

1. 1. 1.

2. 2. 2.

HRE

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

**TELEGRAM RECEIVED**

LONDON

Dated July 21, 1938

Rec'd 3:34 p.m.

Secretary of State

Washington

ADVISER OF POLITICAL RELATIONS  
FROM  
MR. DONN  
JUL 22 1938  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DIVISION OF  
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS  
JUL 22 1938  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

665, July 21, 8 p.m. (SECTION ONE)

My 656, July 20, 8 p.m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

This afternoon in a brief conversation with a member of the Embassy staff Cadogan spoke of the recent much publicized visit to London of Herr Wiedemann a personal aide de camp of Hitler. As might be expected he said press speculation as to topics of conversation has greatly exceeded the facts. Wiedemann, who the British are prepared to believe spoke with full authority for Hitler, had come with a message of good will and an expression of a desire for improvement in the relations between the two countries. The visit was entirely at German solicitation and likewise the private interview which Wiedemann had with Lord Halifax in the latter's house. Lord Halifax naturally noted the expression of good will and adverted to his own visit to Berlin last November when he had had the opportunity to discuss Anglo-German relations with Hitler and other high German officials. He reiterated the British view that it is not a question of Great Britain and Germany settling their differences on a purely bilateral basis but that Great

Britain

741.62/283

FILED

G MB

11

HRE

2-#665 (Section One) From London July 21

Britain has a vital interest in the general appeasement of Europe and the removal of causes of danger. He took occasion to express again the great concern of this government at the situation in Czechoslovakia and in this connection received from Herr Wiedemann the most explicit assurances on behalf of Hitler that Germany did not contemplate any coercive or violent move against Czechoslovakia provided of course that nothing was done on the other side to make it impossible for Germany to refrain **from action**. Cadogan expressed as his opinion that the only two important points in connection with the Wiedemann visit were one, that it had come entirely at the solicitation of Germany and two, that Wiedemann had given these assurances on behalf of Hitler that Germany was not contemplating any move of violence towards Czechoslovakia. Cadogan attaches some importance to these latter assurances because he believes that Wiedemann was in fact authorized by Hitler to give them. It is not (repeat not) true as reported in the press that Lord (END SECTION ONE)

KENNEDY

RGC:HDH

HRE

EU  
PAD

This telegram **TELEGRAM RECEIVED** LONDON  
closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone (B)

Dated July 21, 1938

Rec'd 3:43 p.m.

FROM

Secretary of State  
Washington

DIVISION OF  
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS  
JUL 22 1938  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

665, July 21, 8 p.m. (SECTION TWO)

Halifax made any mention whatever of the refugee problem or any suggestion for German cooperation in settling the problem. He also said that the question of stabilization of armaments had not been discussed. On this subject, Cadogan said, the stumbling block still is, as it always has been, German distrust of Russia. Ribbentrop had often, he said, when in London talked vaguely about the possibility of reduction and stabilization of armaments but the discussions never reached any point because of German preoccupation with Russia and unwillingness to believe in the reality of any pledge which Russia might give on the score of armaments.

860-587P  
6/21/38

Cadogan did not think the fact that Wiedemann's visit came on the eve of the royal visit to Paris, had any particular significance and said that he personally was surprised that Hitler should have chosen just that moment to send his emissary. He did not offer to give any precise details of Wiedemann's conversations nor did he seem ready to discuss what might be the next step. It seems clear however that the British are not prepared to enter into political

HRE

2-#665 From London July 21, 8 p.m.

political discussions with Germany until some reasonably satisfactory solution of the present crisis in Czechoslovakia has been reached and there is no more reason to believe now than there was in November (see Embassy's telegram 735, November 24, 8 p.m.) that the British Government contemplates entering upon any talks or negotiations with Germany without the full knowledge and acquiescence of the French. The royal visit to France is an undoubted reaffirmation of Anglo-French solidarity in all matters which concern their vital, mutual interests. It is not likely that any encouragement was given to Wiedemann that British policy could be diverted from this point of view. (END OF MESSAGE)

KENNEDY

RGC:LMS

# TELEGRAM RECEIVED

JR  
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nicated to anyone. (C)

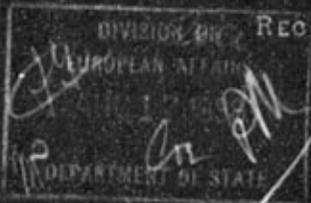
London

Dated August 16, 1938

FROM

Rec'd 6 p.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.



779, August 16, 8 p.m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.

I had a talk this afternoon with Masaryk. He thinks any sudden move by Hitler within the next month is improbable and that the time of greatest danger will be September 15 when the annual Nazi Congress meets at Nuremberg. By that time the German maneuvers and test mobilization will be in full swing and public opinion in Germany aroused to a high degree of excitement. It can only be expected that Hitler will want to produce something dramatic before the Nazi Congress and this, in Masaryk's view, will be at least a very dangerous speech. Masaryk is, however, as unwilling as others to draw any fast conclusions from what is now taking place or to indulge in any prophecies. He repeated with great emphasis, however, what has been said before: that there is no question whatever but that if Germany attacks Czechoslovakia, the Czechs will fight as long as they possibly can. Opinions vary as to how long this resistance could be kept up. The most optimistic view

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G/H/C

-2- 779, August 16, 8 p.m., from London.

view is six months, which Masaryk thinks is absurd. But he thinks they could make a very good showing for a month. The Soviet Ambassador, who recently returned from a protracted visit to Moscow, has told Masaryk that speaking with the full authority of Stalin he had no hesitation in saying that if Czechoslovakia is attacked Russia will fulfill her treaty obligations to the letter the minute that France moves.

Masaryk is sure, he says, that Hitler will endeavor to attain his ends without war and that he personally does not desire war in spite of his hatred of Czechoslovakia and the pressure of his more violent advisers; certainly, in Masaryk's opinion, if Hitler were convinced that a world war would result from a German attack on Czechoslovakia, it would not take place. Masaryk therefore naturally attaches the greatest importance to any support, moral or otherwise, which Czechoslovakia can receive from the outside world.

His attitude towards the government here seemed to me to indicate some degree of bitterness. He feels that, with a view to laying the ground for an understanding between the four great European powers and keeping

Great Britain

-3- #779, August 16, 8 p.m., from London.

Great Britain out of a war, the government would be willing to sacrifice Czechoslovakia. Speaking naturally as a protagonist of his own country, he said he did not believe the British realized fully the supreme importance of the existence of Czechoslovakia as an independent state. If Czechoslovakia falls, he said, nothing will keep Germany from the Black Sea. He has urged on the government here time and time again the advantages which would accrue from economic aid to Yugoslavia and Rumania which would be welcomed by the governments of those countries now on the way to economic dependence on Germany. He thought he had made some impression on Lord Halifax in this connection. His idea is that economic strengthening from Great Britain of Roumania and Yugoslavia by increased British purchases in those countries would in the long run be of even more assistance to Czechoslovakia than similar direct assistance. Exports from Czechoslovakia to Germany have been gradually reduced in order to lessen Czechoslovakia's economic dependence on Germany to a point where Czechoslovak exports to Germany including Austria, represent only 19% of their total exports. They were formerly 40% to Germany alone. Any corresponding weakening of the

economic

4- #779, August 16, 8 p.m., from London.

611.60/31

economic ties of the Danubian countries on Germany would therefore contribute to strengthening the position of Czechoslovakia and blocking Germany's expansion to the east. Hungary, of course, occupies a strategic position in the Danubian area of vital political and economic significance to Czechoslovakia and Masaryk attaches the utmost importance to the results in the forthcoming visit to Germany of Admiral Horthy. Concluding his remarks Masaryk said that his country would always be grateful to the United States for the generous attitude they took in negotiating the trade agreement which had been of invaluable assistance to his country.

JOHNSON

KLP

# TELEGRAM RECEIVED

REF \_\_\_\_\_

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

FROM LONDON

Dated August 24, 1938

Rec'd 5:15 p. m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

815, August 24, 7 p. m.

NY 796, August 19, 6 p. m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.



This afternoon I had a talk with Lord Halifax regarding the Czechoslovak situation. The best available information from Berlin was very disappointing. It indicates that Hitler is planning to solve the present crisis in Czechoslovakia in his own way and is not on his own terms before the end of September. The Foreign Secretary says he thinks that the Germans may have revealed over precision in their reports but nevertheless the developing situation is causing the greatest concern here. It is a regrettable fact that we attempt to force the issue before Lord Halifax has made his recommendations. However, the meeting with the Russian, do not hold out any great hope for a peaceful solution. I need with this situation in mind, I am sure that you will find it difficult to find a way out of this situation.

2-7815, From London, Aug. 19, 8p.m.

to do. If Hitler "collars" by force what he wants in Czechoslovakia no force which France, Great Britain, and Russia can assemble could possibly prevent his accomplishing his purpose. If the three countries moved after the event it would therefore mean a war of indefinite duration to force Germany to disgorge what she had taken, with no assurance even in the case of victory that Czechoslovakia could be reconstituted along the lines of its present set up.

As he sees it there are two major considerations involved in Great Britain and her associates bringing force to bear on behalf of Czechoslovakia. The first is the purely moral issue based on treaties and various international commitments about the meaning of which there can be no doubt. However, the moral issue involved in fighting or not to force Germany to disgorge a conquered Czechoslovakia is no greater than the moral issue involved with Japan in China, and Italy in Abyssinia. The second consideration would be the question whether France and Great Britain in their own self interest should join the issue immediately on Germany's attacking Czechoslovakia,

Czechoslovakia, is an attempt to forestall a perhaps inevitable war with Germany in the future, a war which would have to be fought with a Germany that had accomplished her purpose in Czechoslovakia and mobilized in her favor the resources of all the Danubian countries. A war fought now, however, on the grounds of self interest would narrow itself down to Great Britain and France fighting for the Czechs as against the Sudeten Deutsch. This Lord Halifax thinks would be a most dubious issue on which to wage a war and he indicated that in his opinion the Sudeten grievances against the Czechoslovak Government are indeed very soundly based.

Lord Halifax said that he is now therefore concerned with the problem of whether to encourage the French immediately to implement their obligations to Czechoslovakia in the event of an attack by Germany or to discourage the French from such action. If Hitler risks the gamble that France and Great Britain will not fight, marches into Czechoslovakia and settles the issue by force and France, encouraged by Great Britain, then attacks Germany, Europe will have an immediate war on its hands which might last months or even years. Lord Halifax did not attempt to answer these questions and considerations nor did he say what his Government is going to do but stated them as propositions which are part of the background in their present

dilemma.

As I understood Lord Halifax he endeavored to convey the meaning to me that although without any precise knowledge of what German intentions are he and his Government are more apprehensive of an armed German move against Czechoslovakia and all alternative actions which suggest themselves are beset with dangerous possibilities. At present the British Government stands by the Prime Minister's declaration of March 24 which was to the effect that the consequences of a German attack on Czechoslovakia could not be foreseen. Lord Halifax said that he thought it would be helpful in deterring Hitler if Lord Runciman could possibly issue some public statement before the Nazi Congress at Nuremberg in the middle of September to the effect that he believed there existed possible and practicable bases for a peaceful settlement between the Czechs and Sudeten Deutsch. He gave me to understand that this idea is being examined with Runciman now. He pointed out, however, the danger in such a statement if possible and practicable bases for settlement of the issue did not in fact exist and it is apparent that Lord Runciman has not yet been willing to declare to his government that they do exist. The background of this horrible situation Lord Halifax said is of course the mentality of Nazism which "comes from the devil" and that there might not be any lasting peace in Europe until that spirit is killed.

were dealing with a man who for all practical purposes is a madman and from that fact arises all of the uncertainty.

Lord Halifax spoke with warm appreciation of the President's speech at Kingston, Ontario, and of your speech of August 12. He believed that these speeches had had a useful effect. He then said, but made it clear that he was not making any request, that if either you or the President could find it possible to make some further declaration directed toward the existing situation in Central Europe at some time before the Nazi Congress meets at Hirschburg he believed it might have a restraining effect in restraining Hitler.

The Foreign Secretary is a calm person, but has not given to over emphasis or exaggeration. I believe that he meant to convey to mainly German public opinion that Berlin is not better equipped than it is developing dangerously.

154

# TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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

FROM London

Dated August 29, 1938

Rec'd 9:05 a.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

831, August 29, 11 a.m.

My 829, August 27, 5 p.m.

DIVISION OF  
FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
AUG 29 1938  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Referring to the demarche made by Germany at Moscow, Bucharest and Belgrade, Masaryk last night showed me two telegrams from Praha giving the substance of confidential reports received from the Czech Ministers at Bucharest and Moscow. These messages were essentially as follows:

The Rumanian Foreign Minister informed the Czech Minister that the German Minister, Fabricius, told him, acting on instructions from Berlin, that Germany does not wish war on account of Czechoslovakia but cannot tolerate much longer the ill-treatment of Germans by the Czechs and will help them with all available means. If France should intervene it would not be Germany that could be blamed for the consequences.

The German Legation in Belgrade is said to have told the same thing to Stoyadinovitch, leaving out the last part about France.

The

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FILED  
AUG 30 1938

FS 2-No. 831, August 29, 11 a.m. from London

The German Ambassador in Moscow, according to information furnished to the Czech Minister by Litvinoff, made a similar demarche and told Litvinoff and Potemkin that in the event of the failure of Lord Runciman's mission war seemed inevitable and Germany would not be responsible for it. Litvinoff is said to have advised the German Ambassador that Germany should leave Czechoslovakia alone; that Czechoslovakia would defend herself, aided by Russia in fulfillment of her obligations, and that even England would in the end be forced to intervene.

Masaryk who, needless to say, is under great strain, seemed very nervous and distracted and made no pretense of hiding his immense anxiety. He did say, however, that he still thought that there was a chance that a German attack might be averted and he thought that in spite of all the unfavorable indications pointing to such an intention on the part of Germany.

KLP:GW

JOHNSON

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

JR

GRAY

London

FROM

Dated August 29, 1938

Rec'd 12:30 p.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

832, August 29, 2 p.m.

My 829, August 27, 5 p.m.

F. L. H.  
DIVISION OF  
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS  
AUG 30 1938  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

The press of all shades of political opinion comments soberly and approvingly on Sir John Simon's speech at Lanark. The following excerpts from editorials are an indication of the gravity with which the public is now viewing the situation and of the closing of all ranks in support of the Government's endeavors to maintain peace.

The TIMES "Sir John Simon's declaration of policy on behalf of the British Government must be read as a whole. (\*\*\*) it commits the country once more to the endeavor to remove all potential causes of war. Behind that endeavor are placed the weight and energy of British rearmament. In a rearmed or rearming world, Britain unarmed would be incapable of effective work upon the foundations of peace. It is the more determined upon preventive action against war in the

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FILED  
AUG 30 1938

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-2- #832, August 29, 2 p.m., from London.

sense of positive efforts for peace because of the knowledge, common to all, that conflict anywhere may become conflict everywhere and because it is convinced that the detestation of war is the common possession of the peoples of all nations. This is the 'essence of British policy' (\*\*\*).

In his speech on Saturday the Chancellor of the Exchequer rightly made these broad considerations his way of approach to the tense and difficult situation which exists in Praha. (\*\*\*) a victory for peace here will be a victory the world over, to be followed by other such victories of negotiation and good sense. Conversely no one can undertake to circumscribe in advance the consequences of failure. The attitude of the British Government towards the issues upon which the attention of the world is now concentrated in Praha follows naturally from the general line of British policy. The Prime Minister defined it last March. What he said then holds now (\*\*\*) an upheaval resulting from the use of violent measures must be expected to travel far from the first center of disturbance. The logic of fact and experience leave it in no one's power to assume that the spreading  
conflict

-3- #832, August 29, 2 p.m., from London.

conflict would not compel the participation of this country. Sir John Simon has reaffirmed Mr. Chamberlain's declaration without taking from it or adding to it and any interpretation of his speech will be mistaken which does not give full value to every part of it."

MANCHESTER GUARDIAN "It was evident last week that the Government ought to make a public statement in order to leave nothing undone that might help a settlement in Czechoslovakia and thereby avert the danger of war. The most recent events have been such that only those who deliberately shut their eyes to what they dislike can fail to read the signs (\*\*\*) on Saturday therefore Sir John Simon reaffirmed the statement of the Government's policy which was made by Mr. Chamberlain on March 24. It is the fourth time that the declaration has been made, in public or in private, in five months (\*\*\*) Governments speak more frankly to one another than they can do in public and one must assume that the British Government will speak more intimately in Berlin than Sir John Simon could on Saturday, asking for a contribution towards peace and insisting on the incalculable danger of invoking force. It must not be said that the British

Government

-4- #832, August 29, 2 p.m., from London.

Government has left anything undone."

NEWS CHRONICLE. "It is not war mongering to declare that in certain eventualities we should have to fight, but the very reverse."

DAILY HERALD. "The gravity of Sir John Simon's Lanark speech is the measure of the gravity of the European situation but emphatically he was right to repudiate the disturbing outlook which would expect war, if not now then later, as 'inevitable'. (\*\*\*) it is not enough to stall off war; we have to work out the foundations for enduring peace. These we take to be the essential meanings of the Lanark speech. It might well have been more precise but we trust it will be understood abroad; and that it will be realized that it is the view of a united nation gravely conscious of its responsibilities."

Diplomatic correspondents view the German demarche at Moscow, Bucharest and Belgrade as clearly showing that Germany is contemplating the possibility of aggression. It is also interpreted as showing that if Germany does go to war, she is determined to make the Czechs appear as the aggressors. The opposition

MANCHESTER GUARDIAN thinks that it is British policy

and

-5- #832, August 29, 2 p.m., from London.

and the realism of the Czechs that have so far averted a central European war, and that British policy may succeed in averting a central European war altogether. It is essential however that while British policy remains firm it also remains moderate, as the GUARDIAN thinks of course it will. For were it to become aggressive it would precipitate what it is meant to avert. All these conditions, in that paper's opinion, have been admirably fulfilled by Sir John Simon's speech.

The papers this morning confirm a radio announcement of last night that Sir Neville Henderson, the British Ambassador at Berlin, has been recalled to London for consultation. A meeting has been called for tomorrow morning by the Prime Minister of available ministers. Most of them, it is reported, will be back in London by tomorrow.

JOHNSON

RR:WYC

# TELEGRAM RECEIVED

REB

1-1938

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

FROM

LONDON

Dated August 30, 1938

Rec'd 3:15 p. m.



Secretary of State,  
Washington.

RUSH

838, August 30, 5 p. m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL FOR THE SECRETARY OF STATE.

I have just talked with the Prime Minister. He had just concluded a meeting with the Cabinet and is leaving for Balmoral to join the King and Queen for four days. He does not look well at all.

The gist of the conversation was that he is very much disturbed about the Czechoslovak situation. All the information that he gets with the exception of the report from Gwatkin, Runciman's aide, is that Hitler has made up his mind to take Czechoslovakia peacefully if possible but with arms if necessary. The advice is that Hitler believes that France is not ready to fight and that England does not want to go in. Runciman feels that if the matter were one just to be decided between the Sudetens and the Czechs it could be settled amiably but unfortunately it rests with Hitler.

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REB

2-#838, From London, Aug. 30, 5p.m.

I asked him whether he thought Hitler was affected by the speeches from America or Sir John Simon's the other night. He said he thought that psychologically the two speeches in America -- the President's and the Secretary's -- and Simon's had had an excellent effect, but he is advised that very little of the proper information, so far as world peace is concerned, gets to Hitler any more; the ring around him is keeping him high up on a mountain peak, so to speak; the group that want to go to war which he thinks unfortunately includes Ribbentrop are advising him that, since France is not prepared to go and England will not come in, now is the time to add increased prestige to Germany's cause.

I asked him if he had made up his mind yet whether he was disposed to go to war if France went. He said he was very much afraid that they might be forced into it but he definitely would not go until he was absolutely forced to. He also said that he had an agreement with the French that they would not declare war until they had consulted with the British. He said they had been very loath to give this commitment even though the choice was between breaking their treaty obligations or fighting a war.

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REB

3-#838, From London, Aug.30,5p.m.

a war they knew they would lose, but Chamberlain said that the British convinced them that they were to await this agreement if they were expected to go along.

He said Henderson had advised him that no more speeches should be made because instead of giving courage to the moderates to fight against a war in Germany, it was having the opposite effect and was urging them to get into it.

Chamberlain said that in spite of all this he is still hopeful that war will be averted. He thinks Hitler's speech will come on Tuesday and until then the matter will remain as is. Benes and Henlein were to meet today but up to four o'clock here Chamberlain had had no word. Chamberlain opposes those in his own cabinet who believe that Hitler must be struck at now or else his prestige will increase so much it will be impossible to stop him at a later date. Chamberlain feels that this is not necessarily true; that the anschluss lost Hitler a great deal of public opinion in the United States and he refuses to believe that the smaller countries -- Rumania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, and others -- are willing to have themselves regimented as the Austrians have been.

My

REB

4-#838, From London, Aug.30,5p.m.

My own impression is that he regards war as about a fifty-fifty chance; that even if Hitler strikes my own belief is that his influence will be to keep France out; if France goes it will still be some time before he goes but his own opinion is that he will have to. He says he is advised that Hitler believes that the war will be over, if they march into Czechoslovakia, before you can say the word "knife". Chamberlain does not agree with that at all, figuring the Czechs will give him a battle and that public opinion will be aroused and force France and England into the fray. Chamberlain says public opinion in England today is definitely against going to war for Czechoslovakia but what it will be if France declares war is another matter. He still has very definitely in his mind that it is easy enough to get into war but what have we proved after we are in and he is always hopeful that something may happen for the good of the world if he stays out. He still is the best bet in Europe today against war, but he is a very sick looking individual. He is worried but not jittery.

Code text by mail to Paris and Berlin.

KENNEDY

EMB-NPL



THE FOREIGN SERVICE  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS  
SEP 7 1938  
AMERICAN EMBASSY

No. 1094

LONDON, August 31, 1938.

SUBJECT: Two Viewpoints on the European Situation.

RECEIVED  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

1938 SEP 6 PM 3 06

DIVISION OF  
COMMUNICATIONS  
AND RECORDS

*Copy in EU*

Rating	Classification Instructions
G. 1	MID ONI

*MS*

SEP 8 1938

760F.62/675

The Honorable  
The Secretary of State,  
Washington, D. C.

Sir:

- I have the honor to enclose a clipping from the
- 1/ Manchester Guardian of August 29 reporting at length Mr. Winston Churchill's speech at Theydon Bois, Essex, on August 27 and a copy of Mr. J. L. Garvin's article
  - 2/ as published in The Observer of August 28, both of which indicate the serious viewpoint taken of the present European situation and the hopes which Mr. Churchill and Mr. Garvin express for its settlement.

It

It will be noted that Mr. Churchill's speech was made on the same day that Sir John Simon spoke at Lanark (see Embassy's telegram No. 832 of August 29, 2 p. m.) explaining British foreign policy and that both referred to the Prime Minister's declaration stated in the House of Commons on March 24 regarding Great Britain's commitments in Europe. Extracts from Mr. Churchill's speech follow:

"The whole state of Europe and of the world is moving steadily towards a climax which cannot long be delayed. War is certainly not inevitable, but the danger to peace will not be removed until the vast German armies which have been called from their homes into the ranks have been dispersed. For a country which is itself not menaced by anyone, in no fear of anyone, to place over 1,500,000 soldiers upon a war footing is a very grave step.

"It seems to me - and I must tell it to you plainly - that these great forces have not been placed upon a war footing without the intention of reaching a conclusion within a very limited space of time. The fabricated stories which are spread of a Marxist plot in Czecho-Slovakia and the orders to the Sudeten Deutsche to arm and defend themselves are disquieting signs, similar to those which preceded the seizure of Austria."

\* \* \* \* \*

"It is very grievous that during this hour the fate of European peace should lie in the hands of a single man. We know that the German people do not wish for war; above all, they do not wish for war with the British Empire.

"Our anxieties and our hopes therefore centre upon the extraordinary man at the summit of Germany. He has raised his country from defeat; he has brought it back again to the foremost rank of power. It would indeed be a fatal act (I wish my words could reach him) if he were to cast away all he has done for the German people by leading them into what would almost certainly become a world war."

Mr. Garvin

Mr. Garvin saw in the forthcoming Nuremberg rally and the large-scale German mobilization, as did Mr. Churchill, a menace to the future peace in Europe. He stated in part:

"The next ten days will be of the most far-reaching importance for the future of peace. It is for the British people through the phase of tension to keep their own heads as steady as a rock. Needless to say, the crux of the whole complex of European problems is Czecho-Slovakia."

\* \* \* \* \*

"The Nazis are to hold their annual Congress at Nuremberg next week. Herr Hitler is expected to close it on the Saturday after next by another resounding oration to which the whole world must listen. It may be thunderous or temporising. It may be both at the same time in the way that this extraordinary man has the familiar power to achieve. He is now the master of 75,000,000 people mightily equipped, and he is the sworn patron of more.

"The Nuremberg rally is always organised on colossal lines. This year it will surpass its former scale in more than one way. The Sudeten question across the neighbouring frontier will dominate the proceedings from beginning to end. How could it be otherwise when 75,000,000 on one side of the boundary feel themselves to be of the same flesh and blood with over 3,000,000 on the other side, whom they regard as being under an alien yoke? By next week, when Herr Hitler speaks at Nuremberg, the present trial-mobilisation of the Greater Reich will reach its maximum. There will be over a million men under arms in Germany with a technical equipment still incomplete at some points, but of a quantity and quality on the whole that only the levity of ignorance can underestimate."

Respectfully yours,

For the Ambassador:

*Herschel V. Johnson*  
Herschel V. Johnson  
Counselor of Embassy

Enclosure:

1. Article from Manchester Guardian entitled "Vast German Armies" dated August 29, 1938.
2. Article from The Observer dated August 28, 1938, entitled "The Way".

NI/ALC

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

Handwritten initials: *FF*, *EC*, *GER*

JR

1-1230

GRAY

FROM

London

Dated August 31, 1938

Rec'd 1:35 p.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

847, August 31, 5 p.m.

DIVISION OF  
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS  
SEP 1 1938  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

I submit the following information for what it may be worth obtained from a well informed source who incidentally is in very close touch with Vansittart is now being consulted in Cadogan's absence: the Reichswehr has indicated in London that they are opposed to action which would lead to war but that the situation in Nazi Germany has gone beyond their control. At the time of the May 21st crisis they advised Hitler that although they were equipped to take Czechoslovakia within a week they were not in a position to deal with the forces from the other countries which any such action might call into use. This brought about the intensification of Germany's western frontier defences. Now the Reichswehr are faced with their previous military estimate of the duration of a Czechoslovakia campaign even though they do not themselves

700F. 62/632 1/2

SEP 6 - 1938

FILED

-2- 1947, August 31, 5 p.m., From London.

themselves believe that Germany can wage a successful general war and they are convinced that the ensuing peace treaty would this time have as its sole design the permanent destruction of Germany as a potential disturber of the peace of Europe.

It may well be the Reichswahr that Chamberlain had in mind when he referred in paragraph five of my 838, <sup>6/28</sup> August 30, 5 p.m., to the "moderates."

This source of information regards the recent British moves as designed to impress Hitler with seriousness of the situation before his ideas for the Nuremburg speech crystalize. But he is nevertheless sceptical about the outcome in view of the pressure which the Ribbentrop, Goebels and Himmler group are exerting on a mind which is already predisposed to this concept of action.

KENNEDY

RR:KLP

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS  
SEP 6 1938  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

MJD

London  
Dated September 5, 1938.  
Rec'd. 7:50 p. m.

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

FROM

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

868, September 5, 8 p. m.

By 849, September 2, 5 p. m.

I have just seen Lord Halifax. The Foreign Office received this morning Runciman's report of Henlein's interview with Hitler. According to the account of this interview which <sup>Hen</sup> Henlein gave to Ashton-Quatkin yesterday it passed off rather encouragingly and Hitler was as friendly as they could have expected. The message which Runciman sent through <sup>Hen</sup> Henlein to Hitler was to the effect that he was prepared to recommend a settlement based on the Benes plan for cantonization and <sup>Hen</sup> Henlein's Carlsbad speech. Hitler is said to have accepted in principle. Halifax says that in the negotiations so far the Sudetens have made it very clear that the issue rises or falls on the eight Carlsbad points. <sup>Hen</sup> Deposition conceded. Sudeten leaders have said, however, that while insisting on these points in principle they would be willing to work out the details of them so that they will be practicable for both sides. <sup>Hen</sup> Henlein expressed the hope that he could still work something out with Benes and have it concluded.

760F.62/661

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GDG

MJD -2- No. 868, September 5, 5 p. m. from London

concluded in time to report to the Sudeten conference which is to be held around the 16th of October. I asked Halifax if he thought the tension would last until then and he said he thought it probably would. He said he is convinced now from all his information that Hitler himself has not made up his mind whether he wants to go to war and Halifax's own personal opinion is that he does not want to at this time.

Halifax leaves for Geneva on Friday where he says he will make a blustering speech on Tuesday which will not amount to anything.

A foreign office official in conversation with a member of the staff this afternoon, in addition to an outline of the information given above, said ~~Shonlein~~<sup>Hein</sup> told Ashton-Cookin that he had spoken in terms of warm approval and commendation to Hitler of the work of the Runciman mission. According to this Foreign Office official Runciman was anxious to secure from Hitler through Shonlein some expression of approval of or acquiescence in Shonlein's commendation and Shonlein reported that Hitler did express approval of Runciman's work. The official also said that Hitler asked ~~Shonlein~~<sup>Hein</sup> what the basic line of his policy was to which Shonlein replied promptly that he primarily wanted no war and Hitler is said to have agreed to this. ~~Shonlein~~<sup>Hein</sup> told Hitler that the situation resolved itself into two alternative lines of policy,

HJD -5- No. 868, September 5, 3 p. m. from London.

policy, and, autonomy within the state and, a plebiscite which would inevitably mean the incorporation of the Sudeten area into Germany; and that he preferred to pursue his aims within the limits of policy number one. To this Hitler merely expressed great skepticism.

The Foreign Office official said that they naturally feel some satisfaction at the general attitude Hitler ~~is reported to have~~ taken at this interview with Shenkin and particularly that Hitler said nothing to indicate a desire for the present negotiations between Henlein and the Czechs to be ~~continued~~ *discontinued*. In the Foreign Office view this reported attitude of Hitler is the most favorable and important development of the past two or three days **coupled with** the realization which they believe Henlein has now reached that the situation is acutely serious and that he must make drastic concessions if any successful agreement is to be worked out. The Foreign Office sent on Saturday a lengthy telegram to Sir Ronald Lindsay containing a resume of the British information and the situation as it appears here for communication to the Department. He stated that a further telegram will be sent to the British Ambassador tonight bringing the matter up to date.

KENNEDY

KLP

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

#  
RDC

IR

GRAY

FROM London

Dated September 9, 1938

Rec'd 3 p.m.

Secretary of State,

Washington.

889, September 9, 7 p.m.

My 886, September 8, 6 p.m.

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
SEP 10 1938
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

The Prime Minister has been in consultation throughout the day with the principal ministers and high officials of the Foreign Office. Articles by diplomatic press correspondents reflect the gravity and uncertainty with which events are viewed. While there is no immediate new emergency, the feeling undoubtedly is that the Czechoslovak situation is rapidly approaching the critical point. A meeting of the full Cabinet has been announced for 11 o'clock Monday morning at which the entire Cabinet is expected to be present except the Dominions Secretary who will not return to England until the middle of the week. The more serious papers are speculating on the possibility that the responsible ministers may consider between now and the Cabinet meeting on Monday the desirability of adopting some additional precautionary defense measures, particularly in the North Sea and point out that these would appear as a logical

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FILED  
SEP 18 1938

-2- #889, September 9, 7 p.m., from London.

logical complement to military measures already taken by the French on their land frontiers.

Mr. Attlee, the leader of the labor opposition, has requested that the Prime Minister call Parliament, this request being made subsequent to yesterday's declaration by the Trades Union Congress at Blackpool urging the Government to take a positive lead for collective defense against aggression, to safeguard peace, and to leave no doubt in the mind of the German Government that it will unite with the French and Soviet Governments to resist any attack on Czechoslovakia. The labor movement urges the British Government to give this lead, confident that such a policy would have the solid support of the British people, undoubtedly on the assumption that Hitler would yield to such pressure.

There is no indication whatever that the Prime Minister will accede to Attlee's request but the action of the Trades Union Congress is a valuable indication that the seriousness of the crisis is permeating to all classes of citizens. The opposition papers have been remarkably free of any serious attacks on the Government in this crisis.

-3- #889, September 9, 7 p.m., from London.

I have an appointment to see Lord Halifax tomorrow morning. His trip to Geneva has been postponed and he will be in London over the weekend.

KENNEDY

GW:HTM

SECRETARY OF STATE  
SEP 11 1938  
NOTED

# TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FS

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

London

Dated September 10, 1938

FROM

Rec'd 11:10 a.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

893, September 10, 1 p.m.

By 891, September 9, 10 p.m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL FOR THE SECRETARY OF STATE.

I saw Halifax and Cadogan separately. Halifax says  
the message was prepared last night, not to be delivered  
to Hitler but to Ribbentrop, saying that the English had  
practically decided to go if the French went. After the  
message had gone with this statement they received word  
that Henderson was in conference with Hitler so they  
tried to send word to Henderson to hold up any action  
on their message temporarily until they had the result of  
the conversation with Hitler. They finally got Henderson  
on the telephone last night and found that he had not seen  
Hitler but he urged them most strongly not to insist on  
his delivering the message. They don't know what his  
point of view is but he has sent a messenger with his  
point of view to Cologne. The British have sent a plane  
to Cologne to meet the messenger and expect the plane  
back in London about 4 o'clock this afternoon, and Halifax  
will

760F.62/723

Confidential File

GE

FS 2-No. 893, September 10, 1 p.m. from London

will communicate with me immediately after he and the Prime Minister have this information.

Their secret information is that Hitler is prepared to march and with that in mind they took preliminary steps yesterday with the Admiralty. They are still of the opinion that there are three alternatives for Hitler: (one) to stir up trouble in the Sudeten area and march in to put down bloodshed, (two) call for a plebiscite and in that way try to get public opinion on his side, and (three) to march and bomb Praha. They all reiterate that if they were doing business with a normal man they would have some idea of what might happen but that they are doing business with a mad man.

They are advised by their confidential sources that Hitler cannot stand out very long; that the generals are a little bit disturbed at the regime. Their secret advices are that Hitler (begin underscoring) has reached his decision (end of underscoring) and that he has made up his mind this is as good a time as any to strike.

Halifax and Cadogan think their advices are more than likely correct.

Halifax asked again what would be America's reaction. I said I had not the slightest idea; except that we want to keep out of war. He then asked me why

FS

3-No. 893, September 10, 1 p.m. from London

I thought Great Britain should be the defender of the ideals and morals of the democracies rather than the United States--not in a nasty way, but merely for the sake of argument--and I told him that they had made the Czechoslovak incident part of their business, their allies were connected with the whole affair, and our people just failed to see where we should be involved. Cadogan later said he was in complete sympathy with this opinion and wished in heaven's name they could maintain it.

Halifax said the French had advised him they felt they could make trouble for the Germans on the Siegfried line but felt that the French were not at all convinced the Germans were as invincible as they sounded.

My own observation this morning is that the British are, much against their will, veering away from the stand of keeping out; that unless Henderson's opinion is very strong and he has very good arguments, they are inclined to hand the Germans a stiff note. Halifax said of course there cannot be any good in a war except that a short one might mean the end of this impossible Nazism which, unless destroyed will very likely make it impossible for democracies to live. I asked him how the Prime Minister felt and he said the Prime Minister said last night as he went out, "this really is not as much fun as shooting grouse".

FS 4-No. 893, September 10, 1 p.m. from London

grouse". So they are quite calm but I feel they sense great danger in the air. Cadogan later told me it is quite possible that nothing terribly important may be said by Hitler at Nuremberg and the meeting may pass off quietly but they do not believe that this is the end by any manner of means.

In reporting these bulletins daily it is difficult to be entirely consistent as with shifting events and protests the topside people are changing their minds as to procedure every few hours. We are staying here all day and as soon as I hear from Halifax again I will send you another message.

PEG

KENNEDY

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

NPL  
This message must be  
closely paraphrased be-  
fore being communicated  
to anyone. (C)

London

FROM Dated September 10, 1938

Rec'd 4:35 p.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

DIVISION OF  
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS  
SEP 12 1938  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

896, September 10, 9 p.m.

My 1893, September 10, 1 p.m.

Lord Halifax has just sent me a message that they  
have heard from Henderson and are now satisfied that  
Hitler fully understands the British views. Halifax said  
that if there were any further news or information of im-  
portance tomorrow he would get in touch with me.

NPL

KENNEDY

760F.62/734

GDC

FILED  
SEP 12 1938

# TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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

FROM

London

Dated September 11, 1938

Rec'd 6:10 p.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

DIVISION OF  
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS  
SEP 12 1938  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

897, September 11, 5 p.m.

My 896, September 10, 9 p.m., and 891, September 9, 11 a.m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL. I have just seen Halifax. He read me this morning's despatch from Henderson, in which Henderson urged most strongly that he not be obliged to present the ultimatum forwarded to him for presentation to the German Government; this ultimatum mentioned in my despatch of yesterday. He said have had talked with Goerring who, in spite of his "table thumping" speech, Henderson still considers the leader of the moderates; Goebbels, who was also most reasonable; Ribbentrop, whom I judge, is still rather bad; also the head of the Foreign Office (the Cadogan of this office) and they all made it clear that they had definitely presented the British point of view to the Chancellor and they all warned that a demarche similar to May 21 would be the worst possible thing that could be done, that if they

WERE

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GDG

Confidential File

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SEP 12 1938

-2- #297, September 11, 5 p.m., from London.

were to be able to persuade Hitler to remain moderate, action like this would make it impossible. The Government has therefore decided to accept Henderson's viewpoint and to hold up the delivery of the ultimatum until some later time and then only if necessary. Henderson said that it is impossible to keep anything confidential, the Germans are aware that a messenger was sent to Nuremberg and last night they asked Henderson what the reason for it was. He told them that he had received an ultimatum from his Government but that he had urged the Government not to ask him to present it until some future time. Goering indicated that that was by far the wiser thing to do. Henderson still of course is of the opinion that Hitler is in a bad mood to make an attack and in his latest information says the air force can move within an hour; the army is prepared to move at once. Goebbels indicated to Henderson that their influence was on the side of moderation provided the Czechs showed much more restraint than they are now showing in the handling of their Sudeten people.

Another incident that seems most significant is that yesterday afternoon the German Embassy here asked if their Naval Attache might call on the Admiralty.

He

-3- #897, September 11, 5 p.m., from London.

He was granted permission and asked the Admiralty what they meant by moving up their mine sweepers. The Admiral acting under lead from the Foreign Office told him that since things were so uncertain and because he believed that England would positively move if France got into this fight, and that seemed inevitable to him, they were taking these as preliminary precautions. Halifax added that the Admiral went beyond his authority in this statement but he thought rather wisely because the Admiral reports that the reaction of the Naval Attache was astounding. He said that he did not believe that anybody in Germany had the slightest idea that England intended to fight. Halifax and the Prime Minister were so interested in this reaction that they are considering, within the next two hours, the idea of starting a little movement in the destroyer fleet. They will let me know about this a little later this evening. Temporarily they have decided to continue bluffing with incidents like destroyers and mine sweepers and what not and not with words because they do not believe that Hitler would believe them even if they said they were going in definitely.

I am seeing the Prime Minister at seven-thirty.

KENNEDY

REF ID: A67721  
GDG

EU

# TELEGRAM RECEIVED

JR

PLAIN AND GRAY

London

FROM

Dated September 11, 1938

Rec'd 4:28 p.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

898, September 11, 9 p.m.

File  
9/11  
DIVISION OF  
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS  
SEP 12 1938  
COR  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Following statement of Government views has just appeared on news tickers. The Prime Minister discussed it with me and it came from his office but it has not (repeat not) been attributed to the Prime Minister or any specific official source:

"The Exchange Telegraph understands that in the view of the Government the result of the last proposals put forward for a solution of the Czechoslovak problem is that the gap between the two sides has been appreciably narrowed. Although it may be necessary for a good deal more negotiation to take place for the purpose of elucidating these proposals or modifying them to some extent, there can be no justification for the abandonment of these negotiations in favor of a more violent solution. It is possible that even now there may be a further set back in these negotiations or a further abrupt deadlock but it is pointed out that Lord Runciman is still on the spot.

760F.62/731

GDD

SEP 12 1938

FILED

-2- #898, September 11, 9 p.m., from London.

spot and the same qualities which have enabled him to overcome difficulties of that kind will be available if they should be required again. Therefore, if other difficulties arise in the course of further talks between the Czechoslovak Government and the Sudeten German leaders it is felt here that there is no reason why efforts should be abandoned. With regard to the question which is constantly canvassed in this country and elsewhere as to whether there is a full appreciation in Germany of these possible consequences of a forceable intervention it is pointed out that on repeated occasions the British Government has expressed as clearly as possible its view that if aggression were resorted to that might well cause the involving of France in the conflict since France is bound by treaty obligation to come to the assistance of Czechoslovakia in the event of an unprovoked aggression. It was clear from the Prime Minister's statement of March 24th in the House of Commons that we contemplated the possibility that this country could not stand aside if a general conflict were to take place in which the security of France might be menaced. That position has been repeated recently by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his

speech

-3- #898, September 11, 9 p.m., from London.

speech at Lanark. That speech, the Exchange Telegraph Company is informed was exceedingly well reported in Germany and no doubt it created a considerable impression there but as time goes on circumstances change and memories may grow dim of important things which may have been said a short time before. Everyone realizes the importance that the German Government should be under no illusion in this matter and they should not count upon it that a brief campaign against Czechoslovakia could be safely embarked upon without a danger of subsequent intervention, first of France and later of this country. Although it hardly seems possible that in any responsible quarters in Germany there could be any doubt on that subject there have been, nevertheless, opportunities for the British Ambassador during his stay in Nuremberg to meet all the principal leaders of Germany with the exception of the Chancellor himself. From the full reports which have been received as to his conversations the Exchange Telegraph Company understands there is every reason to feel confident that the British Government's views have been conveyed fully to the proper quarter. It may be further stated that on this occasion as on every other occasion when the interests of the British Empire as a whole are concerned

the

-4- #898, September 11, 9:15 a.m., from London.

the Government have taken special pains to keep in the closest touch with the Dominions. Secondly, this country has observed throughout its historical and traditional association with France our nearest neighbor the country with whose integrity and security our own is so closely bound up. The Exchange Telegraph Company understands that it would be a mistake to assume that the British Government take an unduly pessimistic view of the situation as it is today. It is a serious situation but not one of which an unduly gloomy view should be taken. The statement which Herr Hitler will make tomorrow night is written of course with a certain anxiety and a realization how much may turn on the nature of the statement, but it is recalled that Herr Hitler has repeatedly expressed his own desire for peace and it would be a mistake to assume these declarations were altogether insincere. There is one other country whose sympathy is particularly precious to us at all times and especially at times like this and that is the United States of America. Our relations with that great country were never more friendly and more sympathetic in the experience of most people now living than they are today. Great Britain has felt that

WE

-5- #898, September 11, 9 p.m., from London.

WE OWE IT TO AMERICA THAT WE SHOULD KEEP HER FULLY INFORMED AS WE HAVE DONE THROUGHOUT OF OUR VIEWS OF THE EUROPEAN SITUATION. THE FEELING HERE MAY BE SUMMED UP IN THESE WORDS THAT OUT OF ALL THIS SHOULD THERE COME ANOTHER GREAT CONFLICT IN EUROPE IT WOULD INDEED BE A TRAGIC DISASTER. THE EXCHANGE TELEGRAPH COMPANY LEARNS THAT IN THE VIEW OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT IT IS AN AVOIDABLE DISASTER, AND THE GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO LEAVE NO EFFORT UNTRIED THAT WILL SERVE TO AVERT IT. THE GOVERNMENT'S VIEWPOINT MAY BE SUMMARIZED IN THE FOLLOWING WORDS: A GROWING FEELING OF ANXIETY HAS BEEN MANIFEST IN THE COUNTRY AT THE APPROACH OF A CRITICAL SITUATION OUT OF WHICH WAR MIGHT POSSIBLY ARISE. WAR IN THESE DAYS IS SOMETHING DIFFERENT FROM WHAT IT HAS BEEN IN THE PAST. IN 1914 WAR WAS AN AFFAIR TO BEGIN WITH AT ANY RATE OF MILITARY AND NAVAL FORCES, NOW IT IS SOMETHING WHICH MIGHT IN THE VERY FIRST FEW HOURS AFFECT A CIVILIAN POPULATION AND THEREBY BECOME AN EVEN MORE DREADFUL AND HORRIBLE THING THAN BEFORE. THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY AND EFFORTS ARE DIRECTED ALL THE TIME TO THE AVOIDANCE OF ANY SUCH CATASTROPHE AS THAT. THEY HAVE RECOGNIZED FROM THE FIRST THAT IN THIS CZECHOSLOVAK QUESTION THERE LAY THE POSSIBILITIES OF THE MOST SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES. THEY HAVE FELT

HOWEVER

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-6- #898, September 11, 9 p.m., from London.

however that difficult as the situation was it ought not to be one impossible of solution by peaceful discussion and negotiation. It has been however recognized that when feelings become exacerbated especially when racial animosities are involved as in this case it is very difficult to get the two protagonists to maintain a reasonable attitude and a deadlock is quite likely to occur. It was when the Government saw the situation was becoming critical that they proposed a mediator and investigator whose personality and name would command confidence should go out and see whether he could help by his frank and impartial attitude. Viscount Runciman succeeded with remarkable rapidity in gaining the confidence both of the Czechs and the Sudeten Germans. No one who has followed closely the proceedings out there can have failed to see how valuable his services have been in smoothing out difficulties and restarting negotiations whenever there was a check and finally in so convincing matters that fresh proposals have been put forward which certainly go a very long way to meet the demands of the Sudeten Germans, in fact they go very much farther than anybody could at the time have supposed it possible for the Czech Government to do.

KENNEDY

RGC

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

FROM

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

London

Dated September 11, 1938

Rec'd 6:12 p.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

Washington.

899, September 11, 9 p.m.

My 897, September 11, 5 p.m.

DIVISION OF  
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS  
SEP 12 1938  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Have just seen the Prime Minister. He has just  
made a statement which we are sending you. It is being  
given out by the Prime Minister but his name is not  
being used. They have decided not to bring up the  
destroyers, wishing to hold them for further ammunition.  
He again reiterates that the best information he has  
indicates that Hitler has made up his mind to go and  
has fixed the date and that even if he is reasonably  
mild in his speech tomorrow he has instructed everybody  
to be on the lookout.

KENNEDY

RGC

FILED  
SEP 12 1938

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CDL

~~RDC~~ ~~ED~~

# TELEGRAM RECEIVED

EG

GRAY

FROM

London

Dated September 13, 1938

Rec'd 3:39 p.m. Sept. 13

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

903, September 13, 6 p.m.

DIVISION OF  
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS  
SEP 13 1938  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Editorial comment in this morning's papers continues to emphasize the gravity of the European situation and the suspense with which Hitler's speech tonight is awaited. A typical comment is quoted from the DAILY TELEGRAPH and MORNING POST under the caption "The choice lies with Hitler":

"By tonight the world will know whether negotiations between the Czech Government and the Sudeten Germans are to be allowed to take their course towards a settlement just to both or whether world peace is to be shattered by a refusal to accept any terms under which the integrity of Czechoslovakia can be preserved. That is the simple issue. Any final choice can come from only one quarter. At Nurnberg Herr Hitler faces the crisis of his career. He can if he so desires speak the word that will relieve the tension of the situation and ease

an

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SEP 14 1938

FILED

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-2- #903, September 13, 6 p.m. from London

an approach to that enduring peace in Europe for which he has so often expressed his personal longing. Just as certainly he can swing the balance towards a war of which no man can limit the scope".

Commenting on the weekend conferences in Downing Street the diplomatic correspondent of the MANCHESTER GUARDIAN states:

"Hope of agreement between the Sudeten Germans and the Czechoslovak Government has not been abandoned here and every effort will be made by the French and British Governments to promote further negotiations. The situation is very grim indeed but it is by no means desperate."

Support of the Government's policy is noted and while it is stated that Nazi leaders have been informed of the British attitude in the event of an attack on Czechoslovakia the liberal newspapers urge the further step of immediately warning Hitler himself in most unequivocal terms. The opposition press stresses that the British nation is completely united and also that world opinion is against Germany. In this connection the NEWS CHRONICLE remarks "this unity of feeling against Nazi methods extends far outside this country \*\*\* today the moral influence of the United States is shown wholly

-3- #903, September 15, 6 p.m., from London.

wholly on the Democratic side. This is a factor of profound importance \*\*\*\*."

Press comments give prominence to the American attitude, the TIMES diplomatic correspondent commenting "it is stated in official circles that the sympathy of the United States, always valued, is valued highly at this difficult moment and that relations between the two countries are at their most cordial relations. Mr. Kennedy has been kept informed throughout the discussions as has Corbin the French Ambassador, the integrity and security of whose country are realized to be so closely bound up with our own."

KENNEDY

CSB

TELEGRAM RECEIVED



FS

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

London

FROM Dated September 13, 1938

Rec'd 11:35 a.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

910, September 13, 3 p.m.

My 907, September 12, 11 p.m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL FOR THE SECRETARY OF STATE.

Just saw Sir Samuel Hoare. I asked him his reaction on speech. He told me the Foreign Office felt that conditions had not been improved at all and that the speech meant absolutely nothing except that the trouble was still present. He said Chamberlain, Halifax, Simon and he felt there was more hope in the situation, provided the local disturbances did not generate real trouble particularly because of the reference Hitler made to France and to the Anglo-German naval treaty and because he did not do the building up for a war that would seem necessary. I feel however that they are asking themselves supposing there is no war now; how much better off is the whole situation and where do they go from here?

Hoare said that of course if they weather the storm he believes Chamberlain will move quickly with Hitler to see what can be done on a permanent basis.

He

760F.62/767

GDG  
Confidential File

FS 2-No. 910, September 13, 3 p.m. from London

He said they are ~~watching~~ <sup>watching</sup> an increase in espionage activities particularly along the water front and also the movement of German ships for the purpose of concentration for their needs in the event of war.

All of this group in referring to Hitler always call him the mad man.

RR:CSB

KENNEDY

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FOC

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# TELEGRAM RECEIVED

EG

GRAY

FROM London

Dated September 13, 1938

Rec'd 2:53 p.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

911, September 13, 4 p.m.



Today's editorial comments on Hitler's speech are practically unanimous in the opinion that the position is just where it was. While some hope is indicated in the continuance of negotiations for the present, anxiety is expressed over Hitler's demand for self-determination on behalf of the Sudeten German subjects of Czechoslovakia. The TIMES states "the speech, in fact, though not altogether reassuring, was not violently disturbing" and concludes its leader with the comment "apart from the claim to self-determination, the speech of the Chief of the German state was just another of those which are delivered almost nightly at Nazi gatherings".

The passage regarding self-determination, according to the DAILY TELEGRAPH and MORNING POST "has the ring of dictatorship but leaves the world in doubt as to the intentions behind the words \*\*\* it is plainly Herr Hitler's intention

SEP 14 1938

RECEIVED

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-2- #911, September 13, 4 p.m. from London

intention that the conferences shall go forward under the menacing shadow of German might, ready to intervene should there be no yielding to the extremist demand he is prepared to support. Respite is afforded from the immediate danger of war and Europe is apparently, in the Fuehrer's conception, to be kept in a state of expectancy during the whole time that the negotiations may occupy, and beyond \*\*\* some clearer understanding of German intentions, some more precise definition of 'self-determination' will be necessary if the postponed catastrophe is to be finally avoided".

Although Hitler's phrases regarding self-determination are considered in general as vague and ambiguous, the NEWS CHRONICLE pointing out that there was little or none of practical policy in the speech, comments "but reading between the lines would indicate that Herr Hitler intends to demand a plebiscite in the Sudeten areas" and the DAILY MAIL remarks that those "more significant phrases strongly foreshadowed a forthcoming demand for a plebiscite in the Sudeten land".

The general tone of the editorials is conciliatory, although the NEWS CHRONICLE states "it is beyond denial that the speech was truculent and ill-tempered" and the

MANCHESTER

.3- #911, September 13, 4 p.m. from London

MANCHESTER GUARDIAN describes its chief characteristic as anger. Several comments emphasize the reassuring aspects of Hitler's references to preserving peace in Europe and the maintenance of present frontiers.

The press gives no interpretation of official reactions to Hitler's speech although it reports that ministers were in consultation last night and would resume discussions this morning, after receipt of an authoritative translation, together with the views of the British Ambassador at Berlin. However, the press today reports that the Czechoslovakian Minister in London called at the Foreign Office yesterday in order to communicate his Government's very strong objection to any proposal for a plebiscite in Czechoslovakia.

KENNEDY

G'V:KLP

# TELEGRAM RECEIVED



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

London

Dated September 14, 1938

Rec'd 12:55 p.m.

FROM

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

TRIPLE PRIORITY

923, September 14, 4 p.m.

PRIVATE AND STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL FOR THE SECRETARY  
OF STATE.

NO DISTRIBUTION.

I just saw the Prime Minister. He came out of a  
Cabinet meeting and went into a room with me and told  
me as follows: He has been thinking every night what  
he could possibly do, if a crisis should arise and war  
seemed imminent, to stall it off. Last night he came to  
the conclusion, and without asking the Cabinet's permis-  
sion because he thought the thing had arrived at that  
serious state, he sent word to Hitler that he would like  
to go to Berlin to see him. Today, while I was there, he  
told the Cabinet and received their unanimous approval.  
He said he felt that any plans that Runciman might now  
present, which is what the French wanted done, would  
probably not be sufficient under these trying times.

With

760F.62/737

DDG

FS 2-No. 923, September 14, 4 p.m. from London

With that in mind he felt it absolutely imperative to send a message to Hitler last night and ask him if he would see him to go over the situation with him. Up to now he has not received any answer. He feels that Hitler cannot refuse to see him however for fear of the psychological reaction throughout the world. He said he had great fear as to misconception regarding the British Prime Minister going to see Hitler but he felt that the time had come when he should demonstrate to the world that all efforts of his were bent upon preventing war.

I asked him what he figured was the greatest danger. He told me very frankly it was Hitler's request for a plebiscite. He feels that that would be rather an astute move on Hitler's part in that he would try to make the democracies fight against democratic principles. He said he had considered that and had arrived at two answers: first, he will suggest to Hitler that the Sudeten area take local autonomy for a period of five years and that Hitler demobilize his army at once; at the end of that time, to perceive, other problems and elections might well be held under the auspices of an international body. If Hitler completely repudiates that, on the ground that he wants action immediately, Chamberlain will suggested that possibly

FS 3-No. 923, September 14, 4 p.m. from London

possibly it be done at the end of six months. The great trouble with this is that Hitler will be winning a victory without bloodshed and make the next crisis whenever and about whatever it comes much easier for him to win out. Chamberlain realizes this but plans to say that he is prepared to talk colonies, economics or any other big plan for the peace of the world, without definite commitment at this time, but will try to get the approval of the British public if Hitler wants to talk business. He will tell Hitler that he has come to try to formulate a settlement for world policy and that after all Czechoslovakia is a small incident in that big cause. If this is turned down, England will have tried everything and made every suggestion that they can and he will then tell Hitler that he will fight on the side of France. Chamberlain told me that France has not been advised of this yet for fear of a leak, but he has been informed in the last 48 hours that they are becoming less and less anxious to fight and he is sure they will throw their hat in the air when they hear of this plan.

He is now waiting word from Hitler and as he went out of the room he asked me to wish him luck and pray for him.

CSB

KENNEDY

EU

# TELEGRAM RECEIVED

NC

GRAY

FROM

London

Dated September 15, 1938

Rec'd 1:50 p.m.

Secretary of State  
Washington

F&I	DIVISION OF
IP	EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
	SEP 16 1938
	DEPARTMENT OF STATE

935, September 15, 4 p.m.

Today's press comment is primarily concerned with the announcement last night of the decision of the Prime Minister to visit Hitler. As the TIMES states "in the light of this transcendent announcement the rest of the day's news falls into relative insignificance--serious though some of it would otherwise have appeared".

Other extracts from editorials follow:

The TIMES: "The news will bring a sense of relief and profound satisfaction to all but the very few to whom any sort of intercourse with a dictator is incomprehensible and anathema (\*\*\*) the visit will be first and foremost, the occasion of a full and frank conversation, the outcome of which is less likely to be a complete solution than the renewal of interrupted negotiations. It follows that nobody now need despairingly conclude that the impasse of the negotiations in Praha is final".

The LONDON TELEGRAPH and LONDON POST: "Great Britain is to make a supreme bid for peace (\*\*\*) so courageous a departure from diplomatic permanency deserves success,

and

76 F. 62/831 - CDB

FILED

SEP 16 1938

NC -2- #935 from London, September 15, 1938

and the good wishes of everybody who has the appeasement of Europe at heart will accompany Mr. Neville Chamberlain on his mission".

The DAILY MAIL: "This momentous step is being taken on the initiative of Mr. Chamberlain himself. It is the outstanding example in his great career of his wisdom, his vision and his straightforward methods (\*\*). The Prime Minister's decision to meet Herr Hitler came at a moment when the question 'peace or war?' was balanced on a razor edge".

The MANCHESTER GUARDIAN: "Mr. Chamberlain's decision to go and see Herr Hitler is a bold move. It springs from and itself displays the crisis at which we stand".

The DAILY CHRONICLE: "Britain's Prime Minister wins credit today for one of the boldest and most dramatic strokes in modern diplomatic history (\*\*).

The DAILY HERALD: "Mr. Chamberlain has taken not only a bold course, but one which will receive general support.

It has the quality of dramatic intervention which was needed at the moment.

It is an effort to stave off a war which has seemed to be growing dreadfully near, and so such must win the approval of opinion everywhere irrespective of party".

IF ONLY

4p

NOTED  
SEP 17 1938

# TELEGRAM RECEIVED

F3

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

London

Dated September 17, 1938

FROM

Rec'd 10 a.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

950, September 17, 1 p.m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL FOR THE SECRETARY OF STATE.

The Cabinet meeting is still on but I asked Cadogan to see me and bring me something to report at once. He says that Chamberlain found Hitler in a very bad mood. Those around him had just reported another incident in the Sudeten area in which 300 Sudetens were killed. Chamberlain said he knew nothing of that and urged Hitler not to take it for granted unless it was confirmed. The sum and substance of the conversation after this bad start was that Hitler wants the recognition at once of the principle of self-determination. Chamberlain told him he was not prepared to make any such agreement until he had a chance to consult with the Cabinet and possibly Parliament. Hitler told Chamberlain that the latter was familiar with his ideas on race and that it was not necessary to repeat them but he insisted that something be done immediately. Chamberlain told him that he must return home and received an agreement from Hitler that

he

760F.62/866

FILED

SEP 22 1938

G-1

Confidential File

PS 2-No. 950, September 17, 1 p.m. from London

he would not march--although Chamberlain was convinced that the order was about to be given when he arrived--unless an extremely big incident took place in the Sudeten area. I do not know just what comfort Chamberlain expects to get from this promise, because Cadogan says they have evidence that the groundwork is laid for an incident large enough to furnish the Germans with an excuse to come in.

Chamberlain then told Hitler that, of course, if the British did not agree to this principle and Hitler went in, England would be obliged to go in with France, and Hitler said he was perfectly willing to take on a world war.

I am leaving now to see the Military Attache who saw Cadogan just before me and I am hoping to see Halifax at the conclusion of the Cabinet meeting. Cadogan told me this morning that Halifax had said he regarded it extremely unlikely that an agreement would be reached at the morning meeting and that they would probably have to adjourn until this afternoon or this evening.

I received very good information this morning that there are many rumblings among members of the Cabinet. First, they are displeased that the so-called inner Cabinet is being conferred with constantly. This inner Cabinet

consists

PS 3-No. 950, September 17, 1 p.m. from London

consists of Simon; Hoare and Halifax. In addition to that there are intimations among them that if Chamberlain tries to force the principle of self-determination there will be a row in the Cabinet.

I will send you a message on the reaction of the French Ambassador within a short time and an account of my talk with Halifax as soon as I can see him. Then if at all possible I will try to see the Prime Minister, either tonight or tomorrow, but I judge if he is having a row in the Cabinet he would rather not discuss the matter with anybody outside.

My own opinion from my discussions and from what I have heard from the other members of the Cabinet last night and this morning is that the issue is going to be self-determination or war and the responsibility for declaring war, I think, will be left with the anti-Chamberlain group. The Labor people up to now have played along very well but Cudogan is not sure what will happen.

TELEGRAM RECEIVED



FROM

EG  
This message must be  
closely paraphrased be-  
fore being communicated  
to anyone. (D)

London

Dated September 17, 1938

Rec'd 10:05 a.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

953, September 17, 2 p.m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL FOR THE SECRETARY.

I have just seen Corbin. He has not contacted Bonnet yet because Bonnet is still in a Cabinet meeting in Paris. He regards the situation as very serious but thinks that England will follow Chamberlain's persuasion. He thinks the problem will be much easier to sell to public opinion both in France and England if they have something else to offer as an offset to agreeing to Hitler's principle of self determination.

Neither country wants to fight, he feels, and my own belief is that they are looking for a good excuse to stay out.

KENNEDY

CSB

SEP 22 1938

FILED

Confidential File

760F.62/871

TELEGRAM RECEIVED



*Tu*

EDA

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

FROM

LONDON

Dated September 17, 1938

Received 8:30 p.m.

*copy this letter to the...*  
*11/19/38*

Secretary of State

Washington

960, September 17, 10 p.m.

My 950, September 17, 1 p.m., and 958, September 17, 6 p.m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL FOR THE SECRETARY.

I have just left the Prime Minister. He confirmed all of the story sent you in my telegram this morning reporting my conversation with Cadogan. He said he was thoroughly convinced that Hitler had intended to march within 72 hours after he arrived; that the stories of tragedies happening to the Sudetens are being fed to him and Chamberlain was amazed that a man in such a responsible position could be influenced by such ridiculous tales. After the preliminaries had been gone through he and Hitler and the interpreter went off to Hitler's room. Hitler made a remark that seemed to throw a different light on his character to the effect that when he had received the Prime Minister's request to come and visit him, he really felt that he should go

to

750F.62/891

SEP 20 1938

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Confidential File

GDS

EDA - 2 - #960, September 17, 10 p.m. from London

to the Prime Minister; that he did not think it fair to bring an old man down to visit him. With the exception of that one remark, however, Chamberlain came away with an intense dislike for him. He said he is cruel, overbearing, has a hard look and thoroughly convinced Chamberlain that he would be completely ruthless in any of his aims and methods. When the conversation started Hitler told him that if the principle of self determination, which Hitler said by the way he did not create, was not agreeable to the British, then there was no sense in talking. Chamberlain asked him then if that meant that he would attempt to get the results he wanted by using force and Hitler said, "absolutely, and I will chance a world war if necessary". Chamberlain said, "if that is the case why did you bother to have me come here because if that is all there is to it, the conversation had better stop at once". Hitler eased up a little at that and they started the discussion.

Hitler said he will not stand for any delay in the principle of self determination and for that reason Chamberlain decided to come home at once to confer with his colleagues because he told Hitler he could not make that declaration there. He asked Hitler if the Sudeten region

- 3 - #960, September 17, 10 p.m. from London

region came under the Reich what assurances had they that the rest of Czechoslovakia would not sooner or later fall into his hands. Hitler said he had no interest in the rest of Czechoslovakia at all; in fact he had no further interest in the acquiring of any lands in Europe; that he had taken back seven million Austrians and now he wanted three million Sudetens. ~~etc~~

Chamberlain said of course you have to take Hitler's word for that. Hitler kept referring to the fact that he did not want the dagger in his side.

Chamberlain said to Hitler, "I will go back to England and talk with my colleagues. What assurance have I that you will not give the order to march?" Hitler said, "I will not give any military orders unless some terrific incident happens in the Sudeten area." Chamberlain thinks he will probably adhere to that.

Hitler suggested to Chamberlain that England use its influence to have the Czechoslovak police disbanded as they were causing great trouble. Chamberlain said Runciman confirmed that today to him.

With reference to today's happenings, Chamberlain reported this conversation to his cabinet and asked them for authority to accept the principle of self-determination and after quite some discussion ~~exchanged~~

with

-4- #960, September 17, 10 p.m., from London.

*I judge*  
with ~~it~~ he was finally given authority by his  
colleaguets to tell Hitler that Britain will accept  
the principle of self-determination but that he  
wants a chance to discuss what the method is to be.  
He has also been authorized to talk with Daladier and  
Bonnet who arrive tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock.

It becomes more and more apparent as I talked  
with Chamberlain that his confidence in the French  
becomes less and less. He received a report which  
Sir Samuel Hoare confirmed to me tonight that the  
French aviation situation is so bad that it is  
appalling. The French do not want to fight and they  
will probably blame whole thing on the British.  
Chamberlain said that the public will probably  
not believe that any more than it did the report  
that Daladier had advised him to go to Hitler.  
Chamberlain said Daladier did not know anything  
about it until five hours after the American Ambassador  
had been told.

I asked him what he thought the Czechs would do.  
He said "talk big but probably accede" He said he expects  
however that if they agree they will ask England for a  
guarantee of protection for the maintenance of the balance

of

-5- #960, September 17, 10 p.m., from London.

of the state and Chamberlain said, "Of course I do not expect to give this but I may not be averse to it on condition the Russians are unwilling to make any commitment except to urge England to fight and if there is a disagreement to refer it to the League of Nations. Chamberlain said that would not be very effective with the Germans occupying the Sudeten area. Chamberlain said he talked with the labor group and I have talked tonight with Dalton, Herbert Morrison and Citrine, all of whom I have seen, and I judge that since they have been talking about cooperation of Russia, France, and England the Prime Minister has rather put them in the box, as he expressed it, and in their conversations with me they made it very clear that they were going along with Chamberlain.

When I saw Sir Samuel Hoare he had just finished seeing the editor of the DAILY HERALD and Sir Walter Layton the editor of the NEWS CHRONICLE and he was trying to persuade them to have the papers strong on the side of peace. I judge he had been spending the last two and a half hours seeing all of the newspaper men to urge peace. He felt that the HERALD would play ball. He hoped that Layton would but was not quite sure yet.

The

-6- #960, September 17, 10 p.m., from London.

The Prime Minister contemplates suggesting, if he meets an agreement with Hitler on the principle of self determination, orderly elections and protection of peace and order while the plans are being worked out. On the subject of protection he asked me if all the countries join in whether the United States would--not a question to be discussed now but something that might be put up later--and I am sending it on to you so that you might be giving it some thought.

He told me also that he said to Hitler that the Czechoslovak thing is merely an incident and what is Germany going to do on all of these problems. Hitler said he was too occupied and worried about the Czechoslovak problem to think about anything else but Chamberlain said that before he left he had an intimation from Hitler that if this problem were settled quickly he would discuss the other matters.

Chamberlain believes that the public here will be with him if the problem is put up in the right way and he works it out decently with the French, the Czechs, and Hitler; otherwise he does not know but he says he has to take the responsibility and believes in his own aim and he is going to battle for that.

NC -7- #960, September 17, 10 p.m., from London

I asked Sir Samuel Hoare whether there was any probability of calling Parliament and he said not at least until Chamberlain had another talk and that he hoped not until they got these problems out of the way.

Chamberlain confirmed the general impression which has been widespread in official circles here that Ribbentrop has an extremely bad influence on Hitler.

KENNEDY

EMB  
LVP

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

GRAY

lw

London

1-1333

FROM Dated September 19, 1938

Rec'd 8:30 p.m., 18th

Secretary of State  
Washington

963, September 19, 1 a.m.

My 962, September 18, 11 p.m.

Meeting of British and French Ministers broke up shortly after midnight and following communique was issued:

"After full discussion of the present international situation the representatives of the British and French Governments are in complete agreement as to the policy to be adopted with a view to promoting a peaceful solution of the Czechoslovak question. The two governments hope that thereafter it will be possible to consider a more general settlement in the interests of European peace."

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS  
SEP 19 1938  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

KENNEDY

RGC

760F.62/888

GDD

FILED  
SEP 20 1938

# TELEGRAM RECEIVED

1-1336

FROM



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

London

Dated September 19, 1938

Rec'd 1:15 p.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

966, September 19, 3 p.m.

My 963, September 19, 1 a.m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL FOR THE SECRETARY OF STATE.

Cambon has just shown Johnson in strict confidence the text decided upon between the British and the French of a note to be delivered to Benes as soon as the respective Governments of the two countries have given their approval.

The text of this note has already been sent to the British and French Ministers in Praha for immediate delivery upon receipt of the necessary authorization.

Cambon said that this note contained in essence the entire results of yesterday's discussions. He also said quite frankly that he was sick at the result; that it was the most painful possible experience for his Government which since the war had met with nothing but complete sincerity and loyalty from Czechoslovakia. He said also that he himself felt

strongly

760F-02/908

SEP 21 1938

FILED

Confidential File

-2- #966, September 19, 3 p.m., from London.

strongly that the effect of this decision when known would be (?) and diminish the prestige of Great Britain and France in all the other democratic countries of the world, not to speak of its disastrous effect on the small countries of central and southeastern Europe, which have serious minority problems.

The substance of the draft communication to Benes is as follows:

"One. The British and French Governments declare that they are convinced after recent events that the situation has now reached the point where the maintenance of the German districts within the present boundaries of Czechoslovakia is in fact no longer possible without imperiling the interests of Czechoslovakia and European peace. Great Britain and France are, therefore, constrained to the conclusion that the maintenance of peace and of the vital interests of Czechoslovakia can only be assured effectively if these German districts are now transferred to Germany.

Two. The two Governments point out that there are two possible methods of effecting the change: first, by a plebiscite; second, by a simple transfer. In their  
opinion

-3- #966, September 19, 3 p.m., from London.

opinion the first presents obvious difficulties, the greatest of which would be its repercussions in other countries where minority problems are acute. They, therefore, suggest to Benes that Czechoslovakia would probably prefer to effect a direct transfer.

Three. They then go on to suggest that this transfer would obviously affect those districts containing more than 50 per cent of Germans in their population. They suggest that the transfer of the territories and the limiting of the new frontier should be carried out through negotiations by an international commission on which Czechoslovakia would be represented.

Four. They suggested that the international commission also be charged with the duty of drawing up a plan for the exchange of populations where those populations may desire to be transferred on a basis of option within a fixed time limit.

Five. They suggest to Benes that if Czechoslovakia accepts these proposals it is only natural that she will expect some form of guarantee of the new Czechoslovak state from the countries which have brought her to this decision.

Six.

-4- #966, September 19, 3 p.m., from London.

Six. The note here states that the Government of the United Kingdom is therefore prepared to take its part in an international guarantee of the neutrality of the frontiers of the new Czechoslovak state, together with reciprocal military pledges and suggested that this new international guarantee might eventually take the place of certain present existing treaties. (Cambon remarked that the provisions of this paragraph were not very precise and said that the obligations of the Franco-Czechoslovak treaty would be unimpaired under the ~~new~~ <sup>new</sup> arrangement).

SEVEN. The two Governments paid a tribute to the great sacrifice which they realize Czechoslovakia is being called upon to make in the interests of European peace and do not minimize the extent of this sacrifice.

Eight. They point out that the British Prime Minister expects to see Hitler by Wednesday at the latest and earlier if possible and urge upon Benes the necessity for a prompt reply."

Cambon, who personally seemed extremely upset by the decisions framed in this note, said that he does not see how it would be possible for Benes to give an

immediate

-5- #966, September 19, 3 p.m., from London.

immediate reply as he has no authority without the consent of his Parliament to accept any such terms.

Cambon pointed out the obvious fact that this note has not been delivered to Benes and emphasized that the main portion was given in the most strict confidence.

I am seeing the Prime Minister at 4 o'clock.

KENNEDY

RR

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TELEGRAM RECEIVED

HRE

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

FROM LONDON

Dated September 19, 1938

Rec'd 5:45 p.m.

Secretary of State

Washington

970, September 19, 6 p.m.

Ify 966, September 19, 3 p.m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL FOR THE SECRETARY OF STATE.

I have just left the Prime Minister. He did not have much to add to the note which has now been sent to Benes, the substance of which we cabled you this morning, except to say that he had sent a personal message to Benes telling him Runciman felt that Benes' last offer for settlement of the Sudeten problem was entirely beyond hope now; the nature of affairs had reached such a state that nothing but separation of the Sudeten region was possible.

Chamberlain cabled Hitler saying he would probably see him on Wednesday and received a reply from Hitler that that would be very fine. Hitler asked Chamberlain if he could give out a statement tonight with this information about their next meeting. Chamberlain answered not until they had received some indication of Benes' reply. He said that the French impressed him yesterday as coming over with their tongues out looking for some way to save themselves from war; that although a number of times during the conference there were sad words spoken about Czechoslovakia they were always

70CF-62/914

FILED

SEP 22 1938

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IRE

2-970 From London Sept 19, 6 p.m.

always followed up by, "We must take a realistic view of the whole question." When the meeting was almost over Chamberlain said he asked Daladier, "Supposing Benes answered, 'no'; what do you propose to do?" Daladier said he supposed he would be held by his treaty and would have to march. Chamberlain, said, "How are you going to reconcile a martial war with the fact that you have already gone on record as saying you do not believe in the principle?" Daladier said he had not thought of that.

My own impression is that unless there is a terrific rise of public opinion all over the world, England does not propose to fight on the Czechoslovak issue.

Chamberlain also told me that Henderson had gone to see Goering to make it clear that the British would regard it as an insult if, while these negotiations were on, Hitler gave the order to march. Goering said that they need not be afraid of that unless there is a catastrophe. I asked Chamberlain what he thought that might be and he said a military coup on the part of the Czechoslovak army, which he thinks is not at all unlikely because even though Benes might agree to the terms it is conceivably possible that the army may refuse to. In that event Chamberlain is convinced that Hitler would march at once.

He has had some objection in <sup>his</sup> cabinet to the whole plan and he realizes he is going to be charged with the rape of Czechoslovakia, but he always says war is the alternative

and

HRE

3-#970 From London September 19, 6 p.m.

and, "I can see no rhyme nor reason in fighting for a cause which, if I went to war for it, I would have to settle after it was over in about the same way I suggest settling it now." He looked a little tired and I think he is quite

worried. ~~Extending this morning conversations~~ I heard <sup>this morning</sup> ~~that~~

*that Sir Stanley*  
(?) Winterton, Duff-Cooper and Elliott were very lukewarm on the whole proposition; that possibly Hore-Belisha would join them, but on the general principle of trying to work the problem out they have gone along with Chamberlain.

If he gets an answer from Benes that permits him to move, he will leave Wednesday for Germany.

KENNEDY

EMB:ROM

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

1938  
SEP 21 1938

5  
KSK

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

FROM London

Dated September 21, 1938

Rec'd 4:40 p.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

983, September 21, 5 p.m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL FOR THE SECRETARY OF STATE.

I just left Sir Alexander Cadogan. When I arrived  
they were translating the communique from Praha and before  
I left they brought it in. He read it and prepared to take  
it to the Cabinet now in session at 10 Downing Street. It  
is not satisfactory. Hodza says he is having trouble with  
the leaders of the political parties and while he hopes  
to have them straightened out this afternoon, he can give  
no definite acceptance of the British French plan. Cadogan  
was evidently disturbed. He will advise me later today  
or tonight just what happens on this last note.

He told me that at the conference with the Prime  
Minister this morning the question of what attitude the  
Prime Minister would take if Hitler attempted to bring up  
Polish or Hungarian minorities and Chamberlain has decided

he

760F. 62/973

FILED  
SEP 23 1938

Confidential File

GDG

REB

2-#983, From London, Sept. 31, 5p.m.

he will not discuss anything but the Sudeten <sup>situation</sup> ~~the~~ on the ground that Hitler had made it clear that this was a racial problem, with which point of view Chamberlain has some sympathy. If Hitler insists on talking of these new issues, Chamberlain will adjourn the meeting and return home.

Public opinion here, I think, is probably a shade against Chamberlain's plan and there is definitely opposition in the Cabinet unless Chamberlain brings back some commitments from Hitler, such as demobilization, a larger percentage of votes in the Sudeten area to carry the plan, some idea of his future steps and two or three others which have not yet been formulated. If Chamberlain does not get these, there is liable to be a break in the Cabinet.

I asked Cadogan about the guarantee to the Czechoslovak state after this Sudeten split up and he told me that England would be a participant in this guarantee for protection against aggression but they did not bar the discussion of the minorities for some peaceful means of secession, so it looks to me that this probably won't mean very much.

I don't think they are misleading themselves into

thinking

REB

3-#983, From London, Sept. 21, 5p.m.

thinking that there is not always a possibility of a war at some time hereafter, but Chamberlain and his advisers are hoping that something can happen before the actual war takes place. He also told me that he did not believe it possible for England under peace time operations to ever catch up with Germany's preparations for war, where the whole influence of the state is behind it, which gives more or less official evidence to the fact that time is not the only needed element that Britain wants for catching up with Germany.

In various ways the leaders of the House still sounding out public opinion and I get the impression it is not particularly helpful to their ideas. Chamberlain still feels strongly that a war is the end of this present civilization -- that Communism or something worse is liable to follow.

I am expecting to see some of the Cabinet around 7 o'clock. If anything develops I will cable.

In most gatherings that we attend here the English are spending most of their time apologizing to us for the

way

REB

4-#983, From London, Sept. 21, 5p.m.

way England is acting and while if war were declared they would go, they would still be hollering murder because they had to fight for Czechoslovakia. So it looks to me like a pretty tough situation here which will effect public opinion in your favor. You are damned if you do and damned if you don't.

EMB:

KENNEDY

JR

GRAY

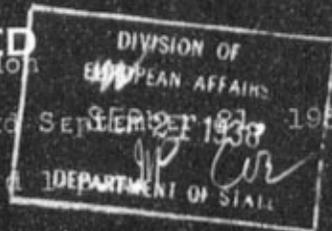
TELEGRAM RECEIVED

London

Dated SEP 21 1938

FROM

REC'D



Secretary of State,  
Washington.

RUSH.

984, September 21, 5 p.m.

My 983, September 21, 5 p.m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.

The Foreign Office has advised us confidentially that press agency reports from Praha that the Czech Government has accepted the last Anglo-French propositions are correct and that the reply is in two parts. The first part is a real acceptance. The second is something which may be termed "the expression of a hope" that Great Britain and France will resist and fight if necessary should Germany in the face of this complete Czech surrender still attack that country.

The Foreign Office informant stated, however, that they have not yet received the official report of the Czech acceptance from Praha. It is, however, expected at any moment.

KENNEDY

RR

7607-62/957

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FILED

SEP 22 1938

Confidential File

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

DIVISION OF  
FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
SEP 23 1938  
GRAY  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
LONDON

1-1330

FROM

Dated September 22, 1938

REC'D 1:20 p.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

991, September 22, 4 p.m.

A stiffening of opinion is apparent in today's press whose burden, in the government supporting and opposition organs alike, is that today's meeting between Hitler and Chamberlain at Godsberg must not solely involve concessions to Germany but also guarantees in the interest of Europe generally. The press moreover reflects growing disquiet over a possible expansion of German demands, a possibility regarded as being implied in the agitation in the German press for a "totalitarian settlement".

Symptomatic of this viewpoint is an editorial in the TIMES which states that it must not be supposed that Mr. Chamberlain's journey is for the sole purpose of handing over the Sudeten regions to Germany as the price of her consent to refrain from war; that the plan is the beginning not the end of negotiations that are to determine the issue of war or peace. The DAILY TELEGRAPH and

MORNING

SEP 23 1938

FILED

-2- #991, September 22, 4 p.m. from London

MORNING POST uses almost identical language. The TIMES adds that any threat to the Czechoslovak parts of Czechoslovakia would be an entirely different matter and observes that "the Czech's reply, received yesterday evening, makes it plainly incumbent upon Great Britain to stand by Czechoslovakia proper if any attempt should be made to lay military hands upon her".

The DAILY TELEGRAPH and MORNING POST also state that "the Czech settlement is designed to form an integral part of a wider appeasement". It adds that the Czechoslovaks have every title to the self-determination which Hitler demands for the Sudetens and the satisfaction of the right is as much a sine qua non to European peace as to the satisfaction of the Germans.

The opposition press continues its criticism of the Anglo-French plan and prophesies that it is bound to fail. The MANCHESTER GUARDIAN is particularly bitter and states that "no guarantees Mr. Chamberlain could secure (\*\*\*) would give us insurance".

The Liberal Party Council last night adopted a resolution condemning the Government for a further surrender to force and declaring that the Anglo-French plan is not workable nor likely to preserve peace.

KENNEDY

CSB



THE FOREIGN SERVICE  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

11  
TATS  
M

AMERICAN EMBASSY

No. 1240

LONDON, September 22, 1938.

SUBJECT: British Opinions on the Czech Crisis.

1109  
112  
RECEIVED  
1938 OCT 4 1938

ADVISER ON POLITICAL SECTION  
MR. DUNN  
OCT 5 1938  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

7607/62

RECEIVED  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

1938 OCT 4 PM 12 07

DIVISION OF  
GENERAL INVESTIGATION

[Redacted area]

7607.62/1405

SDG

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
OCT 18 1938  
ASSISTANT SECRETARY  
OF STATE

Honorable  
The Secretary of State,  
Washington, D. C.

Supplementary to the Embassy's telegram No. 991 of September 22, 4 p. m., I have the honor to give below various expressions of British opinion on the Czech crisis.

First, that of Mr. Anthony Eden, who speaking at the annual dinner of the Stratford-on-Avon branch of the English-Speaking Union on September 21, stated that

that the international situation is now far worse than it was six months ago and that it is still steadily deteriorating. He said "There are some people who believe that if immediate issues can somehow be resolved without resort to force, the ambitions of all the Powers of Europe will then largely be met, and the crisis over. I can find no justification for such hopes, which seem to me illfounded." Mr. Eden then repeated the remarks made in his speech at Leamington on June 11 (see Embassy's despatch No. 541 of June 14 and also the Embassy's telegram No. 133 of March 11, 1937, paragraphs four, five and six) to the effect that appeasement must not be at the expense of British vital interests, national reputation, or of their sense of fair dealing. Mr. Eden summarized the present situation as follows: "For our own people the issue becomes clarified. They desire peace, ardently and sincerely. They are ready to make sacrifices in order to strengthen the foundations of peace.....The conviction is growing that continued retreat can only lead to ever-widening confusion. They know that a stand must be made. They pray that it be not made too late." He concluded his speech with an expression of his belief that nothing was more important at this time than an improvement of understanding between the peoples

- peoples of Great Britain and the United States. The text of Mr. Eden's speech as taken from the Manchester Guardian is enclosed.
- 1/ Guardian is enclosed.

- 2/ There is also enclosed a clipping from the Manchester Guardian of September 22 quoting a speech made by Sir Archibald Sinclair, Leader of the Liberal Opposition, at a meeting of the Council of the Liberal Party Organization on September 21. After reviewing the Liberal Party's foreign policy and discussing the necessary conditions of a fair plebiscite in Czechoslovakia, Sir Archibald Sinclair stated "Do not then let us prate of justice and self-determination. We have merely submitted to Herr Hitler's demands, and our submission has been extorted not by a sudden conversion to the justice of his case but by the threat of war." Regarding a guarantee for the future integrity of Czechoslovakia, he said that "it is indeed an onerous and dangerous addition to the responsibilities and traditions of Britain. It is astonishing that Mr. Chamberlain, who has always been acclaimed by the isolationists as a wise and sober statesman, should be the man who, on the account of the collapse of his policy, has to call upon Britain to undertake it." Expressing the opinion that peace is the greatest common interest of mankind, he remarked: "I do not

believe

believe that peace can be bought and I am sure that it cannot be bought by sacrifices to aggressive military powers at the expense of small and weak nations." Sir Archibald attacked the Government's policies in the following phrases: "We have witnessed one retreat after another in the face of aggressive dictatorships.....In the light of these past events the result of the Berchtesgaden meeting bears all the appearances of hurried, disorderly and humiliating rout."

Upon the conclusion of Sir Archibald Sinclair's speech, the Liberal Party Council adopted the following resolution condemning the Government for surrendering to force and expressing the opinion that the Anglo-French proposals cannot prove workable and that they are unlikely to preserve peace:

"The Liberal party condemns the Government for initiating without consulting Parliament yet another surrender to force in reversal of the policy announced by the Government two weeks ago at a time when a firm lead could have preserved peace with honour.

"It records its view that the Government's proposals in so far as they correspond to press reports cannot prove workable, are unlikely to preserve peace, and will confront Europe in general, and this country in particular, with ever-increasing demands from Herr Hitler, backed in each case by ever-increasing force.

"No lasting solution in the Czecho-Slovak problem can be obtained in isolation. It should be part of a general European settlement, an essential

element

element in which would be the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Spain forthwith.

"The Liberal party demands the immediate re-assembly of Parliament."

Mr. Winston Churchill voiced his opinion on the crisis in the following statement to the Press Association on his return from Paris to London on September 21:

"It is necessary that the nation should realize the magnitude of the disaster into which we are being led. The partition of Czechoslovakia under Anglo-French pressure amounts to a complete surrender by the Western Democracies to the Nazi threat of force. Such a collapse will not bring peace or safety to Great Britain and France. On the contrary it will bring both countries into a position of ever-increasing weakness and danger.

The neutralization of Czechoslovakia alone means the liberation of 25 German divisions to threaten the Western Front. The path to the Black Sea will be laid wide open to triumphant Nazism.

Acceptance of Herr Hitler's terms involves the prostration of Europe before the Nazi power, of which the fullest advantage will certainly be taken. The menace, therefore, is not to Czechoslovakia, but to the cause of freedom and democracy in every country.

The idea that safety can be purchased by throwing a small State to the wolves is a fatal delusion. The German war power will grow faster than the French and British can complete their preparations for defence.

If peace is to be preserved on a lasting basis it can only be by combination of all the Powers whose convictions and whose vital interests are opposed to Nazi domination. A month ago this would have been possible. But all was cast away.

Parliament should be called together without further delay and duly informed upon these grievous matters which affect the whole life and future of our country."

The attitude of the National Council of Labor toward the Anglo-French proposals is given in the following official statement issued by that organization on September 19:

"The

"The National Council of Labour, earnestly desirous of maintaining peace, views with dismay the reported proposals of the British and French Governments for the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia under the brutal threat of armed force by Nazi Germany and without prior consultation with the Czechoslovakian Government. It declares that this is a shameful betrayal of a peaceful and democratic people and constitutes a dangerous precedent for the future.

The National Council of Labour expresses its profound sympathy with the Czechoslovakian people in the grievous anxieties through which they are now passing. It reaffirms its conviction that enduring peace can be secured only by the re-establishment of the rule of law and the ending of the use of lawless force in international relations."

Today's press reported that the Labor Party had decided to launch a national campaign on the Czech issue. The resolution adopted by the National Council of Labor on September 21 regarding the Czech crisis is as follows:

"This meeting, representing the British Labour movement, has read with profound humiliation the statement of the Czecho-Slovakian Government issued in Prague to-day, that it has been forced under irresistible pressure by both the British and the French Governments to accept with pain the proposals elaborated in London.

It is a shameful surrender to the threats of Herr Hitler. Although the Czecho-Slovak Republic has gone to the extreme limits of concession under the auspices of Lord Runciman, the British Government has set aside all considerations of freedom, equality, and justice and has consented to the virtual destruction of the Czecho-Slovak State.

This is not merely the sacrifice of a gallant democratic people; it is the sacrifice of the vital British interests involved in the sanctity of international law.

Britain's long-established tradition of democracy and justice has been dishonoured. This dishonour will not bring us peace. Hitler's ambitions do not stop short at Czecho-Slovakia. There is no longer a frontier in Europe which is safe. His present triumph will be a new starting-point for

further

further warlike adventures which in the end must lead to a general conflict.

With every surrender to violence peace recedes. If war is to be averted and civilization saved the peace-loving nations must make an immediate and concerted effort to restore the rule of law."

Respectfully yours,

For the Ambassador:

*Herschel V. Johnson*  
Herschel V. Johnson  
Counselor of Embassy.

NL/ALC-JC

2  
Enclosures:

1. Clipping from the Manchester Guardian of September 22, 1938, entitled "A Stand Must be Made", in quintuplicate.
2. Clipping from the Manchester Guardian of September 22, 1938, entitled, "Britain's Humiliating Rout", in quintuplicate.

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

ADVISES ON POLITICAL RELATIONS  
MR. DUNN  
SEP 27 1938  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

SECRETARY OF STATE  
SEP 24 1938  
NOTED

1-1336

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

Dated September 24, 1938  
Rec'd 10 a.m.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE  
SEP 26 1938  
MR. MESSERSMITH

UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE  
SEP 26 1938  
MR. WELLES

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS  
SECRETARY OF STATE  
SEP 28 1938  
WASHINGTON  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

1011, September 24, 1 p.m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL FOR THE SECRETARY OF STATE.

I have just talked with Cadogan. They have just received Hitler's answers and they are, he believes, preposterous. Hitler not only wants what everybody was willing to give him but it looks as if he wants a great deal more. Cadogan is convinced that when the letters are made public, public opinion will go and bitterly completely anti-Hitler, not that it is not that way today, but the cause of peace has many adherents. Cadogan feels that it will now be shown that their policy was the right one in that they have taken every possible opportunity to demonstrate they believed there was some sanity in Hitler and to save the world from the horrible results of war. Cadogan says, of course, he is waiting for the Prime Minister's reaction, but his own reaction is that Hitler's answers prove there is no sanity left in the man and the only decision to make

Handwritten initials and marks: S, J, A, P, E, C

SEP 29 1938

FILED

Confidential File

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-2- #1011, September 24, 1 p.m. from London

make now is what England proposes to do. That question of policy is waiting on the Prime Minister's return. Cadogan judges from the tone of these communications that it is probably only a question of a short time before Hitler will march regardless.

Halifax has gone to meet Chamberlain at the airport. On their return there will be a small conference with Cadogan, Halifax, Simon and Hoare and possibly one or two others and the Cabinet is being called at 5:30. Therefore I do not expect to have more authoritative information before 8:30 and then I will try and see sometime during the night Halifax and Chamberlain, if the latter is able to see anybody. Cadogan intimated that Chamberlain is very tired.

Oliver Stanley just told me that they are considering having the Prime Minister broadcast through England and possibly through the United States something to this effect: "I have gone as far as my conscience and reason would permit me to go and a great many people say farther than I should have gone. I tell you now that in spite of all efforts to preserve peace and sanity for the world, I do not believe this man intends to cooperate or help". Stanley is of the opinion, with other members

of

-3- #1011, September 24, 1 p.m. from London

of the Cabinet, that this would have a tremendous influence on public opinion. They believe that the die is cast and it is only a question now of hours.

I am trying to keep you posted on all angles of this. Is there any possible angle I am missing?

KENNEDY

KLP

This message must be  
closely paraphrased  
before being communi-  
cated to anyone (C)

# TELEGRAM RECEIVED

London

Dated September 25,  
1938

Rec'd 3:19 pm

1-1338

FROM

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

*Shaw & McManis*

DIVISION OF  
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS  
SEP 26 1938  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

1017.

September 25, 7 p. m.

URGENT AND STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.

I hear indirectly from Oliver Stanley that the Cabinet meeting did not go well this morning and there are seven potential resignations, possibly before tonight: Stanley, Duff-Cooper, Winterton, De la Warr, probably Hore Belisha, and possibly Morrison and Elliot. At least this group are fighting Chamberlain on agreeing to the new Czech note and there may be some crack up this afternoon. Mr. Chamberlain and Halifax are not seeing me because they have no policy outlined yet that they can get the Cabinet to agree to, and I have been frankly advised that they want to have their house in order before saying what they propose doing. There will be a Cabinet meeting after the meeting with the French Ministers. The dissenting members of the Cabinet have insisted that the French be told of the opposition in the Cabinet. The question is peace or war.

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*SEP 27 1938*

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Confidential File

KENNEDY

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EU

# TELEGRAM RECEIVED

ML  
This message <sup>1-1336</sup> must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone. (C)

London

Dated September 25, 1938

Rec'd 4:30 p.m.

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS  
SEP 26 1938  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Secretary of State  
Washington

1018, September 25, 8 p.m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.

My 1003, September 23, 4 p. m.

The Polish Ambassador, Count Edward Raczyński, called on me this afternoon to outline to me the present Polish situation and to find out from me, if he possibly could, just what England was contemplating doing, in my opinion the latter reason really caused him to come. Their strategy depends to a great extent on what England intends doing and they want if possible to get as much information in advance as they can.

First of all he said that the Poles consider their claim to Silesia dates back much farther than the German claim to the Sudeten area and that the only reason that the Germans are getting prior consideration is because they are much stronger. They asked France last week what would be done with Silesia and were told that France was trying to keep peace in the world and for them to wait a little while.

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SEP 27 1938

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Confidential File

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MJD -2- No. 1018, September 25, 8 5. m. from London

and they would be taken care of. The same question was put up to the English. He said the English were more honest but gave them very little satisfaction, telling them to appeal under Section 19 of the Covenant of the League of Nations. The result of these two talks has forced them more or less to be a sort of "little cousin" of Hitler. Beck telephoned to the Ambassador from Warsaw that he had seen the Hitler message and that Hitler had very cunningly declined to guarantee the boundaries of the Czech State unless the Poles and Hungarians came along, by this method rather indicating that he intended they should get their piece of pie. They do not enjoy being put in this position but nevertheless if that is the way they are going to get what they want they are going to play. A further reason <sup>why</sup> they are anxious to find out what England is going to do is they say if it is to be peace their claim will be adjusted and they will get what they want; if it is to be war then they have to be very careful. I told him I could not help him at all.

He told me that in a conversation between the Rumanian Minister for Foreign Affairs and Litvineff, Litvineff had said that Russia did not want to go through Rumania in the event of trouble with Czechoslovakia but that later on Litvineff expected that they would all be in it together on the same side and then the march through would be okay.

ML -3- #1018 Sept. 25, 1938 8 p.m. from London

The Rumanian added of course that they would not mind a few planes flying over their country so it looks as though that would not be very hard for Russia to work out. I asked him about the Hungarian situation. He said the British had sent for the Hungarian to ask about the calling up of their army. The Minister called Budapest and they told him they were gathering soldiers because of the terrific number of refugees that were coming in and the British accepted this. Rozyński said that on the whole the Hungarians would probably be afraid to do anything because they had a lot of hostile feeling around them and they wanted to be awfully sure before they took action. He also added casually that some high officials in the French Government told him that the way they viewed the problem was that England would make the decision and the French would have to do the fighting. I do not know anything about Polish propoganda but it looks to me like this was an attempt to sell me this whole story for some reason. You will probably know what it is when you get it.

KENNEDY

GW

TELEGRAM RECEIVED *file*

EG  
This message must be  
closely paraphrased be-  
fore being <sup>re-</sup>communicated  
to anyone. (C)

London

FROM

Dated September 26, 1938

REC'd 8:30 a.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

RUSH.

1025, September 26, 1 p.m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL FOR THE SECRETARY OF STATE.

Have just heard from Cadogan. Message that Sir  
Horace Wilson is taking to Hitler is no agreement at  
all with Hitler's terms; it merely asks him to use  
reason and try to maintain negotiations.

The British and French have completely agreed to  
fight if Hitler makes any steps after he turns down  
this proposition.

They are very happy about the President's message  
and they believe that the story is now nearly finished  
and that they have made every effort to preserve peace.  
If war comes they know they are going to get hell but  
they are now reconciled.

I am expecting to see Halifax within the next few  
minutes.

KENNEDY

HPD

760F.62/1078

SEP 27 1938

FILED

Confidential File

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71-1013-20240

ADVISER ON POLITICAL RELATIONS  
MR. DUNN  
SEP 27 1938  
TELEGRAM RECEIVED  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

SECRETARY OF STATE  
SEP 27 1938  
NOTED

JF  
AA  
PAH  
SA  
DUN

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

FROM London

Dated September 26, 1938

11:35 a.m.

DIVISION OF  
Secretary of State,  
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS  
Washington  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
1030, September 26, 4 p.m.

UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE  
SEP 27 1938  
MR. WELLES

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE  
SEP 27 1938  
MR. MESSERSMITH

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL FOR THE SECRETARY.

I have just talked with Halifax. He gave me two items of great secrecy. The first is that Chamberlain definitely promised Daladier that if the French go to war the English will definitely go with them. This is the first definite assurance they have given the French. The second item is that they have sent a very vigorous note to Warsaw telling them not to try and get any more from the Czechs than Benes has advised them he is willing to give them. If they ask for more the British say they will regard it as an unfriendly act.

Other items will not be granted: the Prime Minister intends to broadcast tomorrow night and is contemplating including America in the broadcast. As you know they are calling Parliament on Wednesday and then, if the worst has happened, they expect to pass rapid legislation to protect themselves. The Prime Minister will

make

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FILED  
SEP 29 1938

GDG  
Confidential File

-2- #1030, September 26, 4 p.m. from London

make his speech Wednesday afternoon. Hore-Belisha  
at lunch today said he was still willing to bet a  
hat that Hitler will back down. It is the only en-  
couraging note there is.

KENNEDY

CSB

REB

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

GRAY

London

1-1138

FROM

Dated September 26, 1938

Rec'd 7 p. m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

DIVISION OF  
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS  
SEP 27 1938  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

1035, September 26, 11 p. m.

Following the broadcast of Hitler's speech I have talked with Oliver Stanley and Walter Elliot of the Cabinet who regard the situation as hopeless. The reaction of Geoffrey Dawson of the TIMES is also bad although he feels there is some little feeling of hope in the fact that there are still four and a half days to go before Hitler's time limit ends. Walter Layton of the NEWS CHRONICLE told me that his reaction to the speech was a very gloomy one. The Prime Minister and the inner Cabinet and Foreign Office advisers are now meeting and I have not been able to talk with them. A first reaction of the Prime Minister's office, however, was that the speech had not materially changed the situation at all; although no concession or olive branch seemed to be handed out there were no new threats and no new ultimatums.

EMB-EDA

KENNEDY

SEP 27 1938

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GAG

ADVISER ON POLITICAL RELATIONS  
MR. DUNN  
TELETYPE RECEIVED  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

SECRETARY OF STATE  
SEP 27 1938  
NOTED

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PA/0  
E/S  
Dck

EG  
This message must be closely paraphrased before being communicated to anyone.  
FROM London  
Dated September 27, 1938  
Rec'd 7:05 a.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington,  
1040, September 27, 11 a.m.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE  
SEP 27 1938  
MR. MESSERSMITH

UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE  
SEP 27 1938  
MR. WELLES

DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS  
SEP 28 1938  
DEPART

FOR THE SECRETARY OF STATE.

Referring to your No. 564, September 27, 1 a.m.  
Talked with Halifax and also 10 Downing Street.

They have had no reply yet except from Wilson regarding his interview of 50 minutes last night which was completely and definitely unsatisfactory. Hitler figuratively slammed the door in Wilson's face. He did agree to see him this morning but Wilson held out no hope. We have received a bulletin that Wilson has left by airplane but neither the Prime Minister nor Halifax have heard this. Halifax is almost positive that Hitler does not intend to help the situation. They will both advise me immediately on Wilson's arrival or as soon as they get news from him.

Will you tell the President that not only did last night's papers play up tremendously his message but again this morning with very praiseworthy editorials. As a matter of fact it helped offset a good deal of bitterness

760F.62/1125

GDC

SEP 29 1938

FILED

-2- #1040, September 27, 11 a.m. from London

bitterness that had arisen as a result of the terrific blast from the American newspapers on the question of the betrayal of Czechoslovakia.

On my way to the office this morning saw anti-aircraft guns being placed in Hyde Park and hundreds of men digging trenches.

KENNEDY

RR

# TELEGRAM RECEIVED

EG

PLAIN

1-1338

FROM London

Dated September 27, 1938

Rec'd 9:15 a.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

1048, September 27, 2 p.m.



The local press reaction to Hitler's speech last night is extremely pessimistic.

THE DAILY TELEGRAPH and MORNING POST states:

"The best that can be said of the speech is that while it slammed the door it did not irrevocably bar and bolt it."

THE NEWS CHRONICLE writes:

"There was not one word in it that made for peace." It adds "While it is difficult to see what loophole now exists there are still four days in which to work for peace. Perhaps when Parliament meets tomorrow it will present a spectacle of a united and adamant British nation which will make Herr Hitler pause even on the brink."

The MANCHESTER GUARDIAN which has been pessimistic all along observes "There is no comfort to be derived from Hitler's speech he suggests no further negotiations

opens

SEP 28 1938

FILED

7607.62/1156

GDD

-2- #1048, September 27, 2 p.m. from London

opens no path that yet might lead to peace."

The TIMES sees a faint glimmer of hope. It writes:

"He did not seem absolutely to close the door to negotiations," and asserts that in some respects the speech did mark an improvement on the Godesberg note, namely in its references to an apparent readiness to invite the British Legion to take a hand in maintaining order in the Sudeten areas and to the possibility of a guarantee for the future Czechoslovak State it concludes:

"Great Britain is determined that justice shall prevail and has perfect confidence that in this case it can with goodwill even now be made to prevail without the use of force."

KENNEDY

ALC

# TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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

FROM LONDON  
Dated September 27, 1938  
Rec'd 3:41 p.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

1052, September 27, 5 p.m.



STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.

The Foreign Office gave the following account in confidence of the possible attitude of Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Rumania and Hungary in the given situation. That it is a true account of the position as they see it can be taken for granted because the Foreign Office permitted a member of my staff to see in strict confidence a memorandum covering the same ground which was circulated to the Cabinet over the past week end.

The Foreign Office defined Stojadinovic's policy as designed to be friends with everyone and emphasized that Yugoslavia is only expected to support Czechoslovakia against aggression by Hungary, not against aggression by Germany and that Yugoslavia cannot be expected to fight against both Germany and Italy. In the event of an attack on Czechoslovakia by Germany alone the Foreign Office defined Yugoslavia's probable attitude as one of "wavering". In the event such an attack

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MB -2- #1052, September 27, 5 p.m. From London

an attack involved "complicity" on the part of Hungary, Yugoslavia might mobilize. But unless Great Britain and France were definitely involved and Italy's neutrality reasonably assured Yugoslavia might still shirk from marching to Czechoslovakia's aid. The Foreign Office pointed out that whereas the Yugoslavian army was composed of good fighting material their equipment for a modern war was poor and they had a bad general staff. Furthermore, internal differences between the Serbs and Croats would tend to immobilize them.

When King Boris was in London recently he emphasized that he intended to maintain Bulgaria's neutrality in any forthcoming European war. The Foreign Office felt that Bulgarian policy on the outbreak of such a war would, under the King's guidance, be submitting to preserving its neutrality and that in this popular fears and suspicions of Germany would tend to counterbalance the economic pressure which Germany would doubtless bring and bribes which it would offer such as an outlet to the Aegean and a revision of Bulgaria's Grecian and Rumanian frontier. However, if Russia intervened Bulgaria would find it difficult not to oppose her. On the other hand Bulgaria was certainly determined not to make the mistake she made last time of going in on the wrong side-- nevertheless she desires the realization of her national

MB -3- #1052, September 27, 5 p.m. from London

her national ambitions.

Reports on the Rumanian situation reaching the Foreign Office are said to be meager but are to the effect that Rumania is in a disheartened frame of mind. The Foreign Office emphasized that Rumania was a satisfied power and realized that she could only lose by a European war and therefore she would probably do her best to remain neutral and even if Hungary were to be Germany's ally it was by no means certain that Rumania would go to Czechoslovakia's aid. On the other hand if Rumania was prepared to supply raw materials to Germany the latter in turn might be prepared to respect Rumania's neutrality rather than risk her opposition. There were indications that if Russia intervened Rumania would turn a blind eye to the flight of Russian planes over her territory but it did not seem probable that she would permit the transportation of Russian troops and material through her territory.

Hungary was motivated by a desire to regain her lost territory and nationals and furthermore was not in a position to resist relentless German pressure. The Foreign Office emphasized the fact that although there were only one hundred thousand odd Poles within Czechoslovakia there were some seven hundred thousand Hungarians. On the other hand the Hungarians were not sure of what action Yugoslavia and Rumania might take.

MB -4- #1052, September 27, 5 p.m. from London.

might take. The Foreign Office stated that they had been able to get no confirmation of the press reports that Yugoslavia and Rumania had made representations at Budapest and on the contrary it had been authoritatively stated that Rumania and Yugoslavia were addressing communications to the four great powers in connection with their Little Entente engagements via a vis Hungary but that no such communication had yet been received by the Foreign Office and that it did not have precise information regarding Admiral Horthy's German conversations but there was no doubt they concerned the possible passage of German troops through Hungary. On the other hand it was a likely possibility that if Germany attacked Czechoslovakia Hungarian neutrality would be permitted at least initially.

The Foreign Office seemed to attach some importance to Mussolini's speech of yesterday in that it conformed to his usual tactics of jockeying for position: when war was merely a distant possibility his tone was particularly belligerent and as war became a probability his tone automatically moderated, as he found himself in a more central position. Foreign Affairs was inclined to feel that this signified that he had not really made up his mind as to the desirability, from Italy's point of view, of a European war in which he would find himself opposed by England.

KENNEDY

CB

MJD

ADVISER ON POLITICAL RELATIONS  
OCT 1 1938  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

GRAY

SECRETARY OF STATE  
SEP 28 1938  
NOTED

London

FROM

Dated September 28, 1938,

Rec'd. 7:23 a. m.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE  
SEP 30 1938  
MR. MESSERSMITH

UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE  
SEP 29 1938  
MR. WELLES

Secretary of State, SEP 30 1938

Washington

1064, September 28, noon.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL FOR THE SECRETARY OF STATE.

The Prime Minister just telephoned and said that early this morning he sent two wires, one to Hitler and one to Mussolini. To Hitler he said: "After reading your letter that came last night I want you to know that I feel more strongly than ever that your demands can be satisfied within a comparatively short time--two weeks it would seem to me--and I will come to Germany to discuss it with you at once and give you the assurances of France and ourselves regardless of what you think of Benes or the Czechs' promises, that they will be carried out. I suggested also that possibly you and ourselves and Italy and France get together in a meeting and work out this problem. We must not have a war that will end civilization."

His message to Mussolini notified him that he had wired Hitler to this effect and urged Mussolini to use his influence toward Berlin the problem settled without war.

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TELEGRAM RECEIVED

DIVISION OF  
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS  
BRAY SEP 29 1938  
LONDON  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

#52  
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MY

FROM

Dated September 29, 1938

Rec'd 11:50 a.m.

Secretary of State  
Washington

1084, September 29, 2 p.m.

The President's second message to the German Chancellor is warmly commended throughout the British press as a powerful contribution to a peaceful solution of the Czech crisis.

The TIMES states "without question the influence of Mr. Roosevelt has been of incalculable importance to French and British exertions for the prevention of war. The known and accepted limitations of American policy thro up the more clearly the sincerity, the energy, and the courage with which Mr. Roosevelt has reenforced the drive for peace. His powerful appeal to Herr Hitler yesterday afternoon concerned method as well as principle, and his commendation of 'a conference of all nations directly or indirectly interested in the present controversy' was rapidly sanctioned by the event. With the cooperation of the opportunity, as he described it, 'for this and corre- lated problems to be solved in a spirit of justice and fair dealing' has BEEN won. It is for Europe to use it".

The

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MY -2- N o. 1084, September 29, 2 p.m. from London

The TELEGRAPH and MORNING POST refers to the message as a very moving appeal and states President Roosevelt has rendered to Europe a very great service, which will not soon be forgotten.

The DAILY MAIL writes: with the names of Chamberlain and Mussolini must be joined in grateful recognition that of President Roosevelt, whose noble appeals may well have had a powerful influence upon Herr Hitler's mind.

MANCHESTER GUARDIAN notes that President Roosevelt will already have seen one hope of his second and finely phrased appeal to the German Chancellor turned from an aspiration into a fact: negotiations are to proceed at Munich.

The Liberal and Labor press is equally commendatory. The Liberal NEWS CHRONICLE writes the intervention of Mr. Roosevelt has been a forceful influence against aggression.

The DAILY HERALD, the official Labor organ, expresses the view that President Roosevelt's two messages to Herr Hitler have played a vital part in defense of the principle of negotiation.

KENNEDY

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TELEGRAM RECEIVED

SECRETARY OF STATE  
SEP 30 1938  
NOTED

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

FROM *W. J. P.*

LONDON

Dated September 29, 1938

Rec'd 4:38 p. m.

Secretary of State,

SEP 30 1938

Washington.

UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE  
MR. WELLES

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

1091, September 29, 6 p. m.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL FOR THE SECRETARY OF STATE.

I saw Grandi and had a short talk with him. He feels hopeful about the Munich Conference. He said that yesterday they were four men of war; they may not have wanted to be men of war, but nevertheless, they were all preparing; today they are sitting around a table ~~as~~ <sup>as</sup> men of peace and if they fail they will lose standing in their own countries. He admitted this to be true of Mussolini in Italy. He said that I knew his feelings about Hitler which are not particularly friendly so that his opinion which I am going to give you must be considered in that light. He feels that Hitler has really lost his first battle in the delay in marching his troops since Chamberlain's first visit to Germany. He compared it to an air plane which crashes when it loses its momentum and he therefore thinks that Hitler will

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2-#1091, Sept. 29, 6p.m. From London

will stick for quick action so that complete momentum will not be lost. In spite of all this he is optimistic.

Halifax is not quite so optimistic. He believes that settlement must be made also on the Polish and Hungarian question. For the latter, I am sure he has more feeling in the righteousness of their cause than for Poland or Germany. He believes that Chamberlain must not postpone action but must face the inevitable at once. He talked about the danger of having to come out with some kind of a settlement that would still look impossible to the Czechs and be subject to the criticism that Czechoslovakia was betrayed for world peace. He thinks that the pressure on Chamberlain will be worse than it has been at either of the other meetings, and that for Chamberlain to come out with war averted, he may have to make concessions that the world will not approve of. He told me that when Chamberlain left this morning he looked very tired and he added "with reason".

Both Halifax and Cadogan, whom I saw later, spoke very feelingly of the President's messages and if I may be permitted, I would like to express my own opinion with theirs that the second message is the finest the

President

REB

3-#1091, Sept. 29, 6p.m. From London

President has written for a long, long time. Halifax said it is one of the finest things he has ever read.

Cadogan thought they might have something tonight, depending on how early they got together. Hitler wanted to have the meeting at 12 o'clock and even permitted the airplanes to fly over the restricted areas in order to save an hour. If anything comes in tonight they will let me know.

KENNEDY

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# TELEGRAM RECEIVED

REB

GRAY

FROM

London

Dated September 30, 1938

Rec'd 7:25 p. m. 29th.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

1094, September 30, 1 a. m.

I learn that only message that has come through from the Prime Minister tonight was one to the Treasury, from there passed on to the Foreign Office at midnight that the "talks had been most friendly".

Reliable newspaper sources report that complete agreement has been reached in principle although certain points of procedure are yet to be straightened out. This has not yet been confirmed from official sources.

KENNEDY

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SEP 30 1938

TELEGRAM RECEIVED

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FROM GRAY

London

Dated September 30, 1938.

Rec'd 8:27 a.m.

Secretary of State,  
Washington.

1102, September 30, 1 p.m.

DIVISION OF  
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS  
SEP 30 1938  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

The official announcement of the conclusion of the Munich agreement arrived too late to be included in the majority of this morning's London papers. There is accordingly no editorial reaction as yet. It is evident, however, that the public is profoundly relieved over the lifting of the menace of war. Nevertheless, the agreement is in a sense an anti-climax, the high point having been reached when the Prime Minister announced in Parliament day before yesterday the German Chancellor's invitation to the Four Power meeting at Munich. A peaceful settlement was then regarded as probably assured.

KENNEDY

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OCT 3 1938

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