

● PSF

Czechoslovakia

1938-44

1933-37 filed with Poland

PSF: Czechoslovakia
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OFFICE OF
THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

September 3, 1938.

My dear Mr. President:

I think you may be interested in reading the attached Aide Memoire handed me this morning by the British Ambassador summarizing developments in Lord Runciman's mission in Praha to date.

Faithfully yours,



Enclosure:
As stated above

The President,
The White House.

AIDE MEMOIRE.

His Majesty's Ambassador has received instructions to communicate the following information to the Secretary of State:-

Lord Runciman's mission to Prague to act as investigator or mediator between the Czechoslovak Government and the Sudeten Germans was undertaken to prevent a deadlock arising in the negotiations between the two parties, as seemed probable at the end of July, and to suggest means for bringing them to success.

The constitutional question, viz., provision of some degree of home rule for the Sudeten Germans within the Czechoslovak Republic is the immediate issue confronting Lord Runciman. After his arrival in Prague his first task was to study the suggestions proposed by the two sides. It became clear, however, at a meeting between the Czech and Sudeten representatives on August 17th that there was too wide a gulf between the respective proposals to permit of continuous negotiations on this basis. Lord Runciman prevented the Sudeten party from closing the door on further negotiations and was considering a new basis for their resumption when he learnt on August 21st that new and much more generous proposals were being put forward by M. Benes of which the most important features were:-

1. Creation of local autonomous districts in the Sudeten areas.
2. An exchange of German for Czechoslovak officials.

3. Withdrawal/

3. Withdrawal of Czechoslovak police from the German district.
4. Important financial and economic concessions.

Mr. Ashton-Swatkin returned to London on August 25th and reported that the Sudeten leaders regarded these proposals as a suitable basis for negotiations. Discussions had already taken place between M. Benes and Dr. Hodza and the Sudeten leaders on August 24th and on August 25th at which the atmosphere was good, although it was somewhat disturbed by the issue on August 26th of a Sudeten party manifesto authorising party followers to defend themselves if attacked.

In view of the close approach to the Nazi Congress opening at Nuremberg on September 5th at which some definite pronouncement on the Sudeten problem might be expected from Herr Hitler, Lord Runciman has emphasised to M. Benes the urgency of reaching an early agreement in such a form that it could be published before the Nuremberg meeting. M. Benes indicated that the negotiations were proceeding satisfactorily and hoped that publication might be possible soon after his next meeting with Dr. Kundt on August 30th. From conversations on August 28th with Sudeten leaders who had been in contact with Herr Hitler it became clear, however, that they did not regard M. Benes' proposals as adequate, and that Herr Hitler had indicated that the Sudeten question must be solved on the basis of Herr Henlein's eight Carlsbad points of last April

which/

which go beyond M. Benes' offer of August 21st.

On August 29th Lord Runciman received from M. Benes a written memorandum purporting to amplify the Czech proposals. This document in Lord Runciman's opinion marked a retreat from practical suggestions to academic principles and appeared to justify Sudeten scepticism. He feared that publication of the Czech proposals in this form might do more harm than good. Negotiations meanwhile are proceeding and it is to be hoped that M. Benes' recent proposals may still be made to serve as an agreed basis for detailed negotiations between the Czechoslovak and Sudeten leaders in the near future.

To sum up, a considerable advance towards agreement would appear to have been made recently in Prague largely owing to Lord Runciman's efforts. The present situation, however, gives cause for serious anxiety since it is evident that the German Government, while ready to give Lord Runciman's mission a chance, are not prepared to stand aside and wait much longer for present negotiations to produce a satisfactory result. Early in August information was received by His Majesty's Government of extensive military preparations in Germany, including the calling up of reservists, the formation of reserve divisions, extension of service of second year recruits throughout October, conscription of labour for completion of German fortifications in the West, and measures empowering the military authorities to conscript civilian goods and services. These measures amount to partial mobilization and
indicate/

indicate that the German government are determined to find a settlement of the Czechoslovak question this autumn, if necessary by force. His Majesty's Government have, moreover, received numerous other indications from various sources to this effect. Nor is it certain whether the German Government's real objective is to secure to the Sudetens adequate rights of self-government within Czechoslovakia or whether they are aiming at nothing less than the break-up of Czechoslovakia as an independent state.

These anxieties formed the back ground to the Chancellor of the Exchequer's speech at Lanark on August 27th, and it is because of them that His Majesty's Government decided to repeat once more the warning given by the Prime Minister on March 24th. Time is short, for it seems certain that Herr Hitler will have to speak about Czechoslovakia at the Nuremberg Congress between September 5th and September 12th, and failing any outward and visible sign of progress before the Congress he may feel obliged to make an unpleasant pronouncement, possibly backed up by an appeal to force, based on the right of self-determination and perhaps demanding a plebiscite. He might, however, be restrained from committing himself to any such extreme action if agreement could be secured between the Czechoslovak Government and the Sudeten Germans without further delay as to the basis for a comprehensive settlement. Every effort is being made by Lord Runciman with the support of His Majesty's Government to establish such a basis.

His/

His Majesty's Government are anxious to acquaint the United States Government of the foregoing because of the serious menace which the present situation represents for the peace of the world. They accordingly desire that the United States Government should be aware of the efforts which His Majesty's Government are making in order to restrain Germany from arrogant and forcible action, and at the same time to induce the Czechoslovak Government to make without further delay or evasion the far-reaching concessions which are necessary if an agreed settlement is to be reached between the Czechoslovak Government and the Sudetens.

BRITISH EMBASSY,

WASHINGTON, D.C.,

September 3rd 1938.

PSF: Czechoslovakia

THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

September 7, 1938

My dear Mr. President:

I hasten to send you herewith the text of a further confidential Aide Memoire left by the British Embassy giving more information regarding the pressure being exerted by the British on the Czechs in the matter of meeting the Sudeten demands.

Faithfully yours,

Enclosure:

Aide Memoire.

The President,
The White House.

PSF: Czechoslovakia

A I D E M E M O I R E.

Confidential.

1. His Majesty's Ambassador is instructed to communicate the following further summary of developments in the Czecho-Slovak question for the confidential information of the Secretary of State and in continuation of the Aide Memoire of September 3rd.

2. From conversations with the Sudeten leaders who had visited Herr Hitler, the Runciman mission learnt on August 28th that Hitler would welcome a visit from Henlein if the latter could show that Lord Runciman intended to help him to find a solution on the basis of the Carlsbad points. Henlein himself on the same day expressed to the Mission the hope that His Majesty's Government would recommend to the Czechoslovak Government the adoption of the Carlsbad points as a basis for a settlement.

3. While unwilling to sponsor any particular scheme His Majesty's Government considered it important that Herr Hitler should be made aware before the Nuremberg Congress of the progress made by Lord Runciman's mission and of his anxiety to find a settlement at the earliest possible moment. With their concurrence Lord Runciman on August 31st authorized Herr Henlein to deliver a message /

message to Herr Hitler to the effect that the object of his mission was to assist both parties to reach a settlement on the basis both of Carlsbad and of the new proposals of the Czechoslovak Government. Herr Henlein was to explain that they were reluctant to pronounce upon the merits of any particular proposals: both His Majesty's Government and Lord Runciman were however very anxious that a settlement should be found at the earliest possible moment. Lord Runciman was making every effort to this end and hoped that Herr Hitler would give approval and support to a continuance of the negotiations.

4. Henlein delivered this message on September 1st to Herr Hitler with whom he had a further conversation the next day. According to the account given on September 4th by Henlein to a member of Lord Runciman's mission Herr Hitler had accepted Henlein's commendation of Mission's work. Asked by Hitler what his policy was Henlein had first said that he wanted no war. With this Hitler had agreed. Henlein then said that there were two policies for him: (a) autonomy within Czechoslovak State; (b) a plebiscite, which meant unification with the Reich. In either case he wished to obtain his results in a peaceful way and to this Herr Hitler had assented. Henlein said he preferred policy (a) and hoped to obtain his results thereby but Herr Hitler had expressed some scepticism. Henlein was in a cheerful mood/

mood after his visit and seemed convinced of Herr Hitler's pacific intentions. He said that Herr Hitler had fixed no date by which results must be communicated but he himself thought the latest date by which an agreement should be reached was the end of September.

5. In the meantime Mr. Newton again saw M. Benes on September 3rd and reminded him in the name of His Majesty's Government of what might be the fate of Czechoslovakia in the event of hostilities. He emphasised that it was vital for Czechoslovakia to offer immediately and without reservation those concessions without which Sudeten question could not be peacefully solved. His Majesty's Government were not in a position to say whether anything less full than the Carlsbad programme would now suffice but M. Benes' offer must clearly, His Majesty's Government felt, not recede from his proposals summarized in paragraph 3 of the memorandum of September 3rd. Mr. Newton added as his own interpretation of this message that the Czechoslovak Government should go forthwith and unreservedly to limit of concession and added that this limit should not fall short of the Carlsbad points if settlement could not be obtained otherwise. M. Benes observed that no one could tell him exactly what the Carlsbad programme meant. If concrete measures were proposed he could probably accept them but he was averse to signing a blank cheque.

September 7th, 1938.

PST: Goshaloumbia.

*file
personal*

PSF: Czechoslovakia

THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

September 30, 1938.

My dear Mr. President:

The Czechoslovak Legation sent down to the Department last night the following communication, the text of which has elsewhere been made public. As drafted it would not seem to call for a reply and refers anyway to an intermediate British plan submitted to the Czechs the day before the Munich Conference rather than to the Munich Plan itself.

Faithfully yours,



Enclosure:
As stated above.

The President,
The White House.

The Czechoslovak Minister presents his compliments to His Excellency, the Honorable Secretary of State, and upon instructions from his Government has the honor to convey the following communication.

"Prior to the Munich conference of the four powers, the Czechoslovak Government agreed to further concessions. Czechoslovakia agreed to cede to Germany the territory inhabited by more than 50 percent German population and Czechoslovakia demanded for itself only such borderline as will enable the new Czechoslovak State to exist and defend itself. It cannot, however, in addition agree to a plebiscite in the regions with a Czech majority or populated entirely by Czechs as Hitler demanded for purely military reasons.

The Czechoslovak Government agrees to observe the period indicated for a final settlement; all aspects are to be settled by December 15, but a solution is possible even by October 31st. It agrees to the control of an international commission of the British legion and the gradual occupation by British troops before cession to Germany. It abides by the decision demanding demobilization, the recall of troops, the revision of its treaty system, but in the interests of its own defense and the protection of the Czech and German democratic population and the Jews in the territory that is ceded, it cannot evacuate, demobilize, or abandon fortifications before the borderline is determined, and there is guaranteed the exchange of populations and the assurance of a new system of international guarantees.

It

It wishes, however, to expedite the negotiations, and under no circumstances does it wish to delay the final solution to which it resolved, upon the emphatic advice of England and France and the many telegraphic appeals of chiefs of States headed by Mr. Roosevelt. Elevating the interests of the civilized world and peace and harmony above the tragic feelings of its own people, it has decided to make this sacrifice which, never before in history was required under such concentrated pressure of an undefeated State without war. It has, therefore, the right to demand that the opposing side likewise show the same understanding for peace and harmony in Europe and the world. If, even at this advanced stage of the negotiations insurmountable difficulties should arise, the Czechoslovak Government suggests that the entire dispute be settled by an international conference or be submitted to Mr. Roosevelt for arbitration to which Czechoslovakia pledges its adherence in advance."

H

Czechoslovak Legation,
Washington, D. C.,
September 29, 1938.

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PSF: Gye

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YALE UNIVERSITY
THE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
NEW HAVEN · CONNECTICUT

DR. HARVEY CUSHING

file
personal

10

Masefield Praises Roosevelt Efforts In Czech Dispute

London, Oct. 4.—(AP)—Poet Laureate John Masefield gives credit to Presi-

dent Roosevelt for helping to save peace.

In a letter to the Times today, Masefield said:

"Three things gave us our present peace: First, the heroic self-sacrifice of a proud and noble little nation; then the effort of our prime minister; and then, in large measure, the

power of President Roosevelt's telegrams (appealing for peaceful negotiation of the Czechoslovak dispute).

"Let this country never forget his magnificent, wise, timely and perhaps decisive intervention at an instant when peace seemed impossible."

So say we, all of us

JTC

PSF: Czechoslovakia

*file
personal*

Prague, November 10, 1938.

Dear Mr. President:

Now that we have begun to return to calmer conditions, superficially at least, I want to express to you on behalf of myself and my associates here our gratitude for your very kind message of the 28th of September. In those tragic days when the indications were that this country and all Europe might overnight be plunged into war with all the dreadful consequences that step might imply, the evidence that amid your many responsibilities you had time to think of us was very heartening and gave all of us new courage. Your message was communicated to all of the officers and employees of our several establishments in Prague, and they join me in thanking you most cordially.

While I shall, of course, report fully to the Secretary of State upon the efficiency and conduct of the members of the staffs of the Legation, the Consulate General and the Military and Commercial Attachés in Prague, during
the

The President,

The White House.

- 2 -

the period of the crisis here, I think that in view of your interest in the personnel of the Foreign Service, I should bring directly to your attention the main facts as I see them. As the situation rapidly approached an acute stage there became steadily more and more cohesion among the personnel of our respective offices until some time before the most critical days arrived we were working virtually as a single organization. Our offices functioned during the critical period practically all night long. Throughout, the officers and employees without exception worked loyally and industriously without regard to office hours. When night service became necessary, they gave it without stint. I have not met with a better service spirit among a group of governmental employees than I found here during the recent crisis, and it gives me great pleasure to be able to report this to you.

Although it is not appropriate to single out specific employees for special mention, it is only fair that I should say that the credit for this condition is due mainly to Mr. Vinton Chapin, Second Secretary of the Legation, Raymond E. Cox, Consul General, Major Lowell M. Riley, Military Attaché, and Mr. Edward B. Lawson, Commercial Attaché. All of them did their
part

- 3 -

part exceedingly well, and you can justly be proud of their devotion to duty, their courage in the face of a most ominous outlook. The fine spirit which they showed was emulated by their respective staffs in an admirable manner.

With great respect and deep gratitude, I am, my dear Mr. President,

Very faithfully yours,

Wm. S. Baer

PSF: Czechoslovakia

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

March 18, 1939

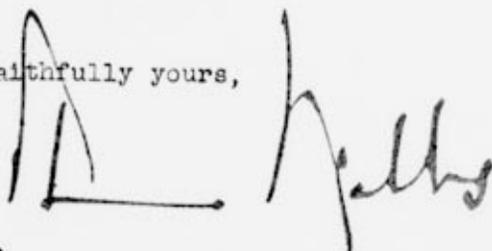
*File
Personal
&
Confidential*

My dear Mr. President:

I am enclosing a copy of a letter I have just received from the Minister of Czechoslovakia. As you will see, his letter contains a message which he has asked that I transmit to you.

Believe me

Faithfully yours,



Enclosure:
From Minister of
Czechoslovakia,
March 18, 1939.

The President,
The White House.

COPY

THE CZECHOSLOVAK LEGATION

WASHINGTON, D. C.

March 18, 1939

My dear Mr. Welles:

I have the honor to express to you, in behalf of my people, gratitude and appreciation for the timely and cogent message which you delivered to the world yesterday.

I should be very grateful if you would convey to His Excellency, the President, my profound respects and admiration for the unequivocal stand which he has taken in condemning this last brutal stroke of force.

Sincerely yours,

V. HURBAN

The Honorable Sumner Welles,
Under Secretary of State,
Washington, D. C.

Department of State

PR

BUREAU

DIVISION

ENCLOSURE

TO

Letter drafted

ADDRESSED TO

Miss LeHand

PSF: Czechoslovakia

ADDRESS OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS TO
THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON, D. C.



DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

In reply refer to
PR

March 7, 1939

My dear Miss LeHand:

There is transmitted herewith a book of photographs of the Czechoslovak Army which the Minister of Czechoslovakia requested me to forward to the President with his compliments.

I have addressed an appropriate letter of thanks to the Minister on behalf of the President.

Sincerely yours,

J. G. Sumner
Chief of Protocol.

Enclosure:
Book.

Miss Marguerite A. LeHand,
Private Secretary to the President,
The White House.

PSF: Czechoslovak

Benes, Edvard, Pres. Czechoslovak Republic,
1884-1948.

Memoirs; from Munich to new war and new
victory. Translated by Godfrey Lias. Boston
Houghton Mifflin, 1954.

(p. 68)

[3-29-

Dear Dr. Benes,

I have received your telegram of March 16th, 1939, regarding the tragic events of last week in Central Europe. I have followed these happenings with deep concern. While the Government of the United States has observed that the provinces of Bohemia and Moravia have been occupied by German military authorities and are now under the de facto administration of German authorities, it has not recognised the legal status of that situation. I need hardly add that I deeply sympathise with the Czechoslovak people in the unfortunate circumstances in which for the time being they find themselves.

Very sincerely yours,

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

PSF: Czechoslovakia

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

✓
yes

5-15-39

MEMORANDUM FOR G.G.T:

I don't know who "H.F.A."
is.

F.D.R.

Hamilton Fish Armstrong

① Please - Will
you ask please
who is

A. F. A.
1/2
1/2

may file

New York, April 20, 1939.

Dr. Benes will avoid doing anything embarrassing to the Government of the United States during his stay in this country. Specifically, he will not take any action which might precipitate events either in the former territory of the Czechoslovak Republic or generally in Europe. Nor will the three organizations of American citizens of Czech and Slovak descent which met in Chicago on April 18 to constitute a Czechoslovak National Council pursue any activities incompatible with their absolute loyalty to the United States. Their aim is solely to help keep alive the Czech and Slovak cultural inheritance and the spirit of Czechoslovak national unity and independence.

The present situation is that the Czechoslovak Republic is recognized as continuing to exist, but that the normal functioning of the Government is suspended. If war comes in Europe, the Czechoslovak Government will immediately begin again to function outside of the territory of the Republic, as was the case in the last war. During the intervening period, the existence of some national symbol will be important in the eyes of Czechs and Slovaks now under German rule. Dr. Benes believes that his person provides such a symbol, in conjunction with the Ministers of the Republic established in Washington (Colonel Hurban), London (Jan Masaryk), Paris (Stefan Osuský), Moscow (Dr. Fierlinger), and Warsaw (Dr. Slavik). These Legations, and all other Legations and Consulates which continue to function, recognize Dr. Benes as head of the movement to reestablish

national independence. He also is now in touch with leaders of the political parties in Prague and even with present Czech governmental circles. His plans are made in concert with them.

As soon as war begins in Europe, it is Dr. Benes's intention to constitute a government and organize a body of troops. He does not aim to hasten events which he thinks are inevitable, but is determined not to be behind them. He will of course act in agreement with the governments concerned. At present, there are about 100,000 Czechoslovak citizens in exile abroad. Of these, about 50,000 are in France, about 10,000 in Belgium, and several thousand each in England and Poland. The number in the United States is somewhat over one thousand. Many of these émigrés have had training in the Czechoslovak Army and a considerable number have served as staff officers and officers. The Czech Legion would at once take its place on whatever front seemed advisable, just as Czech and other national legions performed valuable service on the Western Front, in the Balkans, and in Siberia during the World War. Dr. Benes considers that the formation of this legion will have an important effect on the 10,000,000 Czechs and Slovaks under German domination, who thereby will feel themselves represented in the ranks of their foreign friends and who will be encouraged to rebel against their German masters. It also will have a useful influence on other Slavic peoples. Dr. Benes has not yet communicated all these details to Moscow, but Foreign Minister Litvinov has informed the Czechoslovak Minister in Moscow that Soviet Russia will strongly

support in any case the Czechoslovak action for independence, and the Czechoslovak Minister has in turn communicated this to the British and French Ambassadors in Moscow. Litvinov states that Soviet Russia's interest in the perpetuation of the Czechoslovak state is not ideological, but is based on the principle that the Czechoslovaks must be free as a nation and on obvious reasons of Russian defense.

Dr. Benes has not had the intention of appealing to any foreign government for financial assistance, although when the question of how to run the Legations and Consulates arose in London and Paris the idea that help might be forthcoming was accepted in governmental circles. The question is in negotiation. In general, Dr. Benes does not think it would be expedient for him to depend on the support of individuals, either in mapping his program or in maintaining the Czechoslovak Legations in the various capitals mentioned above. Most persons of Czech and Slovak descent in the United States and elsewhere are people of modest means, laborers, small shop-keepers, etc. - and the help they can give will soon be exhausted. The funds held abroad by the National Bank have been sequestered both in London and New York. Dr. Benes therefore thinks that perhaps the best solution would be to raise a small "Liberty Loan" through some reputable banking house. Needless to say, scrupulous regard would be paid to American legal and political principles. The bonds would, of course, be sold largely on a sentimental basis and with merely the personal guarantee of Dr. Benes and his colleagues that the principal

will be repaid when the Czechoslovak Government is again able to function in its own country. He thinks that \$200,000 will be sufficient to cover all expenses for a year and that it will not be impossible to find two hundred persons willing to buy a thousand-dollar bond apiece on the above terms. Of course, this is still merely a plan, and will be put into practice only if no serious difficulty arises.

All international engagements entered into by the Czechoslovak Republic continue in existence in the eyes of Dr. Benes and his colleagues (e.g., the alliance with France and the alliance with Russia, which never were denounced). The arrangements made by the four powers at Munich were imposed on Czechoslovakia and were never accepted by her legally and formally. They have been tolerated; they have not been constitutionally accepted. But even the Munich arrangements engage the signatories to guarantee the independence of Czechoslovakia. Dr. Benes considers this one of the fundamental proofs that the Republic continues its legal existence. However, since the Munich arrangements were entered into in Czechoslovakia's absence, and under pressure to avoid a European war, those arrangements and their consequences (e.g., the military annexation of Carpatho-Ruthenia and eastern Slovakia by Hungary) will have to be revised during or after the next war or in any negotiations which may be undertaken meanwhile to reach a general European settlement. These matters cannot be discussed in detail now and should remain open.

The above program is receiving the support of many German émigrés, both from the Reich and from the Sudetenland. Many of these (e.g., ex-Chancellor Wirth) are in touch with Dr. Benes. They have given him written and verbal assurances that in the event of the fall of Hitler or the defeat of Germany in war, the sovereignty and independence of Czechoslovakia will be immediately reestablished, the Munich settlement will be revised and a new status established by mutual agreement.

To recapitulate:

1. Czechoslovakia remains legally and technically independent, even though its Government is not now able to function normally.
 2. Upon the outbreak of war in Europe, a new Czechoslovak Government will at once commence functioning outside of the territory of the Republic. It will place troops on the fighting front, will conduct propaganda behind the front, and will work in every way possible to defeat Germany and recover its homeland.
 3. Even the Munich agreements guaranteed the independence of Czechoslovakia. But as they were entered into in her absence and were imposed on her by force they will have to be revised. Democratic German elements agree.
- Dr. Benes expresses the hope that his program as here outlined will be accepted as both realistic and just, and that in the event of war, a declaration of the Czechoslovak Government that it has again assumed active representation of the Czechoslovak people will receive

the approval and support of the United States Government. He understood from Mr. Litvinov's assurances to the Czechoslovak Minister in Moscow that such approval will be forthcoming from the Government of the Soviet Union, and he believes that political and military exigencies will encourage France and Great Britain to take the same attitude without delay. He points out that since American recognition has not been withdrawn from the Czechoslovak Government, no new recognition will be necessary, but merely an expression of approval and support.

Dr. Benes has complete confidence in Minister Hurban in Washington. But he felt that it would be better to make the above facts known to President Roosevelt through a private intermediary rather than officially. He has avoided visiting Washington himself in order not to cause any sort of embarrassment. But he will be glad to receive any advice that may be offered privately; and he of course is always at the President's disposal to supply any further information or to give personally any comment which may at a given moment seem useful.

A. J. A.

PSF: Czechoslovakia *See cover 3-44*

FOREIGN ECONOMIC ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON

*File
Personal*

June 7, 1944

Memorandum for Grace Tully:

Attached is a copy of the
Czechoslovak-Russian Treaty of Friendship that
the President might want to see.

I have marked the specific
provision on the last page which makes it appli-
cable to Poland if Russia and Czechoslovakia
consent.

Oscar Cox

June 7, 1944

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

- 1) Attached is a copy of the Czechoslovak-Russian Treaty of Friendship.
- 2) By its specific terms in the Protocol it is applicable to Poland with the mutual agreement of Czechoslovakia and the U.S.S.R.
- 3) It may possibly be, as suggested in a prior memorandum, that the Soviet Union will be willing to deal directly with the Poles for the purposes of extending the Czechoslovakia Treaty to the Poles if certain conditions as to the make-up of the Polish Government, etc., are met to the satisfaction of the Russians.

Attachment

CZECHOSLOVAK-RUSSIAN TREATY OF FRIENDSHIP

The Text of the Communique by the Czechoslovak
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, December 14, 1943

Of late negotiations have been undertaken by the Government of the Czechoslovak Republic and the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics for the conclusion of an agreement of friendship, mutual assistance and postwar co-operation. These negotiations progressed in an atmosphere of amity and mutual understanding and led to the signature on December 12, 1943, in Moscow, of a Treaty of Friendship, Mutual Assistance and Postwar Co-operation between the Czechoslovak Republic and the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics. The Treaty was signed at the Kremlin on behalf of the President of the Czechoslovak Republic by M. Zdenek Fierlinger, Czechoslovak Ambassador in the U.S.S.R. and on behalf of the Presidium of the U.S.S.R. by M. Viacheslav Mikhailovich Molotov, People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs.

THE TREATY

The President of the Czechoslovak Republic and the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, desiring to modify and supplement the Treaty of Mutual Assistance existing between the Czechoslovak Republic and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and signed at Prague on May 16th, 1935, and desiring also to confirm the stipulations of the agreement reached between the Government of the Czechoslovak Republic and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics relating to joint action in the war against Germany, and signed at London on July 18th, 1941:

desiring to collaborate after the war for the maintenance of peace and for the prevention of further aggression by Germany, and to secure a lasting friendship after the war, and mutual peace co-operation

have decided to conclude a treaty for that purpose and have appointed as their Plenipotentiaries:

The President of the Czechoslovak Republic,

M. Zdenok Fierlinger, Ambassador of the Czechoslovak Republic in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics;

The Presidium of the Supreme Council of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics;

M. Viacheslav Mikhailovich Molotov, People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, who, having exchanged their credentials, found in good and due form, have agreed as follows:

ARTICLE I

The High Contracting Parties, having mutually agreed to unite in a policy of lasting friendship and friendly postwar co-operation, as well as of mutual assistance, undertake to afford one another military and other assistance and support of all kinds in the present war against Germany and all those States which are associated with her in acts of aggression in Europe.

ARTICLE II

The High Contracting Parties undertake not to enter, during the present war, into any negotiations with the Hitlerite Government or any other Government in Germany that does not clearly renounce all aggressive intention, and not to negotiate or conclude, except by mutual consent, any armistice or peace treaty with Germany or any other State associated with her in acts of aggression in Europe.

ARTICLE III

Confirming their pre-war policy of peace and mutual assistance, formulated in their Treaty signed at Prague on May 16th, 1935, the High Contracting Parties undertake that, if one of them should, in the postwar period, become involved in hostilities with Germany, should the latter revive her policy of "Drang nach Osten," or with any of the States which may unite with her directly or in any

other form in such a war, the other Contracting Party will immediately afford the Contracting Party, thus involved in hostilities, all possible military and other support and assistance which are at their disposal.

ARTICLE IV

The High Contracting Parties, having regard to the interests of the security of each of them agree to co-operate in a close and friendly manner after the re-establishment of peace, as well as to act in accordance with the principles: of mutual respect for their independence and sovereignty, as well as of non-interference in the internal affairs of the other State. They agree to develop their economic relations upon the broadest possible scale and to afford each other all possible economic assistance after the war.

ARTICLE V

Each of the High Contracting Parties undertakes not to conclude any alliance and not to take part in any coalition directed against the other High Contracting Party.

ARTICLE VI

The present Treaty comes into force immediately upon its signature and is subject to ratification in the shortest possible time; the instruments of ratification shall be exchanged in Moscow as soon as possible.

The present Treaty shall remain in force for a period of twenty years from the time of its signature, it being understood that, unless at the end of the said period of twenty years, twelve months before its expiry, either Party has notified his desire to terminate the Treaty, it shall continue to remain in force for further periods of five years until either of the High Contracting Parties shall have notified in writing, twelve months before the lapse of the current period of five years, his intention to terminate it.

In witness whereof the Plenipotentiaries have signed the present Treaty and have affixed thereto their seals.

Done in Duplicate in Moscow on 12th December, 1943, in the Czechoslovak and Russian languages, both texts being equally authentic.

SIGNATURE PROTOCOL

The Parties have agreed that if any third country which borders on the Czechoslovak Republic or the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and has been the object of German aggression in this war, should desire to associate itself with this Treaty, it will be given an opportunity, after mutual agreement between the Governments of the Czechoslovak Republic and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, to sign this Treaty, which will thus acquire the character of a tripartite agreement.