

Halina Parafianowicz
Białystok

Wokół Monachium: raporty amerykańskich dyplomatów z jesieni 1938 roku

Od *Anschlusu* Austrii i włączenia jej w myśl dekretu z 13 marca 1938 roku do III Rzeszy, dalsze roszczenia skierował Adolf Hitler wobec Czechosłowacji. Wykorzystał w tym celu Konrada Henleina, założyciela i przywódcę Partii Niemców Sudeckich, domagającego się autonomii dla Niemców sudeckich. Prowokowane incydenty i wzrost napięć niemiecko-czechosłowackich doprowadziły w maju do tzw. kryzysu majowego. Przygotowywanie „statutu narodowościowego” nie zaspakajało już wzrastających żądań niemieckich, a próba brytyjskiej misji mediacyjnej lorda Waltera Runcimana (3 sierpnia 1938) zakończyła się niepowodzeniem. Następowała dalsza eskalacja żądań Hitlera. Podczas dorocznego kongresu NSDAP w Norymberdze 12 września 1938 roku otwarcie zażądał on przyłączenia terytorium Sudetów, zamieszkałego w przeważającej mierze przez ludność niemiecką (spośród blisko 3 milionów mieszkańców około 75% stanowili Niemcy). Spotkało się to z entuzjastycznym przyjęciem Niemców i zostało nagłośnione propagandowo nie tylko w kraju, ale i za granicami III Rzeszy.

Konsultacje brytyjsko-francuskie i spotkania brytyjskiego premiera Neville’a Chamberlaina z Adolfem Hitlerem (15 września w Berchtesgaden oraz 22 września w Bad Godesbergu), a także apele i próby mediacyjne prezydenta Franklina Delano Roosevelta (26 września) nie zażegnały narastającego kryzysu. Wzrost napięć w stosunkach międzynarodowych z powodu eskalacji niemieckich żądań i postępujące osamotnienie Czechosłowacji znalazło swoje apogeum w międzynarodowej konferencji w Monachium zwołanej z inicjatywy premiera włoskiego Benito Mussoliniego. W zainicjowanych przez niego rozmowach w stolicy Bawarii udział wzięli: premier Wielkiej Brytanii - Neville Chamberlain, premier Francji - Édouard Daladier, kanclerz III Rzeszy - Adolf Hitler. W rezultacie rozmów przedstawicieli czterech państw, pod presją żądań Hitlera, w nocy z 29 na 30 września 1938 roku podpisano układ przewidujący włączenie obszaru Sudetów do III Rzeszy, co miało na-

stąpić w dniach 1-10 października. W obliczu takiego „dyktatu” (jak potem nazywano „spisku” i „zdrady monachijskiej”) Czechosłowacja żądania przyjęła, tym bardziej, że musiała też zgodzić się na pewne roszczenia terytorialne Polski i Węgier.

W ten sposób Hitler nie tylko włączył obszar Sudetów do III Rzeszy (co miało ogromne znaczenie propagandowe), ale uzyskał ważny strategicznie i wysoko uprzemysłowiony region. Ponadto przekonał się, że państwa zachodnie nie były skore do obrony zagrożonej Czechosłowacji, ani nie stały na straży *status quo*. Przywódcy zachodni zaś uznali, że „uratowali pokój” i triumfalnie obwieścili to światu. Szczególnie znane są entuzjastyczne wypowiedzi na ten temat po powrocie do Londynu rzecznika zbliżenia z Niemcami i zwolennika ustępstw wobec III Rzeszy, Chamberlaina. Ale niedługo potem te złudzenia i nadzieje na zachowanie pokoju w Europie prysły, a polityka *appeasementu* okazała się zawodna i niebezpieczna. Określenie „duch Monachium” nierozzerwalnie będzie kojarzone z ustępstwami i kunktatorstwem politycznym

O kryzysie w stosunkach niemiecko-czechosłowackich w 1938 roku i konferencji w Monachium napisano wiele książek i jest to tematyka dobrze opracowana w światowej literaturze przedmiotu. Badacze z wielu krajów, zwłaszcza czescy i niemieccy, także francuscy, radzieccy i polscy, od lat podejmowali różne aspekty tego zagadnienia. Większość tych opracowań dotyczyła międzynarodowych uwarunkowań konfliktu i stosunku doń poszczególnych krajów, a więc Francji, Wielkiej Brytanii, ZSRR, USA, Polski, czy Włoch. Po ponad 65 latach od niechlubnej konferencji w Monachium powstają wciąż kolejne prace, których autorzy podejmują nowe próby interpretacyjne. Z najnowszych warto choćby wspomnieć o książkach czeskich badaczy, m.in. Jana Tesařa, Jana Filípka, Václava Kurala, także pracy Amerykanina Hugh'a Ragsdale'a (*The Soviets, the Munich, and the coming of World War II*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004). Polityka Franklina Delano Roosevelta w dobie Monachium była również tematem podejmowanym przez badaczy amerykańskich. Na uwagę zasługuje zwłaszcza książka Barbary Farnham (*Roosevelt and the Munich crisis: a study of political decision making*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1997).

Obrady konferencji oraz decyzje, które zapadły w Monachium, a także ich następstwa są również dobrze udokumentowane w rozmaitych edycjach źródłowych. Począwszy od 1938 roku ukazało się wiele wydawnictw dokumentów, zarówno czechosłowackich, jak i zagranicznych, zwłaszcza niemieckich, francuskich, brytyjskich, polskich i radzieckich.

W niniejszym wyborze dokumentów sięgnęłam do innego rodzaju źródeł, a więc raportów z jesieni 1938 roku amerykańskich dyplomatów z europejskich placówek. Są one w gruncie rzeczy nieznane, bowiem tego rodzaju źródła archiwalne są z rzadka wykorzystywane przez historyków dyplomacji, bazujących głównie na publikowanych *Foreign Relations of the United States*.

Raporty te pochodzą z niezwykle cennej i interesującej kolekcji sekretarza stanu Cordella Hulla (*Cordell Hull Papers*) znajdującej się w *Roosevelt Study Center* w Middelburgu¹. Znacząca część tego bogatego zespołu (118 rolek mikrofilmów) obejmuje korespondencję amerykańskich przedstawicieli dyplomatycznych z sekretarzem stanu Hullem. Kilka mikrofilmów chronologicznie obejmują lata 1937-1939, a w nich jest sporo interesującego materiału i komentarzy na temat ówczesnej sytuacji w Europie, wzrostu napięć pomiędzy III Rzeszą i Austrią, a potem Czechosłowacją.

Amerykańscy ambasadorowie i posłowie z europejskich placówek dyplomatycznych w raportach do sekretarza stanu, także czasem do samego prezydenta, sporo pisali o nabrzmiałym konflikcie niemiecko-czechosłowackim na tle Sudetów. Interesujące są ich komentarze i opinie na temat sytuacji międzynarodowej, układu sił w Europie Środkowej i polityki Hitlera. Nadsyłało je z wielu amerykańskich placówek dyplomatycznych z europejskich stolic, stąd ich zawartość oraz opinie i komentarze były zróżnicowane, a czasem niejako dopełniały się. Ich zestawienie i porównanie jest bardzo ciekawe i przydatne do badań. Warto pamiętać, że dyplomaci byli zazwyczaj bystrzymi obserwatorami wydarzeń i wykazywali się nierzadko dużą wiedzą na temat poruszanej tematyki. Ich spostrzeżenia i uwagi, choć subiektywne, były ważne, użyteczne i zazwyczaj uważnie studiowane przez pracowników w Departamencie Stanu. Warto zatem przybliżyć te raporty i zobaczyć, jaką wiedzę na ten temat mieli amerykańscy dyplomaci jesienią 1938 roku, co akcentowali w swoich doniesieniach do Waszyngtonu, czy widzieli wówczas realne zagrożenie wojenne etc.? Raporty te pokazują klimat ówczesnych spotkań i rozmów europejskich dygnitarzy, ich opinie na temat zagrożenia, panujące nastroje, reakcję mediów i wiele innych zjawisk. Obrazują też w jakiejś mierze spojrzenie amerykańskich kręgów dyplomatycznych na nabrzmiały konflikt w Europie Środkowej i pozwalają lepiej zrozumieć postawy amerykańskich czynników oficjalnych i ich politykę wobec tego regionu i w ogóle

¹ Chciałabym w tym miejscu bardzo serdecznie podziękować dyrektorowi *Roosevelt Study Center*, dr Cornelisowi van Minnenowi i wszystkim pracownikom za życzliwe zainteresowanie i profesjonalną pomoc w trakcie mego pobytu w Middelburgu.

wobec Starego Świata. Raporty te wpływały w dużej mierze na wyobrażenia o sytuacji w Europie zarówno szefa Departamentu Stanu, jak i specjalistów od spraw środkowoeuropejskich. Miały też niemały wpływ na stosunek Roosevelta do narastającego konfliktu w sprawie Niemców sudeckich oraz na amerykańską politykę wobec Europy Środkowej.

Z ogromnej i bardzo ciekawej kolekcji źródłowej Cordella Hulla pozwoliłam sobie wybrać niektóre raporty dyplomatów z kilku placówek europejskich. Z powodu objętości musiałam się ograniczyć do rygorystycznej ich selekcji. Celowo ominęłam tu raporty ambasadorów: Williama Bullitta (z Francji), Josepha Kennedy'ego (z Wielkiej Brytanii), czy posła Wilbura Carra (z Czechosłowacji), które są bardziej znane. Wybrałam raporty ambasadora we Włoszech, a wcześniej także podsekretarza stanu, od lat zaprzyjaźnionego z prezydentem - Williama Phillipsa (z 2 września, 30 września i 1 października 1938), również ambasadora z Belgii, a wcześniej w ZSRR - Josepha Daviesa (8 września 1938) oraz ambasadora w Niemczech, wpływowego i doświadczonego dyplomaty - Hugh'a Wilsona (1 października, 11 października 1938). Zamieściłam także nieznane i interesujące raporty ambasadora z Hiszpanii - Claude Bowersa (3 października, 10 października 1938) oraz posła w Bułgarii - Ray'a Athertona (z 13 października 1938).



Rome, September 2, 1938

Dear Mr. Secretary,

While today the storm over Czechoslovakia seems to be abating, the last two days have been somewhat disconcerting and it was for this reason that I thought it best not to keep to my program of sailing on the REX yesterday. I hope and expect, however, to be off on the fifteenth and to find you in Washington on or about the twenty-third or twenty-fourth.

Just as we were all assuming that the anti-Jewish campaign here was being soft-pedalled, came the sudden publication yesterday afternoon of a ruthless decree affecting all Jewish foreigners in Italy, and foreigners are to include all those who have settled here since 1919. There are many loop-holes and uncertainties in the decree, and an hour after its publication I asked for an interview with Count Ciano. This, however, I have

The Honorable

Cordell Hull,

Secretary of State,

Washington, D.C.

- 2 -

have not yet been granted, and today comes the reply that he is "out of town". It is easy to guess that he may not want to see me until the decree is clarified, and his excuse of being "out of town" is not so good, inasmuch as there is a meeting of the Council of Ministers this morning.

A few days ago I was talking to a friend in the Vatican who presumably represented the attitude of the Vatican correctly when he expressed the conviction that the anti-Jewish movement here was quieting down, probably in view of the Pope's outspoken condemnation and the unfavorable reaction which it had received not only abroad but in Italian circles. It is difficult, therefore, to account for this sudden recrudescence of "racialism", but I am coming to realize that one cannot look for good sense or wisdom in Italian foreign affairs and, after all, an anti-Jewish campaign touches foreign affairs closely. While the Duce is dreadfully sensitive about being accused of accepting dictation from Hitler, everything that he has been doing of late gives the impression of playing second fiddle to the Fuehrer, and it is indeed a sad picture to contemplate.

As you know, there is no French Ambassador to the
Quirinale,

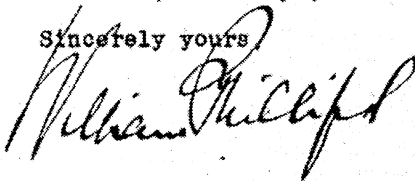
- 3 -

Quirinale in Rome, but I am in close touch with the French Ambassador to the Vatican, who, needless to say, is terribly alarmed even today about Czechoslovak developments. Without doubt he foresees a European war, but the French are always pessimistically inclined.

Leo Pasvolsky has been spending several days in Rome and has had a number of contacts with the higher-ups in financial and commercial circles, all of which has been, I am sure, most helpful. I have had many good talks with him myself and have been particularly glad of his visit. He seems very hopeful of a successful outcome to the British-American trade agreement negotiations and even that they may be concluded before elections. This is the best of news, for I am more than ever convinced that their successful conclusion will be a powerful influence for good in the rest of the world. As you so well know, a commercial accord between the U.S.A. and Britain will be accepted throughout Europe as something far beyond an agreement to facilitate a mutual exchange of commodities. If only it could have been already signed and sealed!

With kindest remembrances, as always,

Sincerely yours



ack
CH
29/10/58
file

Brussels, September 8, 1938

PERSONAL

My dear Cordell:

This is just a line to tell you what pride I take in the magnificent contribution you are making to world peace.

It is only a few days ago that I was up near Namur and Liège, inspecting the military manoeuvres of the Belgian Army. It interested me to find, in talking with the peasantry of the countryside, how eagerly these country people had followed and what hope they found in your public speeches and official actions in attempting to establish a rule of law, justice and equity among the nations and peoples of the earth. The world is small, and in the most unexpected places over here one finds response to and hope in the theme of liberty, law and international decency, which characterize public addresses and pronouncements which you have made.

One of the troubles in European public opinion is that no one has been "selling" democracy, whereas the

Communists . . .

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

- 2 -

Communists and Fascists are everlastingly pounding away with their propaganda. Over here there are some indications that they are getting away with it, as too many people seem to think that the only alternative is either Communism or Fascism. Of course that isn't true. One of the most heartening things in the international situation is the constant and valiant and exceptionally able and clear manner in which you have been maintaining the principles of justice, law, order and decency, without which society will become anarchy. This constant hammering away upon the necessity of international morality and rule of law in order to preserve society itself, which so nobly characterizes your public utterances, is making and has made a deep impression, and gives hope to liberty-loving people everywhere.

The situation from this angle is about the following. Hitler is today dominating Europe, and I mean, dominating. He is holding out the bait to Great Britain that the Germanic empire which he proposes with its domination of Europe, will not challenge Britain's world empire on the sea, and that the two "cultural" Empires can preserve peace for Europe and the world.

There . . .

- 3 -

There are many responsible people here who believe that "Britain would not march" if Czechoslovakia were invaded, at least until such time as it would be too late and that Germany might be able to accomplish another Austrian putsch, being able to hold off France and Russia in the interim. There are many also who believe that if that were effected and Czechoslovakia liquidated or subordinated into a vassal state, England and France would, rather than fight, agree to a program of guaranteed peace under the then status quo, which would be accompanied by an agreement of limitation of armaments. The next ten days will tell whether Hitler will assume that risk. In a long war, of course, he would be annihilated. There are many Germans and others in Europe who think that Britain would under such conditions welcome peace as against the prospect of a long war, quite as much as she seeks peace now, - this despite the unreliability of Hitler's promises as illustrated by innumerable instances, the last of which was in May 1936 when he guaranteed Austrian autonomy.

I often think in this connection of your statements to me with reference to the manner in which the

Tennessee . . .

- 4 -

Tennessee pioneers, with the strength and vigor of pioneer common sense, put a disturber of the peace in jail if necessary for the common good. In other words, they imposed a rule of law for the protection of society as against a rule of force. When strong men do that, animated by a sense of justice and decency, the transgressor does not go berserk but obeys the law, and society is preserved.

In a nutshell, the situation seems to be about this.

The Government and the Military Staff of France are undoubtedly determined to go to aid Czechoslovakia. Internal conditions in France, however, are bad, both financially and on the labor front. What France could do to aid Czechoslovakia in the face of the German Maginot Line is problematical and gravely doubtful.

The English Government seems gradually coming to the belief that it will definitely have to let Germany know where it stands, and in a forceful manner and in a language which the German Government will understand. But there are evidences still of hesitancy and temporization.

Russia . . .

- 5 -

Russia definitely will fight and, in my opinion, it will do so aggressively and in a manner which will make its influence felt.

Mussolini does not like Hitler and does not trust him and, while openly friendly to Germany, would keep hands off and ultimately join the stronger side.

The Spanish conflict seems to be as far removed from settlement as it was six months ago.

The German mobilization proceeds apace on land and sea. Whether it is a bluff or for business, no one knows. Germany is nevertheless on a war basis and would have a ten days advantage in case of the outbreak of hostilities, although France mobilizes very quickly and is now openly taking some steps.

As I see it from this angle, there are only two possibilities for the establishment of a permanent peace for any length of time:

I) Complete domination by Hitler of Europe, with Czechoslovakia either wiped out or revamped as a vassal state, which would give Germany domination over the Rumanian oil fields and the Danubian Basin, and a possibility for the desired complete economic self-sufficiency

from . . .

- 6 -

from Berlin to Bagdad. Such a situation would be undoubtedly fortified by a German proffer of a Western Locarno Pact guaranteeing peace on the basis of the status quo, together with an agreement for the limitation of armaments. The fly in that ointment is the question as to how reliable are Germany's promises for the future, in view of the past. It would probably, however, ease the situation for a considerable time, although it might involve a conflict between Russia and Germany in the interim. It would probably involve the domination of German Weltanschauung and Volkstum, certainly in Europe, with possible world-wide repercussions, especially in South America and the East. It would continue the economic policy of nationalistic self-sufficiency to the ⁿth degree.

II) Germany, France and Russia could impose peace by a firm and united front. If this were accompanied by a policy of justice and decency, and by a fair and reasonable treatment of the German people in affording to them access to raw materials through the implementation of the principles of your splendid policy, it would assure peace at least for a generation.

Another . . .

- 7 -

Another situation, which contains much realistic probability, is that Hitler will finally accede to a settlement of the Czechoslovakian situation on the basis of the last and Fourth Proposal. This will reserve to the Czechoslovakian Government control over its foreign policy, its army and its finance. It will assuage the ostensible demands of the Sudetens to a large degree. It will not settle the problem, however.

The realistic fact in the situation is that what Hitler must have to complete his program, as announced in "Mein Kampf" and in the Nuremberg and other speeches, is the control of the Bohemian Mountains and/or the destruction of the Soviet and French defensive political treaties with Czechoslovakia.

These two facts are the wall which prevents the onward march of his program. The "Drang nach Osten" and the domination of the Danubian and Balkan States is "out," unless he commands Rumanian oil and the agricultural wealth of the South for his military adventures to achieve that self-sufficiency which he proclaims, in the absence of "colonies," the German people must have. To continue to ride the Tiger, he must go forward - or face trouble at home.

Any . . .

- 8 -

Any settlement of the Czechoslovakian problem on the present basis is generally believed here, will result only in a postponement of the issue - and European peace will continue to be threatened.

There is no confidence among substantial opinion here that Hitler will be willing to settle down to compose and consolidate his internal economy on such a basis. There is no "Will To Peace," through orderly processes of reason and peaceful economic solution.

Some time ago I sent you Norman Angell's book on "Peace with the Dictators," which is an unusually fair presentation of the German and Italian point of view.

I have also ordered another book which is a compilation of the most recent utterances of the present-day German leaders and political philosophers, setting forth in the clearest possible way the purposes that would seem to dominate their theory of political action and explain their horrible attitude toward the Catholics, toward the Lutherans, and, in fact, toward the Christian faith, as well as their horrible persecution of a race of people who through no fault of their own happen to have been born of Jewish blood. I think if you will scan it through, . . .

- 9 -

through, it will give you a splendid insight into what is really dominating German thought.

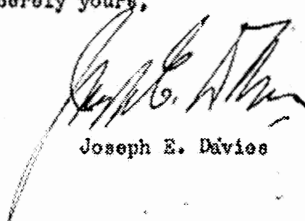
This is rather a long letter but may be of some value to you.

Life here in Belgium is most agreeable and we are going to be very happy here. I hope I can be able to send you from time to time information that may be of value. I shall always be very glad that I had the opportunity to have had the stimulating and intellectual experience which I had in Russia.

I hope that you are keeping fit and well.

With kindest personal regards, I am,

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Joseph E. Davies', is written over the typed name. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Joseph E. Davies

Wm Phillips



EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Rome, September 30, 1938.

Dear Mr. Secretary:

This morning brings indescribable relief with the news that last night the four statesmen meeting at Munich had found ways and means to avoid the catastrophe. It is hard to believe that Europe was within two or three hours of the abyss, but such was the fact, and it proves, if anyone is still in doubt, the dangers involved to all concerned in this form of government. On the other hand, it also proves the speed with which problems can be settled by this personal form of government.

I do not know why I am bothering you this morning with a letter unless it may be that my thoughts are already homeward bound and I expect to be able to sail in the near future. We have passed through two inconceivable days - so terrible, in fact, that something constructive must result. Ciano himself
has

The Honorable
Cordell Hull,
Secretary of State,
Washington.

- 2 -

has expressed this thought to me.

There is no doubt that the Duce played a very strong hand at the critical moment and I believe we should be profoundly grateful to him. That he might have been more active in the cause of peace before the crisis developed goes without saying, but that his influence with Hitler was sufficiently powerful to restrain the latter at the critical moment must be recognized. It is for this reason that I have suggested some message from the President to Mussolini and I am hoping for a favorable reply. At any rate, I shall go to the station to meet him on his return from Munich this evening and express to him my profound gratitude. I shall also take occasion to call upon Count Ciano tomorrow and to say all that I feel very deeply.

My telegrams of the 28th following my calls upon Mussolini and the British Ambassador recite the events of the day sufficiently so that I need not repeat them here. There is one point which still puzzles us all and that is why the Duce failed to respond to the British Government's appeal made through Halifax and the Italian Ambassador in London and waited until Perth's call at the Foreign Office conveying the same appeal two days later. Thus forty-eight precious
hours

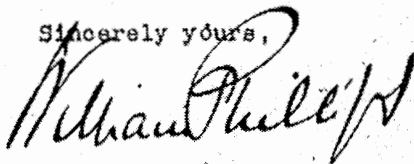
- 3 -

hours were permitted to elapse without any motion from this end. There are only two explanations which we can think of as yet - either the Duce was sulking because he had not been shown any consideration whatsoever during the Chamberlain-Hitler conversations and exchanges or more probably because neither he nor Ciano fully grasped the fact that the French and British armies were ready for war. And so it may well be that Perth himself prevented the catastrophe by impressing upon Ciano at the last moment the fact that Great Britain was prepared to act.

However that may be, now that the tragedy has been avoided, let us hope that the Europe of yesterday is today facing a new Europe and will realize, if not before, the necessity of taking such steps as will prevent a recurrence of such tragic possibilities.

With warmest personal regards, I am

Sincerely yours,





THE FOREIGN SERVICE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Hugh R. Wilson
file

AMERICAN EMBASSY

Berlin, October 1, 1938.

acc

Dear Mr. Secretary:

The press this morning of France, England and Germany is full of declarations to the effect that Europe is at the turning point and that now we can look forward to a better existence on this continent. Why do they feel so? If we are to hunt for an answer we have to examine some history and make use of some prophecy. By the summer of 1936 it had been demonstrated clearly that the ideas which had governed Europe since the Armistice and the Treaty of Versailles had failed lamentably. The Ethiopian experience had proved the vulnerability of "collective security" as applied to a great power. It had proved that sanctions to be effective had to be essentially acts of war, and it had further proved that the peoples, certainly of democratic nations, would not fight for an altruistic ideal alone, but only if their immediate and vital interests, as well as their idealistic conceptions, were assaulted.

In

The Honorable
Cordell Hull,
Secretary of State,
Washington.

-2-

In the meantime a further and frightening phenomenon was taking place. The great gap in Europe caused by the lack of a German Army and German defensive forces was rapidly being filled, and as this fact became daily more evident, so it became increasingly necessary to take stock of the situation anew and to see how far the framework which had sufficed for the past eighteen years was applicable to a Europe in which the German people were again armed.

Among League members two schools of philosophy argued clamorously. The one desired reinforcement of the League sanctions, believing that by the strictness of the obligation, automatic and vigorous action on the part of the members could be enforced. The other insisted that all mention of sanctions should be eradicated from the Covenant, inasmuch as the very attempt to apply them caused grave danger to small states.

It was in this situation that occurred one of the pivotal episodes of European history in the past years. The King of the Belgians declared that he severed all special engagements and held his country in a fully armed independent position.

Without going into the military situation, suffice it to say that this declaration and this attitude on the part of Belgium brought about a condition where an attack by Germany on France or by France on Germany was almost

certain

certain to fail. In other words, the wall was closed in the West and it was closed to the great satisfaction of Germany and to the considerable irritation of France. Satisfaction for Germany was because Hitler had repeatedly declared that he had no designs or ambitions in the West; at the same time he did not particularly hide the fact that he was unsatisfied with the condition on the Eastern frontiers of Germany. Dissatisfaction in France because the instant Germany became invulnerable against French attack the military alliances and the scaffolding of mutual assistance, pacts on which France had labored since the Treaty of Versailles, became worthless.

The Maginot Line had been built, the Siegfried Line was in construction, the declaration of Belgium's independent action was the final padlock put on the gate in Western Europe.

Two major deductions could be made from this action.

1. If the Western Powers used a minimum of intelligence, were not actuated by ideological and crusading dogma, or by the conception of power politics and preventive war, then there was real hope that for the Western Powers a long period of peace could be foreseen.
2. Equally evident was the deduction that Germany in some form or other was going to dominate the

Danube

-4-

Danube Valley, and indeed most of Eastern Europe as far as Russia. This domination might be economic, it might be political, more probably it would be a mixture of both, but certainly Germany's influence in the east with the closing of the western frontier would meet no counter-weight adequate to check it.

In the course of the progress of this domination several factors of agitation, discord and even threat of war were visible. The two major ones were

(a) Austria.

(b) Czechoslovakia.

Both have now been liquidated. Whether we like the solution or not both problems as a threat to world peace have ceased to exist.

If Germany continues its efforts, and I believe it will, toward the East, then there seem to be no problems in that quarter for a considerable period that cannot be settled by peaceful means. The line of delimitation on the Vistula frontier, the passage of the Corridor, perhaps even readjustment of Upper Silesia, are all capable of negotiated solutions. Indeed most of the objectives with which Hitler is credited are thus capable of solution until he reaches the problematic and questionable objective of the
Ukraine

Ukraine.

Mr. Chamberlain, I am sure, has been animated by some such conception. Some such picture of the future must have led him to the desperate efforts which he has made to preserve the peace in this particular episode and to speak as hopefully of the future as he was able to do in stepping out of his airplane yesterday at London. The road has been bumpy and full of danger but he believes, and I share his belief, that a better highway is in front of us.

One further factor I must mention. As early as 1934, if I remember accurately, Mussolini first proposed his "Four Power Pact". The political conception was based on the fact that Germany had left the League and thus the Council no longer dealt with the realities of Europe. Further, he considered that the U.S.S.R. was playing a role in Western Europe unjustified by its interests and dangerous in its doctrine of "indivisible peace" and "indivisible war". As the years have passed it has been increasingly evident that aside from such an improbability as permanent cooperation between Great Britain and Germany only the "Four Power Pact" could have any hope of keeping peace in Western Europe and

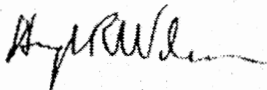
of

- 6 -

of avoiding a definite alignment into "ideological" blocks with automatic and warlike obligations. Now the danger of war has called such a machine into being, it sprang normally and naturally into existence. Indeed, it may be said that one of the impulses towards its formation was the President's second telegram to the Chancellor. Having been tried successfully once, it is as sure as anything in the future can be, that the machine will be called again to deal with coming problems, and it may well develop into the normal governing body for Western Europe.

A consultative pact of the four Great Powers as an agency for the maintenance of peace does not measure up to the ideal which brought the League of Nations into existence and the smaller countries of Europe will doubtless be apprehensive of the effect of such a concert of power on their ambitions and freedom of action. In the present state of the political development of Europe, however, the consultative organization of the four Powers alone seems to offer a guarantee of peace and stability.

Respectfully yours,



[William Phillips]

Rome, October 1, 1938.

Dear Mr. President:

I have this morning received your message through the State Department and I accept your reprimand as fully deserved. It is only too true that I should not have left Rome, even though there were no indications here during that week-end that a serious crisis was imminent. In fact, the feeling of relief in Italy resulting from the acceptance by the Czechoslovak Government of the Sudeten proposals was so general that I had even hoped that the opportunity for home leave had at last arrived.

The Italian Government very clearly had been playing down the approaching crisis, and the series of speeches which Mussolini had been making in northern Italy were much in his usual vein, except
for

The President,

The White House,

Washington.

- 2 -

for his statement that in the event of a general war "Italy had chosen her position." Precisely what that meant, no one knew, and certainly there did not appear to be any noticeable increase in nervousness on the part of the Italians until Tuesday afternoon, although there had been a noticeable increase of regret that Italy now was lined up more definitely with the Germans. Moreover, there was no outward sign of military measures on the part of the Italians, and as late as September 28 we were officially informed at the Ministry of Marine that they had taken no unusual precautions and still thought that any conflict would be localized.

Having received very little information from our other missions and almost none from London, Paris or Prague, I telegraphed on September 17 to Kennedy and Bullitt asking that this mission be kept better informed of developments as viewed by them, receiving in reply only one brief message from Bullitt and from London only a word to say that copies of certain cipher messages to the Department would be sent by courier. These despatches were two weeks on their way and reached me only today, and are only now being deciphered.

I had seriously thought of running up to Paris to find out the real situation and if conditions had proved favorable

- 3 -

favorable, to sail for home, but I abandoned that idea.

I mention these facts not as an excuse but only to show you the atmosphere in which I had been working. It was not until Chamberlain's speech on Tuesday evening, the 27th, that the full gravity of the situation was revealed and on the following morning I returned to Rome, having been advised by telephone just before leaving Florence of the receipt of your message to Mussolini.

During the three days in Florence, where I went to see Caroline who had not returned to Rome from her summer in northern Italy, I was in constant telephonic communication with the Embassy and at a distance of only a few hours from Rome, and until Tuesday had no reason to be more uneasy than I had been since early September.

However that may be, I realize now only too well that I should never have left Rome, and to have caused you this serious annoyance is causing me acute suffering.

I need not go into the details of the delivery of your message to Mussolini for they have been reported by cable. At 9:45 a.m. of the 28th, Mr. Reed, Counselor of Embassy, in asking the Foreign Office for my appointment, had at the same time unmistakably intimated the purport of the message, and that morning Ciano informed

me

- 4 -

me that he had of course been aware of the message at the time the appointment with the Duce had been requested.

In arranging for my reception, therefore, at which Ciano himself was to be present, we may presume, I feel certain, that Mussolini had also been informed.

There is nothing to add except once more to express my profound sorrow that I have failed you in this instant. It may well be that as a result you have lost confidence in me and, if so, do not hesitate to tell me and my resignation will follow immediately.

Ever sincerely yours,



EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

San Juan de Luz, October 3, 1938

Dear Mr. Secretary:-

Just a word of congratulations on the effort made by the Department and the President to persuade Hitler to reason. I have a feeling that the attitude of Washington had more to do with the last conference at Munich than anything else, and while I am sure that in the end Chamberlain gave Hitler the victory he actually sought, that is not our fault. We have a new Holy Alliance to put down liberal and democratic governments in Europe --outside England and France. Democracy has received a severe blow and Fascism is in the ascendant over here as a result. France is more isolated now than at any times since the close of the last war. No ally has or can have any faith in her. And the rape of the Czechs is the most shameless thing that has happened since the partition of Poland. I believe at that time that Charles James Fox referred to it ironically as "the Peace of Warsaw" and that phrase has come to have a definite meaning. Now we have "the Peace of Munich" to match it.

I think you may be interested in some observations in a despatch, No. 1587 which goes in today's pouch.

With regards and best wishes,

Sincerely,

Charles E. Bower

(Attached)

2.

then I am afraid that the peace that alone can come through your policies is much postponed. I know of no greater tragedy.

Chamberlain has reversed the British policy of 250 years on which the greatness of the Empire rests, and he has brought to England the darkest hour it has known since Austerlitz. In the attitude and speeches of Lord Cecil, Churchill, Eden, Duff Cooper, etc., I hear the old British spirit with which we Americans can associate ourselves, and I know it to be the real voice of England.

In view of what I have consistently written about Chamberlain you may be sure I was not surprised by his conduct. If not a Fascist, he is most decidedly pro-Fascist, and he speaks for the little group that is all Fascist at heart. I remember writing you in September 1936, more than two years ago, predicting the Czech tragedy and predicating that prediction on my conversations with Franco Spaniards who startled me by the vehemence of their abuse of the Czechs.

We certainly are living in a dark hour. For twenty years I have heard nothing but the highest praise of Benes and his great predecessor from all Americans and British with whom I have talked. Since Hitler began his filthy abuse of Benes I have been unspeakably disgusted to note

what

3.

what a large per cent of expatriated Americans about here tell me that Benes is a vicious character. I am glad that two American Universities have invited him to America.

I hope that Mr. Dies will awaken to the fact that the most arrogant, insolent foreign propaganda at work on us at home comes from the Fascist Powers. I do hope that we pass an act ending the propaganda and the organizations at home that are subsidized and directed by the Hitlers against American institutions. I have come to the conclusion that under existing conditions there must be a modification of the "freedom of the press" such as we have in times of war - for we are at war. If the Hitlers, Mussolinis and Stalins are to make a defence of democracy a crime in the countries over which they tyrannize, and the Democracies permit these very men to carry on abusive propaganda against democracies in their countries, the ultimate result inevitably will be the loss of liberty everywhere.

It remains to be seen what the effect of the Betrayal of Munich will be on Spain. The "settlement" through the action of the new Holy Alliance or Four Powers would be another Czech outrage. At this moment it seems that Chamberlain is still standing for the expulsion of all foreigners from Franco Spain. The reaction to the Czech outrage, coming after the first emotional reaction, should be warning to him.

But

4.

But - I am writing you personally and confidentially - I have no faith whatever in the integrity of Chamberlain. In looking over my diary the other day I found numerous cases where he deliberately lied to the Commons about Spain and on his responsibility as a Minister of the Crown - something rare in the parliamentary history of England. So I am looking for a trick and a "job". The French are in a pitiful situation now and I find the French about here conceding it. They have no leader that rises to the level of respectable mediocrity. Daladier, that Pillow of Democracy - stuffed with feathers - is apt to do anything to please Chamberlain and Mussolini.

I hope that whatever others may do, we continue to follow the line of legality, custom, and decency in Spain. There must be some Power, as old-fashioned as honesty, standing serene and unmoved by the new madness. We have been criticised by both sides at times for this or that where we were right, but both sides now have greater respect for us than for any other country in the world. I know that to be true. We don't need to cringe. Last night over the British broadcast I heard Hitler's mad-dog attack on England even now, more bitter and nastier than ever, more offensive and indecent, in which he dared to threaten England should Chamberlain fall and be displaced by some one like Cecil, Churchill

or

5.

or Eden. Well, why not? Didn't Hitler dictate to Austria what Ministers she should appoint - his men? Didn't Mussolini dictate to England the removal of Eden and get away with it? Why should not Hitler dictate to England who shall be Prime Minister? Surely the time has come to call a halt.

I merely started out to say that more than ever your policy stands out as the one and only sane policy making for real peace in the world, and, if we stand four-square, a disgusted world is more than ever apt to turn to it in the end.

Sincerely yours,

Claude G. Bowers

American Ambassador

HUGH WILSON

Berlin, October 11, 1938.

*Chick. C. H.
11/4/38*

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We have used the expression "Europe is at the Cross-roads" so many times that the phrase has become hackneyed. Nevertheless it seems to be the phrase that fits the present situation.

During almost six years, the period in which the National Socialist Party has been in power, the incessant objectives of Germany's foreign policy have been (a) the destruction of the servitudes, prohibitions and obligations of the Treaty of Versailles, and (b) the joining to Germany of portions of the German race outside of and adjoining the boundaries of Germany. Both points were part of the original platform of the N.S.D. A.P. and both points have been insistently and clamorously demanded.

The

The Honorable

Cordell Hull,

Secretary of State,

Washington, D. C.

The alarms and excursions of the past recent years have been due to the progressive realization of these policies. The methods of attainment of the objectives have been sudden, brutal and dangerous. They have been methods that have shocked the world, kept it in a state of apprehension, and led to the wide-spread belief that no pledges and undertakings of this government are to be relied upon. With the objectives sought, however, there has been always a certain measure of understanding and sympathy abroad. The abolition of reparations, the military occupation of the Rhineland, the rebuilding of German armed forces have all seemed to fair-minded people, things which would not be withheld justly from an independent and vigorous people. Even in respect of the Anschluss of Austria and the cession of the Sudeten area justification was offered on a sympathetic and democratic conception of self-determination of peoples and the inborn desire of peoples of the same blood and tongue to belong to the same political unit. In the last two cases, people abroad remembered the fact that Article XIX, the revision article of the Covenant of the League, had never
been

-3-

been invoked, and could not have been invoked with hope of success because of the single veto power of any member of the Council. They remembered that the "legal" attempt to create a customs union between Germany and Austria met with defeat through the "legal" means of the Court of International Justice which based its decision on the Treaty of Versailles. It may be remembered here that the bitterest dissenting opinion came from the American member, Mr. Kellogg. So that up to this point, there has been a measure of understanding and sympathy in the world for Germany's objectives, and, to a lesser degree, for the methods used since all "legal" remedy seemed out of the question. When the historical eye of perspective is turned on this situation it will probably be realized that Hitler himself is only an instrument for carrying out the inevitable revolt of a dynamic and powerful people against humiliating conditions imposed in an hour of defeat. It will probably be recognized that such a revolt in one form or another was inevitable under the conditions.

Now arises a different situation. On the continent, at least, all traces of the "injustices" of the Treaty

of

of Versailles have been eliminated with the exception of minor, and I believe, negotiable points in respect to Poland. Hitler has declared both publicly and privately, and most emphatically, that he has no points of conflict with the west and that, with the settlement of the Sudeten matter, Germany will be a satisfied power at least as far as the continent is concerned. He has given repeated assurances as well with respect to Switzerland. Will he hold to these declarations and will he be a "satisfied power"?

Since the birth of the Nationalist Socialist Party, the doctrine of hatred has been preached. No campaign has been undertaken, either external or internal, which was not founded upon hatred of some party, some country, or some statesman. Hatred is so engraved in their doctrine that it is difficult to conceive of the adoption of a policy not predicated upon hate. Can Germany drop the doctrine of hate, or can it maintain the doctrine and still be a "satisfied power"?

If Hitler launches a further adventure beyond the scope of rectification of "injustices"; if by his subsequent acts he proves that his assurances were made only to gain immediate objectives, and were veils only

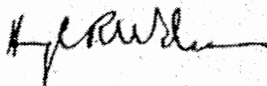
of

-5-

of his wider intentions, then he will prove himself beyond question a menace to international society.

Such are the questions which now arise and on the answer depends our future. We may have before us a long period of better relationships than we have had since the War. If Hitler goes wild, however, we may be faced with possibilities even more sombre than we have recently conceived.

Respectfully yours,



Sofia, October 13, 1938.

Dear Mr. President:

In my telegram to the Secretary of State on September 28th I reported a conversation with the Prime Minister, in which he referred to the arguments used by King Boris in his talk with Hitler in Berlin on Sunday, September 25th, urging that a German-Czech settlement be negotiated without resource to force.

I was received by the King yesterday, who in discussing the crisis, outlined at some length various of his views. Because of his remarks as to the timing and impressions created by your first message to Hitler, I venture to transmit them as of special interest.

The King began by saying he had had to do with dictators all his life; in fact he had

been

The President,

The White House,

Washington

-2-

been first included in audiences granted by his father, whom he now envisages as a dictator. In the course of his own reign he had to deal with Stamboulisky and Tzankoff, both dictators of contrasting types. He remembered Mussolini when he was an ardent Socialist, dreaming reforms for his country, and likewise he had known Hitler for some years. At the outset these dictators were doubtless sincere in their vision of the welfare of their country and their people, and impressed this not only on their immediate entourage but a great part of their nation as well. However, as responsibilities developed, no dictator could rely on the disinterestedness or self-abnegation of his advisors, who often unconsciously began pressing their own viewpoints, or in seeking favor consciously presented opinions they knew would be favorably received. He said, for example, Mussolini would be far more ably served with Grandi as Foreign Minister than Ciano, and Hitler better advised with almost any other Foreign Minister than Ribbentrop.

King Boris said that in his talks with Chamberlain, Halifax and again with King George at Balmoral as late as September 11th, he had

-3-

stressed his personal conviction that Hitler (a mystic and a visionary who had not traveled outside of Germany) had never received an accurate picture of the attitude of foreign countries regarding the German-Czech crisis, particularly that of France and Great Britain. It was his personal belief that Hitler was not a soldier at heart, and because of his experiences during 1914 - 1918, was averse to war; nevertheless, members of his government were deliberately forcing Hitler into a position where he had no other choice than a resort to force. King Boris said he believed this so strongly that he informed the British Government he was determined to make a personal appeal to Hitler in his Berlin visit, and I had the very definite impression the King believed his remarks in London confirmed Mr. Chamberlain also in his desire to talk with Hitler face to face.

King Boris then told me that on his arrival in Berlin, just after the Godesberg conversations had terminated, he had talks with Goering and Ribbentrop before he saw Hitler and clarified his facts. No one else was present in his interview with Hitler on Sunday, September 25th. Hitler

-4-

began by storming against Benes, declaring that Hodza had been following a policy that made negotiation possible, but that the Government of Syrový, who had adopted a more aggressive attitude vis-a-vis the Sudeten Germans, had left no alternative but force, since he (Hitler) could in no other way achieve the ends he had promised to the German people. At the beginning of their talk it was quite evident to the King that Hitler's advisors had persuaded him that force was inevitable; also, as the King in turn began his arguments he was apprehensive over the stiff and intransigent attitude Hitler adopted, which fortunately he could see gradually became more moderate. The King began by urging Hitler not to make Germany responsible for beginning another world war. "You may be", said the King, "forced into war, but do not again put a world stigma upon Germany of starting a world war. You say it will take only a short campaign to conquer Czechoslovakia, but I must point out you obviously do not realize as I do who have just come from France and England that if a war begins, no matter what your preliminary successes, these two nations are

preparing

preparing for a war to the bitter end, a war for the end of Germany. Furthermore," went on the King, "not only must Germany not repeat today the mistake Germany made in 1914 by beginning a war, she must not repeat the mistake Germany made in 1914 by underrating her enemies."

The King asked Hitler how definite he was as to the combined strength, resources and determination of England, France and Czechoslovakia?--- what would be the position of other nations?--- had Germany correctly judged what would be the final attitude of the United States?--- "and," said the King, "when Germany is war weary, exhausted in victory or defeat, are you as the German Fuehrer then prepared to meet the impact of 160,000,000 Russians who will wait for Germany's hour of weakness to enter the war effectively against her and condemn all Europe to Communism?"

The King pointed out that Stalin's purge of 10,000 men was nothing in a nation of 160,000,000, where the new forces are unknown and where generalship could be imported from "Christian nations", if necessary, for a war against Germany.

In conclusion, the King pointed out that Bulgaria had in turn suffered with Germany in the

past

-6-

past. He did not want Bulgaria to suffer the privations and terrors of Communism and anarchy now because of Germany. In the King's opinion two choices only were open to Hitler, one, war, which could only end in a victory for Russia and Communism, or two, negotiation, which would assure Hitler the successes that had already been promised him and a proud place in his country's history. At the end of his talk the King said Hitler escorted him to the door of his car and he knew his words had made an impression.

According to the King it was almost immediately after this interview that Hitler received President Roosevelt's telegram of September 26th. That was the day the King left Berlin, but before his departure he was told of the tremendous effect the President's message had had on Hitler, and he felt confident his own talk with Hitler had been a dramatic preliminary to the "inspired" and evidently quite unanticipated personal message direct to Hitler from the head of the American nation. The King said he felt this forceful message at such a decisive moment prevented Hitler from definitely closing the door to further negotiation, as reflected in his public address of

Monday

-7-

Monday evening, September 26th. Since that time the King said he was more and more convinced that even though the price demanded of the Czechs might seem high, the people of the world and the German people as well had learned that conquest by negotiation could be just as extensive as conquest by war. Thus, war, which no man wanted, was just that much back-staged as a necessary instrument of national policy.

In conclusion, the King referred to Germany's policy of economic penetration in Southeastern Europe, and closed with some reflections on Bulgarian national policies. He gave me liberty to transmit for your information any part of his remarks which I felt might be of interest, requesting that in other respects they be regarded as strictly confidential, because of the nature of the views he had expressed.

I remain, Sir, with great respect,

Sincerely yours,

RAY ATHERTON