace Treaties from uniting with the Reich. This in itself is sad enough. But there is one thing regarding which there must, in our eyes, be no doubt. Constitutional severance from the Reich cannot bring about a deprivation of all national-political rights, that is to say, the general rights of national self-determination, which, by the way, were solemnly promised us in Wilson's 14 Points as a condition precedent for the armistice; (this) cannot be simply ignored merely because the people in question are Germans. It is intolerable in the long run for a world power with a just appreciation of itself (Selbstbewusstsein) to know that there are fellow-countrymen at its side who, because of their sympathies or their close ties with the nation as a whole, its destinies and its philosophy of life, are constantly subjected to the most severe suffering. Just as England watches over her interests throughout the whole world, so will the Germany of to-day also watch over her interests and protect them, even though they be so much more limited. And one of these interests of the German Reich is the protection of those German fellow-countrymen on our frontiers who are not able by their own power to secure for themselves the right to ordinary human, political and ideological freedom."

The Austrian Anschluss. On March 13 Austria formally became a part of the German Reich. Several German planes having inadvertently flown over Czechoslovak territory, the Czechoslovak Minister in Berlin made representations to General Göring from whom he received assurances that "nothing respecting Czechoslovakia was contemplated" (Embassy's telegram No. 120, March 13, 3 p.m.).

The German Plebiscite Campaign. In his speeches delivered during the propaganda campaign prior to the "plebiscite" on April 10, the Führer again and again reiterated his determination not to tolerate the oppression of 10 million Germans on the Reich's frontiers (Embassy's despatch No. 73 of April 5, 1938). Inasmuch as it could be assumed that the problem had been definitely closed as regards the same 6 1/2 million Austrian-Germans, Herr Hitler could be regarded as giving a warning with respect to the 3 1/2 million Sudeten Germans, even though at that time he chose to speak only in mathematical parables.

The British Prime Minister's Speech of March 24. Prime Minister Chamberlain delivered a declaration before the British House of Commons, in which he pointed out that England's concern in the Czechoslovak question was not on the same footing as its interest in safeguarding the integrity of France and Belgium. He declared England's unwillingness to

guarantee

guarantee Czechoslovakia against attack or to associate itself directly with France's security pact with Czechoslovakia (both of which steps, Chamberlain said, exceeded England's obligations under the League Convention). At the same time, however, he asserted:

"Where peace and war are concerned, legal obligations are not alone involved, and, if war broke out, it would be unlikely to be confined to those who had assumed such obligations. It would be quite impossible to say where it would end and what governments might become involved. The inexorable pressure of facts might well prove more powerful than formal pronouncements, and in that event it would be well within the bounds of probability that other countries, besides those which were parties to the original dispute, would almost immediately become involved. This is especially true in the case of two countries like Great Britain and France, with long associations, with interests closely interwoven, devoted to the same ideals of democratic liberty, and determined to uphold them."

Henlein's Carlsbad Eight Demands. Speaking on April 24 before a gathering of the Sudeten German Party in Carlsbad, Konrad Henlein - no doubt in agreement with the highest Reich German authorities - put forth the following "eight demands" which for the first time made the world acutely conscious of the Sudeten German question:

- (1) Full equality of status for Czechs and Germans.
- (2) A guarantee for this equality by the recognition of the Sudeten Germans as a legal body incorporate.

- (3) Determination and legal recognition of the German areas within the State.
- (4) Full self-government for the German areas.
- (5) Legal protection for every citizen living outside the area of his own nationality.
- (6) Removal of injustice inflicted since 1918 and reparation for the damages thereby caused.
- (7) Recognition of the principle: Within the German areas German officials.
- (8) Full liberty to profess German nationality and German political philosophy.

In addition Henlein demanded in effect that the Czechoslovak Government revise its foreign policy which had led the country into the ranks of the enemies of the German people.

The German press accorded immediate support to Henlein's demands and portrayed the Sudeten German question as having become a "European problem" (Embassy's telegram No. 198, April 25, 2 p.m.).

The Period May 1 - May 22. In a series of speeches delivered on the German National Holiday of May 1, Henlein affirmed his resolve not to withdraw one iota from his demands, describing them as the minimum rather than the maximum of the Sudeten Germans' requirements.

As a result of the visit of the French Premier and Foreign Minister to London, the British and French governments decided to take joint steps in Prague to advise the Czech Government to offer concessions to the Sudeten Germans. The British Ambassador in Berlin was also instructed to inform Göring of the joint demarche and to urge Germany against taking any action which might endanger peace (Embassy's telegram No. 223, May 5, 4 p.m.). The British Ambassador also saw Reich Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop who described the issue as one primarily between the Czechoslovak Government and the Sudeten Germans and assured the British Ambassador that Germany would not attack Czechoslovakia provided that no attack was made upon the Sudeten Germans (Embassy's telegram No. 246, May 14, 8 p.m.).

In the meantime the German press started a running fire of protest against alleged Czech mistreatment of the Sudeten Germans.

On May 13 a special guard called the "Voluntary Protective Service" was established by the Sudeten Germans ostensibly to defend themselves against further attack.

The May 21-22 "Crisis." The increasing tension in the Sudeten area, which arose with the approach of the communal elections set for May 22, was reflected in fresh outbursts in the German press against a new series of incidents culminating in the shooting of two Sudeten Germans by Czech frontier

guards. Herr Hitler sent a wreath to the funeral of the victims and the German press indignation at the shooting reached a pitch as vehement as that immediately preceding the occupation of Austria. These developments seemed to mark the end of all pretense to dissimulate the Reich's direct and immediate interest in the fate of the Sudeten Germans.

Ostensibly on the report that Germany had massed troops at the border, the Czechoslovak Government decreed a partial mobilization, calling up several classes of reserves. Although no unusual troop movements were observed on the German side (Embassy's telegram No. 263, May 23, 6 p.m.), the situation gave the appearance of becoming increasingly tense. The British Ambassador called twice upon Herr von Ribbentrop on May 21, first, to state that the British Government was pressing Prague to come to an agreement with Henlein, and on the other hand to urge moderation of the German Government; and on the second occasion to warn the German Government, in terms of the British Premier's declaration of March 24, of the possible consequences of hasty measures. The British Ambassador was somewhat coolly received and indeed met with a response which can only be described as a rebuff (Embassy's telegram No. 261, May 22, 12 p.m.). The (allegedly) unauthorized step taken by certain subordinates in the British Embassy to order special cars for the evacuation of their families from Berlin served substantially further to discredit the British Government in German eyes.

Following

Following an approximately 90% victory for the Henlein Party in the local Sudeten German elections, tension relaxed and the German press attacks receded to a pitch of suppressed vehemence with which was mixed high indignation against British "meddling" over the week-end of May 22.

Hitler's Decision of May 28. Unknown at the time to the general public and only subsequently disclosed in his Nuremberg speech of September 12, the Führer on this date gave orders for the taking of those military measures which, he said, were designed to prevent a repetition of the calumny - "intolerable for a great Power" - which Germany had suffered through reports circulated abroad that the Reich had mobilized troops on the week-end of May 22 and had been "bluffed out" of marching into Czechoslovakia by pressure from Great Britain and France. In their practical effect these measures marked the beginning of the wide concentration of German military forces which was to play such an important role in bringing pressure to bear upon Prague and the western Powers.

The specific orders which the Führer gave on May 28 were to strengthen still further the army and air force and to rush to completion before the beginning of winter Germany's western fortifications. There followed thereafter Göring's order of June 22 opening the way for a forced conscription of civilian

labor

labor for the construction of the western forts. Starting in August, a greater number of reservists than ever before were called up for training and, moreover, for the first time since the war, reserve divisions were joined with the regular army for maneuvers (although it was officially stated this step was decided upon a year ago). The law of July 13, considerably enlarging the power of the military authorities to requisition and commandeer private property and services, completed the legal structure whereby virtual mobilization could be carried out without a general mobilization order.

Hess' Speech of June 12. Since his speeches delivered during the plebiscite campaign, Herr Hitler had remained silent on the Sudeten German issue and was to say nothing further publicly until his concluding speech at Nuremberg on September 12. Aside from the press and several minor Party orators who kept the issue ardently alive, the most important proclamation in the interval was made by the Führer's Deputy, Herr Hess, who, speaking in Stettin on July 12 said, with respect to Czechoslovakia: "It is clear and unmistakable to all eyes: This State is no longer in a position to maintain calm and order within its frontiers, is no longer able to protect the life of its own citizens. This State has become a center of danger for the peace of Europe."

The Period June 12 - July 26. This period was one of comparative calm. On June 7 the Sudeten German Party transmitted to the Czechoslovak Government a 14-point memorandum embodying and elaborating Henlein's original eight demands. Various counter-proposals of the Czech Government as published in the foreign press were sporadically attacked in the German newspapers as insufficient.

Appointment of Lord Runciman, July 26. On this date the British Government entrusted Lord Runciman with the mission of mediating between the Sudeten Party and the Czech Government. The German press greeted his appointment with reserve and skepticism (Embassy's telegram No. 360, July 27, 3 p.m.).

According to the British Prime Minister's House of Commons speech of September 28, the German Foreign Minister, also reserved Germany's attitude in a conversation with the British Minister, stating that it must regard the matter as of purely British concern. In a personal letter addressed to Herr von Ribbentrop on July 28, the British Foreign Secretary expressed his regret at this attitude and set forth the hope that Germany would collaborate in the finding of a peaceful solution.

The "Nationality Statute" of August 10. The Czech Government formally placed before the Sudeten German Party its draft of the so-called "Nationality Statute." This draft was rejected by the German press as indicating that the Czech Government was not disposed to grant fundamental concessions. The proposal for the establishment of local assemblies and councils was described as a "gerrymandering" device designed to cheat the Sudetens of their autonomy.

Breakdown of Negotiations between the Sudetens and the Czechs. On August 17 the Henlein group met with the political committee of the Czech Government. The Sudetens' continued insistence upon the Carlsbad points led to a standstill although in breaking off the discussions the Henlein group let it be known that the door still remained open for further negotiations. As the British Prime Minister stated in his speech of September 28, Lord Runciman thereupon sought to bring about a resumption of discussions on a new basis.

German Military Measures: Attention may now be shifted to the German military measures which, as they began to assume an intensified form early in August, caused serious concern to Great Britain and France as indicating that the Reich was determined to seek a solution of the Sudeten problem by autonomy.

In

In his House of Commons speech on September 28, the British Prime Minister reported that the British Ambassador in Berlin was instructed to make representations concerning these military preparations on the ground that they jeopardized Lord Runciman's work, as well as the peace of Europe. Replying to these representations in a letter, Herr von Ribbentrop refused to discuss the military measures and stated that the British efforts in Prague had only served to increase Czech intransigence.

In a speech delivered August 27 at Lanark, Sir John Simon, the British Chancellor of the Exchequer, reiterated the Prime Minister's declaration of March 24. This speech was sharply attacked by the German press as being entirely "negative" (Embassy's telegram No. 407, August 29, 5 p.m.).

Following information that several German divisions had been moved to the French frontier, the French Government called up certain reservists at the end of August, and on September 7 manned the Maginot Line.

As disclosed in Mr. Chamberlain's speech of September 28, the British Ambassador, after returning to Berlin from London whither he had been called for special consultation with the British Cabinet, delivered urgent personal messages to both the German Foreign Minister and to the State

Secretary

Secretary in the German Foreign Office, outlining Great Britain's probable attitude in the event of a German attack upon Czechoslovakia. Mr. Chamberlain emphasized that these "personal warnings" were delivered in the place of formal representations "which might have been interpreted by the German Government as a public rebuff as had been the case in regard to the British steps taken on May 21."

Resumption of negotiations between the Sudetens and the Czechs. On August 18 Lord Runciman had a meeting with Henlein and on August 19 the Czech Government announced the appointment of numerous Sudetens to official posts formerly held by Czechs in the Sudeten area. On August 21 the Czech Government put forward new proposals which appeared to have been regarded by the Henleinists as a suitable basis for negotiation. Discussions were broken off, however, by a new series of incidents.

On September 3, the British Minister in Prague called on Dr. Benes and while stating that his government was not prepared to say whether anything less than the Carlsbad program would suffice, he urged Dr. Benes to go immediately and unreservedly to the limit of concession, the more particularly in view of possible developments at the forthcoming

Nuremberg

Nuremberg Party Congress. The British Minister's representations were supported by Lord Runciman, and on September 6, the opening of the Nuremberg Congress, the Czech Government communicated to the Sudetens what was known as the "Fourth Plan."

In his letter of September 21 (forming item No. 1 in the White Paper laid before the British House of Commons on September 28 - hereinafter referred to as the "first White Paper") addressed to the British Prime Minister, Lord Runciman gave his opinion that this plan embodied almost all the requirements of the Carlsbad eight points. The German press received the plan with exemplary restraint and for a few days there was an encouraging calm - as it proved, a lull before the storm. On September 7 there occurred the incident involving the arrest and alleged mishandling of a number of Sudeten deputies at Mährisch-Ostrau which provoked an explosive flareup in the German press. The Henlein Party put forth certain demands for investigation and reparation and after the Czech Government had yielded to these, negotiations on the plan were resumed on September 10. There followed thereafter other incidents which increased in frequency after Herr Hitler's closing speech at the Nuremberg Congress on September 12, and on September 13 the Sudeten delegation refused to meet the Czech negotiating

committee

* Copies of the two pertinent British White Papers are attached hereto.

committee, as had been arranged.

In his letter to the British Prime Minister, Lord Runciman places responsibility for the breakdown squarely upon Herr Henlein and Herr Frank and other extremists who, he says, had made up their minds by this time that they did not wish a settlement on the former basis. Whatever may have been their motives, there seems to be little doubt but what the Sudetens took this action after consultation with the Reich Government and in this connection it is significant that Herr Henlein paid Herr Hittler a first visit on September 3 and remained with him at Nuremberg for the greater part of the National Socialist Congress.

Developments in Germany before and during the Party Congress. The scene now shifts back to the diplomatic front.

One reason why Henlein and his Reich German patrons may no longer have wished to consider a settlement on the basis of Sudeten autonomy within the Czech State may have been the following suggestion with which the London TIMES of September 7 concluded its leading editorial:

"No Central Government would still deserve its title if it did not reserve in its own hands Defence, Foreign Policy, and Finance. There does not appear to be any dispute about this principle in the minds of the Government or of Herr Henlein; and, if the Sudetens now ask for more than the Czech Government are apparently ready to give in their latest set of proposals, it can only be inferred that the Germans are going beyond the mere removal of disabilities and do not find themselves at ease

within the Czechoslovak Republic. In that case it might be worth while for the Czechoslovak Government to consider whether they should exclude altogether the project, which has found favour in some quarters, of making Czechoslovakia a more homogeneous State by the secession of that fringe of alien populations who are contiguous to the nation with which they are united by race. In any case the wishes of the population concerned would seem to be a decisively important element in any solution that can hope to be regarded as permanent, and the advantages to Czechoslovakia of becoming a homogeneous State might conceivably outweigh the obvious disadvantages of losing the Sudeten German districts of the borderland."

Although the British Government denied that this suggestion represented its considered official opinion, the lead seems to have been quickly caught up in Germany. On the German side an editorial perhaps fully as important as that published in the TIMES appeared in the BERLINER TAGEBLATT of September 9, which stated that with respect to Prague, "it has been brought home to the world that the point at issue is no longer merely the fate of the Sudeten Germans but the construction of the Czech State as such." It was intimated that important decisions on this basis had been taken in Nuremberg (see Embassy's telegram No. 428, September 10, 2 p.m.).

In the meantime the British Ambassador had been impressing upon the leading German personalities in Nuremberg his government's attitude as

expressed

expressed in the Prime Minister's speech on March 24 and in Sir John Simon's speech on August 27. As the Prime Minister explained on September 28, no direct approach was made to Herr Hitler himself inasmuch as it was feared that personal representations might have a contrary effect to that intended.

The inflammatory speeches of Goebbels and Göring on September 10 at Nuremberg, both only of incidental importance, prepared the atmosphere for the Führer's ^{speech} ~~speech~~ on the following Monday. On September 11 the British Prime Minister gave a statement to the press emphasizing the close ties between Great Britain and France and pointing to the probability in certain eventualities of Great Britain going to the aid of France. Although this press statement was not mentioned in Hitler's speech, it is assumed to have caused him to sharpen the tone of his address (see Embassy's telegram No. 436, September 13, 7 p.m.).

On the eve of Herr Hitler's closing speech on September 12, the German press stressed the necessity of "self-determination" being applied in Czechoslovakia (see Embassy's telegram No. 432, September 12, 6 p.m.), and this question indeed formed the central theme of Herr Hitler's

speech

speech, although no specific modalities were suggested as to how self-determination should be carried out. After describing at great length the defensive measures on Germany's western frontier, Herr Hitler proclaimed that the Sudeten Germans (in contrast to the Arabs in Palestine) were "neither defenseless nor abandoned." As the British Prime Minister subsequently pointed out to the House of Commons, this speech for the first time promised the support of the Reich to the Sudeten Germans if they could not obtain satisfaction for themselves.

The "Dynamic of Events" in the Sudeten Area.

As mentioned above, the Sudeten leaders had refused to meet with the Czech authorities on September 13 for further discussion of the "Fourth Plan."

On the same day serious rioting broke out in the Sudeten areas, causing the Czech Government to decree Standrecht, or measures equivalent to martial law, in the affected districts. On the same evening the Henlein group met and addressed a set of demands (described in certain sections of the American press as an "ultimatum") to the Czechs, stating that they could not be responsible for the consequences if the emergency measures were not immediately withdrawn.

On the following day, September 14, Henlein dissolved the Sudeten negotiating committee and issued a proclamation to the effect that the Carlsbad program was no longer sufficient and that the situation called for "self-determination." Thereafter Henlein fled to Germany but appears to have returned for a brief interval to Eger where he issued a statement on September 15 proclaiming the will of the Sudetens to "return home to the Reich." Following this, he occupied himself with the formation on German territory of a Free Corps consisting of 4 units, each containing 10,000 men, made up primarily from the Sudetens who had fled to evade service in the Czech army.

A word may be said at this point concerning the state of feeling in Germany, which presented a paradoxical picture from many aspects. During these critical days the violence of the press propaganda against Czechoslovakia was unparalleled. While considerable uneasiness existed, there was little public manifestation of it in Berlin at least and it was curious to read of demonstrations being held in London and Paris. The German wireless stations would occasionally interrupt their programs with news of a fresh Czech "atrocitv" and would then resume their playing of soft music. Although the artificial indignation of the German press against the Czechs

did not meet with a response which made popular outbursts likely at this juncture, at the same time the events of these days furnished an example of the ability of a totalitarian regime to keep public uneasiness within bounds and from reaching a panic state.

Chamberlain's Visit to Berchtesgaden. On September 14 the British Prime Minister despatched a telegram to Herr Hitler suggesting a meeting on the following day (Embassy's telegram No. 439, September 14, 9 p.m.). Before the House of Commons on September 28, the British Prime Minister explained that he had this plan in mind as a last resort, adding that "one of the principal difficulties in dealing with the totalitarian governments is the lack of any means of establishing contact with the personalities in whose hands lie the final decisions for the country."

According to the Prime Minister's speech referred to above, Herr Hitler in his conversations made it plain from the very first that "he had made up his mind that the Sudeten Germans must have the right of self-determination and of returning if they wished to the Reich"; that if they could not achieve this by their own efforts, he would assist them to do so, and that rather than wait he would be prepared to risk a world war. He also said that if the Prime Minister

could

could give him an immediate assurance that the British Government accepted the principle of self-determination, he would be ready to discuss ways and means of carrying it out. Mr. Chamberlain replied that he would have to consult his Cabinet colleagues and in the meantime obtained a guarantee that Germany would refrain from active hostilities until an answer had been given. In recounting these developments to the House of Commons on September 28, the Prime Minister stated that he had no doubt that his "visit alone prevented an invasion, for which everything was ready."

Upon returning to London, the British Prime Minister recalled Lord Runciman who gave substantially the same advice that he later set forth in his letter of September 21 (item No. 1 in the first White Paper), namely, to the effect that while the Sudetens had been responsible for a breakdown of negotiations, a cession of territory was inevitable; that for the Sudetens who remained in the Czech State an arrangement similar to the so-called "Fourth Plan" should be created; and that Czechoslovakia should adjust its internal and external policy in such a way that it could live at peace with all its neighbors, like Switzerland. In the meantime publication had been made on September 15 of Signor Mussolini's open letter to Lord Runciman, in which

Mussolini

Mussolini, after describing Czechoslovakia as a "crocodile State" and a fiction of Versailles, suggested a series of plebiscites to enable various nationalities to exercise their rights of self-determination.

The Franco-British Plan. The consultations in London on September 18 between the French Premier and Foreign Minister and the members of the British Cabinet resulted in a plan which was communicated to the Czech Government on the following day.

This plan, which constitutes item No. 2 in the first White Paper, sets forth the joint opinion of the British and French Governments that the interests of Czechoslovakia and of world peace would best be served by the immediate transfer to Germany of districts in which over 50% of the inhabitants are German. It was suggested that the Czech Government might wish to agree to this method of direct transfer, "as a case by itself," in preference to a plebiscite procedure which might involve far-reaching consequences as regards the other nationalities in Czechoslovakia. It was envisaged that an international body might be set up to deal with the adjustment of frontiers and a possible exchange of German and Czech populations in certain districts. In return for acceptance, the British and French Governments were

willing

willing to offer a guarantee against unprovoked aggression which would replace Czech treaties with France and Russia involving reciprocal engagements of a military character.

On September 20 the Czech Government replied by suggesting that the Sudeten German question be submitted to arbitration under the terms of the German-Czechoslovak Arbitration Treaty of 1926. The British and French ministers in Prague were instructed, however, to urge immediate acceptance of the plan in the interests of European peace, and on September 21 the Czech Government declared its unconditional acceptance.

On September 22 the Hodza Government resigned and was succeeded by a national concentration Cabinet under General Sirovy, which, according to Mr. Chamberlain's House of Commons' statement, stood by its predecessor's acceptance of the Franco-British plan.

The Beginnings of the Polish and Hungarian Phases. The Czechoslovak problem entered a new phase with the raising of demands in the Polish and Hungarian official press that the minorities of these two countries must be accorded in equal degree the rights to be obtained for the Sudetens. These demands found hearty support in the German

press

press as well as in several speeches by Signor Mussolini, the issue being stated in the slogan that the "Czech Nationalities State" as established in 1918 must be destroyed.

Considerable diplomatic activity was begun by the Hungarian and Polish Governments. On September 20 the Hungarian Regent visited General Göring and on the following day the Hungarian Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, as well as the Polish Ambassador, called on the Führer at Berchtesgaden. At the same time steps were taken by the representatives of these two countries in London; they were informed, however, by the British Government that while the latter appreciated the interest of these two governments in their respective minorities, it hoped that they would undertake nothing to extend the scope of the crisis at this particular juncture.

The Godesberg Conversations on September 21-23. The British Prime Minister took with him to Godesberg certain proposals which the British and French Governments had agreed upon for effecting the transfer of the Sudeten territories and for delimiting the final frontier.

Although at the first meeting in Godesberg Herr Hitler did not name any time limit for occupation, he said that he could not accept these proposals on the ground that they were too dila-

tory

tory and offered the Czech Government opportunities for evasion. With respect to the proposed guarantee for Czechoslovakia envisaged in the original Franco-British plan of September 20, Herr Hitler said that he would be willing to enter into the guarantee only on the condition that other Powers, including Italy, were also guarantors, and on the further condition that the other minorities in Czechoslovakia were first satisfied.

As Mr. Chamberlain said in his House of Commons speech on September 28, he had come to Godesberg with the expectation that he and the Führer would quietly discuss arrangements for the transfer of the Sudeten territory and that he was therefore surprised when he was confronted with other proposals which he had not contemplated. Accordingly, as he said, he "withdrew" and dispatched on September 23 a letter to Herr Hitler (item No. 3 in the first White Paper) in which he wrote: "I am sure that an attempt (as Herr Hitler had evidently proposed) to occupy forthwith by German troops areas which will become part of the Reich at once in principle, and very shortly afterwards by formal delimitation, would be condemned as an unnecessary display of force."

Surmising that the Czechoslovaks would use their forces to resist, Mr. Chamberlain suggested in his letter that the Sudetens themselves might

be entrusted with maintaining order, acting possibly under the supervision of neutral observers.

In his written answer (forming item No. 4 in the first White Paper), Herr Hitler, abiding by his original intentions, stated that "it is, however, for a nation an unworthy demand to have this recognition (of the right of self-determination) made dependent on conditions which are not provided for in treaties nor are practical in view of the shortness of time." He also added, "there is no international power or agreement which would have the right to take precedence over German right."

In a second letter to Herr Hitler (item No.5 in the first White Paper), the British Prime Minister requested a memorandum which he could hand to the Czechs, at the same time asking for an assurance that no military action be taken by the Reich which would prejudice further chances of mediation.

The Godesberg Memorandum of September 23.

In very brief summary Herr Hitler's memorandum (item No. 6 in the first White Paper) stipulated that German troops were to occupy on October 1 certain large areas (indicated on a map annexed to the first White Paper) regardless of the possibility that in certain portions of this area the Czechs should prove to be in the majority.

Provision

Provision was made on the other hand for the occupation by Czech troops of certain doubtful areas which might include large "German-language islands." Herr Hitler demanded that the territory to be evacuated by the Czechs be handed over intact as regards military and commercial establishments as well as regards foodstuffs, goods, cattle, and raw materials.

The memorandum set forth the German Government's willingness that a plebiscite be held before November 25 in "areas to be more definitely defined," and that alterations of the frontier be decided by a German-Czech, or an international, commission.

The demand was made that the Czech Government immediately discharge all Sudeten Germans serving in the Czech army, and release all those held as political prisoners.

It was suggested finally that a German-Czech commission be set up to settle all questions of detail arising out of the points set forth in the memorandum.

Chamberlain's Final Interview With Hitler at Godesberg. In the House of Commons speech of September 28, Mr. Chamberlain tells of the surprise which he felt at finding for the first time that Germany had set a time limit for occupation. He related that in his final interview with Herr

Hitler

Hitler late in the evening of September 23, he characterized the document more as an "ultimatum than a memorandum" and that he bitterly reproached the Führer for his failure to respond to the British efforts to secure peace.

In friendly terms Herr Hitler replied that he had made a response by holding back certain operations which he had planned, and that he had offered in his proposal to Czechoslovakia a frontier very different from the one which he would have taken as the result of military conquest.

The Prime Minister also related that Herr Hitler had repeated a statement which he had first made at Berchtesgaden, namely, that "this was the last of his territorial ambitions in Europe, and that he had no wish to include in the Reich people of other races than German."

With respect to his desire to make friends with Great Britain, Herr Hitler was quoted as saying: "It is true, there is one awkward question - the colonies." As regards Czech mobilization, which was announced in the middle of these conversations, Herr Hitler said, alluding again to colonies, "there will be no mobilization about that."

Czech

Czech Rejection of the Godesberg Memorandum.

As mentioned immediately above, the Czechoslovak Government ordered a general mobilization on the evening of September 23, this action being based, according to the German press, on fallacious reports concerning a "breakdown" of the Godesberg conversations.

Herr Hitler's memorandum and the accompanying map were taken to Prague by the British Military Attaché in Berlin who encountered considerable difficulty in crossing the German-Czech frontier where a nightly battle was in progress between the Czechs and armed members of the Sudeten Free Corps.

In a letter dated September 25 addressed to the British Prime Minister (item No. 7 in the first White Paper), the Czech Minister in London communicated his government's rejection of the memorandum, stating: "Against these new and cruel demands my Government feels bound to make the utmost resistance, and we shall do so, God Helping."

The Second Visit to London of the French Ministers. The French Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs paid a second visit to London on September 25 and 26 during which they informed their British colleagues that if Czechoslovakia

were

were attacked France would fulfill its treaty obligations. According to the British Prime Minister, they were told in reply that if as a result of these obligations French forces became actively engaged in hostilities against Germany, Great Britain would feel bound to support them.

The Sir Horace Wilson Phase. In anticipation of a speech which Herr Hitler was scheduled to make in Berlin on the evening of September 26, Mr. Chamberlain considered it useful to dispatch Sir Horace Wilson with a "personal message" embodied in a letter (item No. 9 in the first White Paper) which was delivered on the evening before the speech.

The letter set forth the reasons which induced the British Government to agree with the Czech Government's rejection of the Godesberg memorandum. "With a clear appreciation of the consequences which must follow the abandonment of negotiations and the substitution of force," the British Prime Minister asked Herr Hitler to agree that there should be immediate discussions between German and Czech representatives, in the presence of British representatives, concerning the methods by which the territory should be handed over. Recalling that "the only differences

between

between us lay in the method of carrying out an agreed principle," the letter concluded, "Surely the tragic consequences of a conflict ought not to be incurred over a difference in method."

As the Prime Minister told the House of Commons, Herr Hitler listened to Sir Horace Wilson but stated that he could not depart from the memorandum for the reason that further conferences would lead to intolerable procrastination.

President Roosevelt's Appeals. On September 26 President Roosevelt addressed his appeal to Herr Hitler and to Dr. Benes. On September 27 Herr Hitler dispatched an answer directly to the President, the correspondence being published in the German papers next morning. Amplifying Herr Hitler's reply, German press comment pointed out that the Reich was merely seeking in its demands a fulfillment of President's Wilson's scheme for self-determination, and politely criticized President Roosevelt for failing to mention the distressing fate of the Sudeten Germans (Embassy's telegram No. 510, September 28, 2 p.m.).

The President's second appeal, which was sent to Herr Hitler on September 27, has not been published in the German press nor as far as is known has it yet been answered.

Hitler's

Hitler's Speech of September 26. Next in order comes Herr Hitler's speech delivered on the evening of September 26 in the Berlin Sportpalast, the historical scene of many earlier Party gatherings. The atmosphere of the meeting was boisterous, if indeed not unruly, the audience being made up from one-third to one-half of Sudeten German refugees who had been brought to Berlin.

The speech began with a historical summary of the moves which Herr Hitler claimed he had made for peace, including his various proposals for disarmament, his pact with Poland, the London Naval Agreement of 1935, and his personal friendship with Mussolini. From France, he said, Germany wished absolutely nothing. This led him to speak of the Sudeten Germans as "the last problem which must be solved and will be solved." "It is the last territorial demand which I have to make in Europe," he declared, "but it is the demand from which I will not deviate and which, God willing, I will fulfill."

The Czechoslovak State was based on a lie, Herr Hitler continued, and the father of this lie was Dr. Benes, who "while I was doing my duty as a simple German soldier, wandered about the world from one clique to another." After saying that he sympathized with the Slovaks, Poles, Hungarians,

and

and Ukrainians in Czechoslovakia, Herr Hitler emphasized, however, that he claimed to speak only for the fate of "my Germans," 214,000 of whom had been compelled up to that time to seek refuge in the Reich. He said that the Godesberg memorandum asked for nothing more than the realization of what Dr. Benes had previously promised; that Germany had been willing to invite the British Legion to maintain order in the Sudeten districts; and that Germany was prepared to draw the frontier in accordance with the vote of the inhabitants. Thanking Mr. Chamberlain for his efforts, Herr Hitler said that he had assured him that he had no further interest in Czechoslovakia after that State had solved its minority problems. Concluding his speech on an ecstatic note, Herr Hitler said that Benes had the decision of war or peace in his hands and that he must choose inasmuch as Germany was resolved to come and seize "German rights" on October 1. Herr Hitler called upon the world to believe that Germans were a far different people now than in 1918 when "a wandering scholar had succeeded in infecting them with the poison of democratic phrases."

Developments after Hitler's Speech. Events moved rapidly after Herr Hitler's Sportpalast speech.

As Mr. Chamberlain told the House of Commons, after reading the speech he issued a statement that the British Government would guarantee the fulfill-

ment of the promises made by the Czechoslovak Government. Sir Horace Wilson called on Herr Hitler for the second time on the morning of Tuesday, September 27, and finding his attitude unchanged, reiterated the British Government's probable position in the case of a conflict. At that time Herr Hitler apparently informed Sir Horace Wilson of certain action (presumed to be general mobilization) which he planned to take at 2 p.m. on the day following if the Czechs had not by that time accepted the Godesberg memorandum.

In the meantime the British Prime Minister evidently had a conversation with the Czechoslovak Minister in London in which the latter asserted his Government's readiness, under certain conditions, to take part in a conference with German and British representatives, as the Prime Minister had suggested. (The Prime Minister had in the meantime informed Herr Hitler of this proposal in a letter which forms item No. 9 in the first White Paper.) The substance of the Czechoslovak Minister's statement to Mr. Chamberlain is embodied in a letter which he wrote to the British Prime Minister, forming item No. 8 in the first White Paper.

On the evening of September 27, Mr. Chamberlain delivered his broadcast address to the British nation. Describing as "unreasonable" the attitude displayed by Herr Hitler in the Godesberg

memorandum, Mr. Chamberlain said that he could well understand the reasons for the Czech Government's refusal to accept these terms. He declared his readiness to take another trip to Germany, although at that moment he thought it would serve no useful purpose. It seemed incredible, he said, that England should be undertaking military preparations because of a quarrel in a far-away country, and a quarrel, moreover, which had been settled in principle, but the issue as he put it was whether resistance should not be offered if "a nation made up its mind to dominate the world by fear of its force." Calling upon the British people to go quietly about preparations for an emergency, he stated that in the meantime he would leave no effort untaken to keep the peace.

The State of Feeling in Germany on the Afternoon of September 27. Tuesday afternoon and evening seemed to mark the height of the crisis and the seriousness of the hour was felt in Germany in no less measure than in other countries.

Since the preceding Saturday and Sunday, anti-aircraft units had been posted on the roofs of many buildings in Berlin, upon the Olympic Stadium, upon sport fields, and along roads passing by local air ports. Reports were current of the nightly movement of troops to the south and southeast. On

Tuesday

Tuesday evening from six to nine, street traffic was periodically held up for the passage of several trains of armored cars directly through the middle of town and down the Wilhelmstrasse, where they were reviewed briefly by the Führer from his balcony at the Reich Chancery. (Official sources have later confessed that this was largely a "propaganda march" for the benefit of the British Embassy on the Wilhelmstrasse and that the armored cars later turned around and went back to their barracks on the outskirts of Berlin.)

The Berlin populace greeted these military manifestations with glum silence and genuine worry. For once it appeared that a National Socialist propaganda campaign had over-reached its mark, inasmuch as the general public failed almost entirely to respond to the campaign of hatred against the Czechs, and while they may have felt some sympathy for the Sudeten Germans, they were probably at no time of the opinion that their salvation was worth the risk of war. The mass of the people, moreover, seemed to be fully aware of the dangers they were facing. Although this aspect was played down in German press editorials, it percolated through from broadcasts from foreign states and furthermore was reflected in reports

from

from German correspondents in London and Paris, which on the whole presented a fairly accurate picture of the state of feeling abroad. Mr. Chamberlain's radio address to the British nation was apparently considered too strong for German consumption, however, and was considerably diluted in the next morning's papers. Curiously enough, there was little outward resentment shown toward Great Britain or France. Evidence was unmistakable that a campaign against Czechoslovakia with its possibly wider dangers would be the first adventure for which Herr Hitler could not count upon enthusiastic support, although most of the people seemed to accept the eventuality with resignation. It became abundantly clear that those people who still had memories of Germany's defeat of 1918 are bitterly opposed to war, although the exuberance of the Hitler Youth and the newer members of the S.S. at the prospect of hostilities served perhaps as a foreboding that this attitude might change in years to come.

In foreign diplomatic circles the information was circulated that the British Embassy had burned its archives and was ordering its nationals to leave the country, including the correspondents of all British newspapers.

The Break-Up Leading to the Détente. Although it was not generally known at the time, the turn for the better probably occurred late Tuesday night, September 27, with the receipt by the British Prime Minister of another message from Herr Hitler (item No. 10 in the first White Paper). In his House of Commons' speech on the following day, Mr. Chamberlain described this letter as indicating that Herr Hitler was disposed to place certain limitations on his intentions; specifically, Herr Hitler had stated that the "final settlement of the Sudeten problem would be made dependent not upon a German unilateral decision, nor on German measures of force, but rather on a free vote under no outside influence;" "that the proposed German military occupation was no more than a 'security measure' and would stop within the limits set;" and that Germany had not the slightest wish to check the independence of the remaining Czech State, but was ready to participate in a formal guarantee.

As Mr. Chamberlain told the House of Commons on September 28, he now felt that the "differences and the obscurities had been narrowed down still further to a point where really it was inconceivable that they could not be settled by negotiations."

Accordingly

Accordingly he dispatched the following message to Herr Hitler (constituting item No. 1 in the second White Paper):

"After reading your letter, I feel certain that you can get all essentials without war and without delay. I am ready to come to Berlin myself at once to discuss arrangements for transfers with you and representatives of the Czech Government, together with the representatives of France and Italy if you desire. I feel convinced that we can reach agreement in a week. However much you distrust the Prague Government's intentions, you cannot doubt the power of the British and French Governments to see that the promises are carried out fairly and fully and forthwith. As you know, I have stated publicly that we are prepared to undertake that they shall be so carried out. I cannot believe that you will take the responsibility of starting a world war which may end civilization for the sake of a few days' delay in settling the long-standing problem."

Mr. Chamberlain also dispatched the following message to Signor Mussolini (item No. 2 in the second White Paper):

"I have to-day addressed a last appeal to Herr Hitler to abstain from force to settle the Sudeten Problem, which I feel sure can be settled by a short discussion and will give him the essential territory, population, and protection for both Sudeten and Czechs during transfer. I have offered myself to go at once to Berlin to discuss arrangements with German and Czech representatives also of Italy and France. I trust your Excellency will inform German Chancellor that you are willing to be represented and urge him to agree to my proposal, which will keep all our peoples out of war. I have already guaranteed that Czech promises shall be carried out and feel confident that agreement could be reached in a week."

The Arrangements of the Munich Meeting.

Early on the morning of September 28, the French Ambassador called up the State Secretary in the German Foreign Office to say that Mr. Daladier had a proposal to communicate to Herr Hitler. The French Ambassador was instructed to say that if the German and British Governments agreed to these proposals (which Mr. Daladier had apparently evolved independently and the contents of which have never been divulged), and the Czechoslovaks refused to accept it, France would reconsider its treaty obligations to Czechoslovakia. In the course of the meeting which later took place with Herr Hitler, the latter began by denouncing the Czechs as "Mongols not Slavs" and recalled the far different and happier solution of the Saar question. The French Ambassador is reported to have pointed out that Germany wished in the Sudeten question to reverse the Saar procedure by occupying the territory prior to the vote; he then alluded to the danger of a general war which might bring in the "American countries." Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop interposed that Germany was stronger than any aggregation of powers. At this point the conversation was interrupted by Hitler being informed that the Italian Ambassador had brought an urgent personal message from Mussolini who had apparently just received Chamberlain's message through the British Ambassador at Rome.

Mussolini's

Mussolini's message was to the effect that the British Ambassador had just made a suggestion to him, on the strength of which he begged Herr Hitler to postpone for 24 hours the action which he had planned to take that afternoon at two o'clock. Signor Mussolini added that if Herr Hitler wished to see him he was willing to arrange a meeting. Hitler thereupon summoned his advisers and on the basis of Mr. Chamberlain's offer to return to Germany, decided to invite Mussolini, Chamberlain and Daladier to come to Munich the next day. *

The invitation was presented to the British Prime Minister under dramatic circumstances while he was addressing the special meeting of the House of Commons on the afternoon of September 28. The essential points in Mr. Chamberlain's speech, which consisted of a review of British action in the Czech affair, have been dealt with in detail in the foregoing sections.

- * Since the foregoing was drafted, further information concerning Mussolini's communications to Hitler has been received and embodied in the Embassy's telegrams No. 565 and 566 of October 21, 4 p.m.

The Munich Meeting of September 29 and the Resulting Agreement. It is understood that Mussolini on his way from Rome worked out the draft of what was later to become the Munich agreement. Herr Hitler went to Kufstein to meet Mussolini and on the train back to Munich declared himself to be satisfied with the plan, which was later presented to the British and French statesmen. At the meeting in the Fuhrer's house in Munich, the participants sat around an open fire in easy chairs, and for 14 hours Hitler's interpreter, Schmidt, translated from German into French, French into English, etc., in all possible geometrical combinations. In the discussion of the plan paragraph by paragraph, a number of changes were made but in its final essentials the subsequent agreement corresponded very much to Mussolini's draft.

Two Czech diplomats were called to Munich to keep in touch with the conference. A striking feature of the final agreement, however, is that Czechoslovakia was not given the status of one of the negotiating parties, nor is reference made to Czech acceptance of the plan as a condition necessary for its operation. This was apparently taken for granted, and on September 30 Prague announced its unconditional acceptance of the agreement, thus ending the crisis.

The text of the agreement is published as item No. 4 in the second British White Paper and furnishes an interesting comparison with Herr Hitler's Godesberg memorandum.

In the Munich agreement Herr Hitler won his point that occupation should commence by October 1, this agreement, however, providing for a more gradual procedure whereby this should be carried out by the consecutive occupation of defined zones and should reach its completion on October 10. Herr Hitler also obtained satisfaction in his original Godesberg demands concerning the release of Sudeten German political prisoners in the Czech army, as well as concerning the point that the evacuated territory should be handed over essentially intact. Herr Hitler may have sacrificed a minimal advantage in conceding far-reaching powers to an international commission, although such a commission was envisaged in the Godesberg memorandum as an alternative to a purely German-Czech commission. The proposal for a possible plebiscite is largely the same as that contained in the Godesberg memorandum. With respect to guarantees, the annex of the Munich agreement conforms substantially to Herr Hitler's earlier statements that he would consider taking part in such a guarantee, in association with Italy, once

the Polish and Hungarian minority problems had been settled.

Two maps are annexed to the second British White Paper. The first indicates the territory which Germany proposed to occupy under the terms of the Godesberg memorandum; the second indicates the four zones which the statesmen at Munich agreed that Germany should occupy without further formality. There is enclosed herewith a third map, taken from the London TIMES of October 10, showing the total extent of territory which Germany occupied as of October 10 as the result of Zone 5, within which the Commission of Ambassadors lumped together certain supplementary areas to be occupied by German troops. The third map will be found to differ very little from the map of the Godesberg memorandum. By agreeing to a certain delay and to a larger measure of international supervision, Herr Hitler would thus seem to have lost practically nothing territorially (if indeed he did not gain); while the avoidance of war and the subsequent improvement of Germany's position among the powers following the Munich agreement can hardly be denied him as a great diplomatic victory.

Conclusions

Conclusions Regarding the Crisis. After the Austrian Anschluss it was inevitable that steps should be taken to bring the Sudeten Germans nearer to the Reich. This appears to have been done first in Henlein's demand at Carlsbad for autonomy. At what point Hitler may have decided that actual incorporation of the Sudetens within the Reich was feasible must remain a matter for speculation. It is clear, however, that on May 28, following the British démarche and the insinuations concerning Germany's "weakness" made in the foreign press, Hitler decided that the Sudeten question must be brought to some kind of a solution before this fall. The time when he made up his mind that acquisition of the Sudetenland was possible to bring about during the current year probably occurred between May 28 and his closing speech at Nuremberg on September 12. *

With the passage of the crisis, two questions immediately spring to mind: (a) Was Hitler willing if need be to risk a general war to bring the Sudetens into the Reich? or (b) did he employ this threat merely to coerce Czechoslovakia and the Western Powers, intending at all times to leave himself a possible way out from a general conflict?

The British Prime Minister, whose testimony is deserving of attention as that of the most intimate witness to the negotiations, appears to

* Since the above was written further information concerning Hitler's decision to acquire the Sudetenland has come to the Embassy's attention. See my confidential personal letter to Mr. Moffat, Chief of the European Division, dated October 22, 1938. believe

believe in the first possibility, having told the House of Commons on September 28, "I have no doubt now, looking back, that my visit alone prevented an invasion, for which everything was ready....." Following his visit to Berchtesgaden, Mr. Chamberlain definitely had the impression that Herr Hitler was determined to go ahead with his plans even though they might lead to general hostilities. While Herr Hitler may have hoped that Great Britain and France would intervene to force Prague to yield to a peaceful cession of the Sudetenland, it is doubtful if he could have envisaged the specific step which Mr. Chamberlain took in offering to come to Berchtesgaden. In surmounting this earlier crisis, namely, that, prior to the Berchtesgaden meeting, it would appear that Mr. Hitler enjoyed spectacular good fortune.

Hitler's actions at Godesberg and immediately thereafter are understandable on the premise that he fully believed that the most drastic threats were necessary to secure without delay the territory promised Germany in the Franco-British plan, which the Czechs had accepted in principle. Here again the question arises as to whether Herr Hitler had in mind an avenue of escape from the possibly disastrous consequences

which

which might have ensued from his being forced to stand by his program of radical action. In his Monday evening speech at the Sportpalast, Hitler gave the outward appearance of having closed the door and, moreover, maintained this position subsequently in his conversations with Sir Horace Wilson.

Accepting the thesis, however, that he was always willing to compromise temporarily on 10% of his demands, the strengthening of the British and French attitude to the point where these governments on September 27 gave the appearance of being prepared to go to war, may have seemed to him to be the moment to concede the vital 10%, which he did in his final letter to the British Prime Minister dispatched on the evening of September 27. It may be assumed, moreover, that after Berchtesgaden Hitler had a fairly good idea of the man he was dealing with in Chamberlain and he may perhaps have thought therefore that he could always count upon Chamberlain for one more effort to maintain peace. The fact that Mussolini gave first utterance to the details of the Godesberg memorandum had led certain people to suppose that Hitler may have concerted with the Duce in advance some last-minute move for a way out; whether this was so or not, this proved unnecessary inasmuch as Chamberlain took in time

the decisive step of addressing his last appeal to Hitler. Although the crisis following Godesberg was far more intense, a case may be made out for maintaining that Hitler knew the factors and the elements in the game that he was playing better than he did, say, before the Berchtesgaden meeting when, although the situation had not reached such a critical point, the elements of chance were possibly greater.

In the last analysis Hitler cannot have failed to have weighed the consequences which might have arisen from a forced march into Czechoslovakia. It is generally assumed that that country would have fought back, and although it is problematic how long it would have taken Germany to subdue Czechoslovakia, certain opinions have been ventured that at the outside a little more than a month would have been necessary. While a war lasting that length of time in the middle of Europe would certainly have offered chances for all sorts of complications, the opinion held in Berlin, at least, was that France and Great Britain would only have broken off relations at the beginning of hostilities without necessarily declaring war upon Germany from the first. What would have occurred, therefore, must be left to speculation.

In

In the face of the many imponderables, including that most unfathomable factor of all, namely, the character of the man at the head of the Reich, it would be idle to attempt to present at this point a definitely formed conclusion as to whether Hitler acted in an irresponsible manner and was saved from disaster merely by good fortune, or whether he was following a plan which he foresaw would lead to the result eventually produced. It is perhaps only possible at this juncture to furnish material which may assist those to form an opinion on this point who care to make the attempt. In this connection, certain incidental developments may be adduced which lend support for the maintenance of either one thesis or the other.

On the one hand it is known that Hitler's course of action caused the gravest concern to many of his most intimate advisers, excluding Herr von Ribbentrop whose statements, as recorded above, would seem to indicate that he was urging the Führer to proceed with the Godesberg plan whatever the dangers involved. A story has been circulating in informed quarters that at the height of the crisis General Göring and former Foreign Minister von Neurath called upon the Führer, it being presumed from the character of these two

personages

personages that they intervened to urge moderation. Herr Hitler's mood at the Sportpalast meeting gave the appearance of desperate recklessness, although in this connection it must be recalled that he was speaking primarily for his German public before whom he is always at his histrionic best.

On the other side of the picture there exists evidence to show that Hitler refrained from acting precipitately in certain important matters. During the few days before the meeting in Berchtesgaden when open rioting had broken out in the Sudetenland, Germany failed to take any extraordinary military steps. At the Berchtesgaden meeting Hitler gave an assurance that he would not attack Czechoslovakia during the pending negotiations, an assurance which Chamberlain in his House of Commons speech gives him full credit for living up to. As military experts point out, the preparations in no way corresponded to a general mobilization, nor was there that complete conscription of private vehicles and supplies which would have occurred as part of a general mobilization. It is true, of course, that the bases of a mobilization were laid in the skeleton organization of the reserve units as well as in the provision of legal steps suited to bring about quickly such a mobilization. In their extent, the measures were directed solely to a possible reduction of Czechoslovakia

and

and at no time did they approach the stage of a general mobilization for a European war.

It is an oft-repeated assertion that Hitler is desirous of avoiding a general conflict at all costs. Nevertheless, in the last crisis he could hardly have escaped taking this into account as an eventuality, however remote. It is learned on good authority that he commissioned one of his advisers to draw up a report on the state of feeling among the German people. The fact that this report was overwhelmingly negative might have played a certain role in his calculations.

In the course of time possibly other information may be revealed which will throw light upon the question as to how near Germany came to war. As sometimes happens, this may be employed to stress the inevitability of the final conclusion recorded by events, that is, it may be subsequently maintained that war was merely a remote possibility. Without attempting to prejudice in advance the value of such material as may in the future be adduced, it would at the same time seem a pity to leave out of account what for want of a better term must be called the "subjective atmosphere" of the recent crisis, which made itself felt in the fact that large sections

of

of the German people sincerely believed that they were on the brink of war, an opinion which was shared as well by many foreign observers in Berlin.

Enclosures:

1. Map taken from the London TIMES of October 10, 1938.
2. Copies of British First and Second White Papers entitled respectively:
"Miscellaneous No.7 (1938), Cmd.5847" and
"Miscellaneous No.8 (1938), Cmd.5848."

JDB:EM

.....

At the time of mailing copies of the White Papers ordered have not arrived.

They will be sent subsequently.

See despatch No. 397 of October 31, 1938 from the Embassy, Berlin.(760f.62/1847

From London TIMES of October 10, 1938.

BOUNDARIES OF FIFTH ZONE IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA



that it
saved it
ard, who
aphed:
d hom
bank

complaint.

Wulu ucip us.

...to enforce it.

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

PAST

RAW

1-1336

This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (C)

FROM

Berlin (part air)

Dated October 20, 1938

Rec'd 11:48 a.m., 21st.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
OCT 21 1938
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ADVISER ON POLITICAL RELATIONS
MR. DUNN
OCT 25 1938
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

560, October 20, 4 p. m.

The Counselor of the French Embassy Montbas just called.

He stated that Francois Poncet had returned from his talk with Fötler at Berohesgaden rather encouraged by Hitler's attitude.

Hitler had said that a false impression had gotten abroad that he regarded the Munich meeting as an isolated episode. This was not the fact. Hitler insisted that he felt that the accord at Munich should be followed by a definite betterment of relationships among the great powers of the west and that real benefits for the future should flow from this ~~accord~~ ^{understanding.} Hitler had instructed Ribbentrop to put into precise form certain arrangements that might be concluded in the spirit of the Munich agreement but was not yet ready to speak in detail.

Hitler added that he did not anticipate any difficulty with the French, that the French would tell him "yes" or "no" and that this would decide the matter. With the

English

760F. 62/1737

GDG

FILED

OCT 29 1938

75162

EDA - 2 - #560, October 20, 4 p.m. from Berlin

741.62
English, however, it is different. You give them a paper. There is a storm of discussion, billions for armament and no precise satisfaction comes. In fact Hitler declared that he might have to denounce the naval agreement. He was not yet ready to do so because he had not built up to the 35% in heavy units but when he was so built up he would judge by the state of mind in England whether to denounce the agreement or not.

Hitler said that he desired to have real understanding with England but that what he could not tolerate was a partial understanding while Great Britain armed at a furious rate. In other words he would not accept a piece of sugar to keep him quiet until the British armament program was completed.

Cipher text accompaniment to London.

WILSON

RGC:EDA

~~(S) APPROPRIATE OMISSION~~

P

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

RAW

This telegram must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (D)

FROM

Berlin

Dated October 21, 1938

Rec'd 4:20 p.m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

565, October 21, 4 p.m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL FOR THE UNDERSECRETARY.

Supplementing my 558, ¹⁹²⁴ October 20, 2 p.m., and in further reply to your 181, ^{11697a} October 18, noon.

Report on your point No. one. Weizsaecker telephones he cannot verify the hour at which Hitler received the President's second message. Papers are not given a time stamp in the Chancery and he is unable to find anyone who saw the paper delivered.

Wiedemann states that he saw the telegram between ten and eleven o'clock the morning of Wednesday the 28th, that it was already translated at that time and that he "supposes that it had already been brought to the Chancellor".

Reference to your Point Three. I had a long talk this morning with Attolico who begged me to keep strictly confidential anything he told me about September 28. His story follows:

He did not participate in events on the 27th instant other than to follow as well as he could what was going on.

On the morning of the 28th at eleven o'clock he told the Belgian Minister, who was calling on him, that he

fully



760F.62/1747

FILED

OCT 24 1938

GDC

RAW -2- 565, October 21, 4 p.m. from Berlin

fully expected war to break out that day.

A few minutes later Mussolini called on the telephone in person to inform Attolico that a message from Chamberlain had just been received through Lord Perth. Mussolini instructed Attolico at once to apprise Hitler that whatever happened Mussolini was with him to the finish. He knew that Hitler was planning to issue orders for final mobilization and the march of troops at 2 p.m., that he had just received a message from Chamberlain that looked interesting but he wanted time to consider it. Hence he begged Hitler to delay everything 24 hours. He closed with a further assurance of his solidarity whatever happened.

Attolico went at once to the Chancery and was informed by the adjutant that Francois-Poncet was with Hitler. He persuaded the adjutant to carry in a note saying that Attolico was there with a message from Mussolini. Hitler read the note and told Francois-Poncet that he was called to the telephone, went out of the room leaving Francois-Poncet with Ribbentrop. He then heard the message from Mussolini hesitated some twenty seconds and said that since Mussolini requested it he would delay affairs 24 hours. Attolico then said that Mussolini was calling him at noon sharp to have Hitler's answer and that he must hurry back to the Embassy to take
the

RAW -3- 565, October 21, 4 p.m., from Berlin.

the call. Attolico says that Hitler returned to Francois-Poncet and told the latter that he had just had a message from Mussolini thus giving Francois-Poncet the impression that Mussolini himself had called on the telephone.

Mussolini called Attolico promptly at twelve, instructed him to return to Hitler to thank him for his consideration, to state that Chamberlain proposed that the whole situation be liquidated in one week, and that he undertook his guaranty in respect to carrying out the solution not only vis-a-vis Germany but vis-a-vis Italy as well. Attolico was further to state that acceptance of the plan in Mussolini's opinion meant for Hitler such a "grandiose victory", that there was no point in precipitating hostilities. Attolico was to return to Hitler at once and in the meantime Chamberlain's proposal was to be read over the telephone to the Italian Embassy.

Attolico proceeded again to the Chancery where he encountered Goering and Neurath in the anteroom. He immediately acquainted these two with the state of affairs and received Goering's assurances that he would push for the acceptance of Chamberlain's proposal. Hitler then entered the room and Attolico delivered his message briefly. Hitler appeared puzzled and said that nobody had yet spoken to him about

the

RAW -4- 565, October 21, 4 p.m., from Berlin.

the problem being solved in one week and he thought there was some confusion. Attolico immediately volunteered to return to his Embassy, get the copy of Chamberlain's communication (not yet delivered by the British Embassy) and return at once with it. He desired thus to give Goering a chance to urge Hitler to accept the proposal. Attolico returned to the Embassy, picked up Chamberlain's communication, found a further message from Mussolini instructing him to say that if Hitler so desired Italy would be present at any conference if Chamberlain chose to come over again and Hitler received him.

END SECTION ONE.

WILSON

EMB

ROW

REB

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

This telegram must be _____
closely paraphrased be-
fore being communicated
to anyone. (D)

BERLIN

FROM

Dated October 21, 1938

Rec'd 3:50 p. m.

Secretary of State,
Washington.

566, October 21, 4 p. m.

Continuing my 565, October 21, 4 p. m. (SECTION TWO)

Attolico returned to the Chancellory. This time Hitler was summoned from a conference with Henderson carrying in his hand Chamberlain's communication which Attolico also presented. Hitler said that he could not see much purpose in an announcement in Rome that dealings at Godesberg had given him the impression that he was in agreement with Hitler's suggested line. Chamberlain had then returned to England, encountered a wave of hostile opinion and had slipped back. He would only talk to Chamberlain again provided not only that Italy was represented but that Italy was represented by Mussolini in person.

Attolico rushed again to his Embassy, telephoned Mussolini, rushed back to the Chancellory arriving there about 2:40 for the fourth time since 11 o'clock. Hitler

CAME

REB

2-#566, From Berlin, Oct. 21, 4p.m.

came from the lunch table still eating. Attolico who speaks no German spoke this time four words in that language "morgensfuhr Mussolini ladies a panic". Hitler laughed for the first time during the day and Attolico went back to lunch.

Attolico added one further detail emphasizing again its strictly confidential nature. In the course of the third visit Hitler dictated a brief outline of his minimum and irreducible demands and told Attolico to communicate them to Mussolini. Attolico did so but warned that other influences here might cause Hitler to stiffen those demands before the meeting. Mussolini replied that he thought he could take care of that. At the first meeting of the four heads of government Mussolini at once spoke and proposed as his own suggestion the irreducible demands which Attolico had telephoned. Attolico states that he has since learned that in fact the demands had been stiffened subsequently but that Hitler was unable to disclaim Mussolini's suggestion in view of the fact that it had originated with himself.

(END OF MESSAGE)

WILSON

EMB-KLP