

## THE DIFFIDENCE OF POWER— SOME NOTES AND REFLECTIONS ON THE AMERICAN ROAD TO MUNICH

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In June 1972, former Secretary of State Dean Rusk appeared before the Subcommittee on National Security Policy of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives for the first time since leaving office in January 1969. Addressing himself to the problem of "national security and the changing world power alignment," Secretary Rusk—now Sibley Professor of International Law at the University of Georgia—remarked: "I have pointed out to some of my young friends, as I visited many campuses in the last year or two, that they would not necessarily improve their position if they reject the mistakes of their fathers merely to embrace the mistakes of their grandfathers."<sup>1</sup> The Subcommittee listened attentively, and even its more dovish members seemed, for the moment at least, disinclined to press Professor Rusk on his position.

The former Secretary of State may well have been somewhat surprised by his friendly reception, for liberal orthodoxy—which had long ago gained control of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and had in recent years made a number of converts on the House Committee—has long maintained that there was no significant connection, or even reasonable similarity, between the events of the 1930's which reached a climax at Munich in September 1938 and the events of the 1950's and 1960's which reached a climax in the bitter and protracted Vietnam war.

It is only fair to note that this particular position has been adopted not only by some American journalists or historians whose knowledge of the European past understandably may be somewhat limited, but also by a number of well-known historians of modern Europe, one of whom (Fritz Stern, Seth Low Professor of History at Columbia University) has recently written that "advocates of the Vietnamese war have for years

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deluded themselves and others by invoking Munich as the failure of appeasement to justify their persistent error. Out of respect for the dead, we should adopt a moratorium on facile analogies with unique suffering; the memory of that past should not be dissipated by mindless invectives."<sup>2</sup>

Judging from such impassioned remarks as these, there can be little doubt that the possible resemblance of the eras of Munich and Vietnam has become a highly controversial subject. Considering the importance of the subject, both from a historical and political standpoint, and in view of the fact that historians both in Europe and in the United States have, in recent years, devoted increasing attention to problems of Atlantic and comparative history, it seems rather surprising that apparently there have been no previous studies of this subject.

What follows is, for a number of reasons, not intended as a comparison of the Vietnam situation and the Munich crisis as such. In the first place, although Professor Stern does not say so, no reputable scholar or statesman has contended that one could, strictly speaking, compare a conflict that has lasted since the mid-1940's with a crisis that took place between April and October 1938. What supporters of resistance to Communist subversion and aggression in Southeast Asia have in fact maintained is that there appears to them to be a disturbing resemblance between such subversion and aggression and corresponding developments in the 1930's—developments to which the Western democracies, the United States included, responded largely by a policy of appeasement.<sup>3</sup> Supporters of American policy in Southeast Asia (and elsewhere) have further contended that there is, in essence, no difference between subversion and aggression whether carried out in Europe, Africa, or Asia, and no difference whether inspired, directed, and carried out by totalitarians of the right or left.<sup>4</sup>

In the second place, it seems clear that much of the discussion of possible similarities and differences between the Munich and Vietnam eras has proved largely pointless because it has been beset by a remarkable lack of knowledge and understanding of the Munich era, and especially of American policy during this period<sup>5</sup>—a policy which played a far greater and more important role during those years than is generally recognized. The principal purpose of this essay, therefore, is to examine, as a preface to a study of the larger problem, especially in the light of recently published evidence, the development of American diplomacy in the Munich era, with special reference to its response to the spread of aggression in the 1930's.

This is not to suggest that the course of American diplomacy in the 1930's has not been profitably examined before, notably in James MacGregor Burns's *The Lion and the Fox*,<sup>6</sup> the superb first volume of his outstanding Roosevelt biography; in William L. Langer and S. Everett Gleason's *The Challenge to Isolation 1937-1940*,<sup>7</sup> the no less superb first volume of their

excellent two-volume history *The World Crisis and American Foreign Policy*; in William E. Leuchtenburg's *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal 1932-1940*,<sup>8</sup> the best single-volume history of the subject; and in Manfred Jonas's *Isolationism in American 1935-1941*,<sup>9</sup> an impressive synthesis of intellectual and political history. The following pages generally agree with all of these interpretations of Rooseveltian and American foreign policy from 1933 to 1938. Nevertheless, this is a subject of such significance (both in its own right and because of its possible implications for our own time) that it has seemed appropriate to take another, closer, look at the subject with special attention to the role of President Roosevelt, his leading advisers and diplomats, and the most recent evidence concerning their views and policies.

No attempt has been made to provide in the following pages a comprehensive account of American foreign policy in the Munich era, which would have added substantially to the length of the present paper, but it is hoped that no important aspect of the subject has been left entirely neglected, and that the problems that have been singled out for more detailed discussion will appear to the reader to warrant such treatment.

A word, finally, should be said about the methodology of this account. In the pages that follow, an effort has been made to inform the reader not only about what is now known concerning the important men, problems, and ideas of the Munich era, especially from the standpoint of the United States, but also something about how and when this information became publicly available. Furthermore, because much of the material discussed below is to be found in government and other publications not widely available, and also because the subject lends itself to this treatment, it has seemed best to permit the evidence, where possible, to speak for itself. If this approach has resulted in a wealth of direct quotations from the record, it may also convey a greater sense of immediacy to the reader.

## I

In the debate about American foreign policy that has been raging for more than twenty years—a debate that began with the publication, in September 1951, of George F. Kennan's *American Diplomacy 1900-1950*<sup>10</sup>—much has been written about America's "arrogance of power,"<sup>11</sup> about an alleged "Pax Americana,"<sup>12</sup> about America's supposed assumption of the role of "policeman of the world," and so on.

This is not the appropriate place to discuss the remarkable historical judgments of Chairman Fulbright of the Committee on Foreign Relations of the United States Senate or those of his many influential supporters and admirers, although it may be observed in passing that one of the common characteristics of much recent criticism of postwar American foreign policy,

especially on the part of New Left historians, has been its largely, if not entirely, unhistorical character.<sup>13</sup> Much of this “revisionist” criticism has, among other shortcomings, exhibited a lamentable inability to explain how and why the United States found itself, twenty years after the second world war, both in Europe and Asia, in the position so well described by John F. Kennedy at the close of the address he planned to deliver in Dallas on November 22, 1963: “We in this country, in this generation are—by destiny rather than by choice—the watchmen on the walls of freedom,”<sup>14</sup> or as President Johnson eloquently put it at his press conference of July 28, 1965: “We did not choose to be the guardians at the gate, but there is no one else.”<sup>15</sup>

The President went on to ask at that press conference—one of the most important and impressive of all his years in the White House:

Why must young Americans, born into a land exultant with hope and with golden promise, toil and suffer and sometimes die in such a remote and distant place [Vietnam]?

The answer, like the war itself, is not an easy one, but it echoes clearly from the painful lessons of half a century. Three times in my lifetime, in two World Wars and Korea, Americans have gone to far lands to fight for freedom. We have learned at a terrible and a brutal cost that retreat does not bring safety and weakness does not bring peace. . . .

Nor would surrender in Viet-Nam bring peace, because we learned from Hitler at Munich that success only feeds the appetite of aggression. The battle would be renewed in one country and then another country, bringing with it perhaps even larger and crueller conflict, as we have learned from the lessons of history.<sup>16</sup>

The President was not, on that occasion, telling the country something that it had not heard before. Every President since the second world war had felt the same way. In his memoirs, President Truman—an avid and close student of history who had long believed “that almost all current events in the affairs of governments and nations have their parallels and precedents in the past”<sup>17</sup>—recalled his flight from Kansas City back to Washington on the afternoon of June 25, 1950, after receiving word of the Communist attack on South Korea:

I had time to think aboard the plane. In my generation, this was not the first occasion when the strong had attacked the weak. I recalled some earlier instances: Manchuria, Ethiopia, Austria. I remembered how each time that the democracies failed to act it had encouraged the aggressors to keep going ahead. Communism was acting in Korea just as Hitler, Mussolini, and the Japanese had acted ten, fifteen, and twenty years earlier. I felt certain that if South Korea was allowed to fall Communist leaders would be emboldened to override nations closer to our own shores. If the Communists were permitted to force their way into the Republic of Korea without opposition from the free world, no small nation would have the courage to resist threats and aggressions by stronger Communist neighbors. If this was allowed to go unchallenged it would mean a third world war, just as similar incidents had brought on the second world war.<sup>18</sup>

President Eisenhower, who remembered the rampant “anti-militarism” and isolationism of the interwar years when he was a rising young staff officer in the United States Army, recalled the lessons of the 1930’s in a letter



to Prime Minister Churchill written at the height of the Indochina crisis of 1954:

If [the French] do not see it through and Indochina passes into the hands of the Communists the ultimate effect on our and your strategic position with the consequent shift in the power ratios throughout Asia and the Pacific could be disastrous and, I know, unacceptable to you and me. . . . If I may refer again to history; we failed to halt Hirohito, Mussolini and Hitler by not acting in unity and in time. That marked the beginning of many years of stark tragedy and desperate peril. May it not be that our nations have learned something from that lesson.<sup>19</sup>

President Johnson's immediate predecessor—many of whose close friends and associates were later venomously to attack Johnson for continuing the policies that John F. Kennedy had followed in Southeast Asia—also believed in the relevance of past to present, and especially the meaning of the 1930's for our own times.

John Kennedy had learned about appeasement at first hand as a young man. At the end of 1937 his father, Joseph P. Kennedy, had been appointed American ambassador to Great Britain. In the winter and spring of 1939, that is, in the interval between Munich and Hitler's takeover of what remained of Czechoslovakia after Munich, young Kennedy, then a junior at Harvard, had travelled extensively throughout Europe.<sup>20</sup> In *Why England Slept*, a revision of his senior thesis entitled *Appeasement at Munich*, completed in the spring of 1940, Kennedy had written: "We withdrew from Europe in the 1920's and refused to do anything to preserve the democracy we had helped to save. We thought that it made no difference to us what happened in Europe. We are beginning to realize that it does."<sup>21</sup> As President of the United States, Kennedy returned to this theme in a nationwide television address he delivered at the height of the Cuban missile crisis in October 1962. "The 1930's," Kennedy said on that occasion, "taught us a clear lesson: aggressive conduct, if allowed to go unchecked and unchallenged, ultimately leads to war."<sup>22</sup>

It remained, however, for a leading English historian, A. L. Rowse, to put his finger on the role of the United States in the coming of the second world war. "The fundamental reason for the Second World War," he wrote in *Appeasement—A Study in Political Decline*,<sup>23</sup> his brilliant memoir of All Souls College in the 1930's, "was the withdrawal of America out of the world system: that, more than anything, enabled the aggressors to get away with things. Not all the mistakes this country [Great Britain] was responsible for in the 1920's and 1930's equalled the one enormous and irreparable mistake America made in contracting out of responsibility."<sup>24</sup>

If the remarks quoted above seem to have made little permanent impression, the reason may well be that by the 1960's most Americans remembered little, and probably cared less, about their country's foreign policy in the Munich era. It may also have been true that such indifference was partly the

result of the fact that the full story of American diplomacy in the 1930's was a long time becoming known. It seems likely that many Americans who had lived through that period, or had read about it at one time or another, recalled something of the isolationist climate of the time and the country's determination (expressed, for instance, in a series of so-called neutrality acts) never again to become involved in a foreign war unless the United States was first attacked; but they probably recalled little or nothing, for instance, about the attitude and policies of President Roosevelt. During the postwar years Roosevelt was largely remembered as having sought to alert the country to the dangers lurking abroad, as having done what he could to assist Britain in her "finest hour," and accordingly as deserving to be ranked with Churchill as one of the handful of men who had saved western democracy.<sup>25</sup>

It is not necessary at this point to inquire how Roosevelt had acquired this largely undeserved reputation. A recent survey of historical writing on twentieth-century American foreign policy offers the plausible explanation that "in the past diplomatic historians . . . assumed that throughout the thirties Roosevelt remained a Wilsonian, committed to the concept of collective security, and, that, though he reconciled himself to the isolationist mood of the era, he never accepted its assumptions."<sup>26</sup> It would probably be more accurate to say, however, that until the publication of Langer and Gleason's fine volumes on American diplomacy 1937-1941, which appeared in the early 1950's, most American historians tended to skirt the subject of Rooseveltian diplomacy in the Munich era, in part perhaps because, many of them being liberal partisans, it was a rather painful subject they preferred to touch on as lightly as possible.<sup>27</sup>

Indeed, one main reason why there has been so much apparent confusion or indifference concerning the possible resemblance of the Munich and Vietnam eras is the fact that, for more than twenty years (from the time that the inner history of American foreign policy in the 1930's first began to be fully known in the 1950's, until the present), most leading and widely used books on recent American history have in effect failed to tell the full story of American diplomacy in the Munich era. The story they have told—about rampant isolationist feeling, about the passage of "neutrality acts" and the like—was true enough as far as it went. The problem was that, almost without exception, these books did not go far enough. In particular, they failed to make clear how well informed President Roosevelt and the State Department were about what was happening abroad at the time—whether in Europe, Africa, or the Far East—and how inadequately they responded to that information. These books also failed to make clear how Roosevelt and his administration became, in effect, the prisoners of certain gross historical misjudgments, and who was responsible for propagating and disseminating these misjudgments.<sup>28</sup>

Sometimes even the best and most highly respected books on this period went completely astray, as for instance when Morison and Commager, in the fourth edition of their *Growth of the American Republic*, published in 1950, asserted that Roosevelt had "disapproved" the neutrality act of 1937,<sup>29</sup> citing as their evidence a statement Roosevelt made in July 1941. They conveniently overlooked the fact that, at his famous four hundredth news conference, held on October 6, 1937, Roosevelt had chided the distinguished Washington reporter Ernest K. Lindley for suggesting that the neutrality legislation then in effect conflicted with the substance of the "Quarantine Speech" he had delivered the day before in Chicago.<sup>30</sup> It was not until the sixth edition, published in 1969, that Morison and Commager—now joined by William E. Leuchtenburg, the expert author of *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal 1932-1940*, who had the "main authority" for revision of the Morison and Commager volume—admitted that "when President Roosevelt signed the Neutrality Act of 1937, he seemed to be endorsing all the assumptions of the isolationists."<sup>31</sup>

It may be that even had the American people, in the late 1960's and early 1970's, been fully and accurately informed about the course and significance of American diplomacy in the 1930's, their response to the challenge of Communist aggression in Southeast Asia might ultimately have been much the same. Such considerations, however, are no part of the historian's business. His task is to make sure that the story of the past, distant and more recent, is fully known, and properly understood, by the general public as well as by other scholars. The rest is up to them.

To understand the differences and similarities between the Munich and Vietnam eras, we must therefore take a closer look at the 1930's to see how the United States, and President Roosevelt in particular, responded to the spread of aggression in Europe, Africa, and Asia, and how the story of that response itself became known to the interested public.

## II

The American public received, or should have received, its first close look at American foreign policy in the Munich era from the personal papers of the American ambassador to Germany from 1933-1937, Professor William E. Dodd, which were edited and published by his son and daughter a year after his death in February 1940.<sup>32</sup>

Dodd, who had been professor of history at the University of Chicago since 1908, was one of the outstanding scholars, teachers, and members of the historical profession in this century. He served as President of the American Historical Association in 1934 and returned from Berlin in December of that year to deliver his presidential address. A dedicated Jeffersonian,

Dodd was passionately devoted also to the ideals of Woodrow Wilson, and was convinced that the world crisis of the interwar years was largely the result of the frustration and ultimate defeat of Wilson's principles and objectives at the end of the Great War. Dodd, moreover, was no stranger to German history, politics, and culture. He had studied in Germany in the late 1890's and received his doctorate from the University of Leipzig in 1900, his thesis director being Erich Marcks, subsequently the biographer of Bismarck.

It is sometimes forgotten, especially after the appearance of the pertinent government documents and other evidence, how much certain books published at an earlier date revealed about particular periods. *Ambassador Dodd's Diary 1933-1938* was such a book. It was a volume about which Charles A. Beard—with whose later views of international affairs Dodd, as will be seen, frequently disagreed<sup>33</sup>—wrote appropriately that “when the record of our troubled age is written, in distant years to come, this journal will be regarded as a priceless source of primary information and a vibrant human document illustrating American character in this period.”<sup>34</sup> Dodd's book also provided a fascinating view of political developments, economic and social conditions, and intellectual life in Nazi Germany. It was from Dodd's diary that the public first received, among other things, an inside account of President Roosevelt's grandiose peace plans before Munich—plans for which Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles subsequently claimed credit and which in the end, not surprisingly under the circumstances, came to nothing.<sup>35</sup>

While not uncritical of the British and French policies which, in his estimation, had facilitated Hitler's rise to power, Dodd was appalled by the pusillanimous response of the Western democracies, headed by the United States, to the spread of totalitarian aggression, beginning with the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931. Dodd was no less outraged by the efforts of giant American corporations—whose names he freely mentioned<sup>36</sup>—to take advantage of the German market and to strike profitable deals with the Nazi regime, and by the feckless efforts of some individual Americans—including for instance Jacob Gould Schurman, United States ambassador to Germany from 1925 to 1930<sup>37</sup>—to ingratiate themselves with the German government.

Dodd's journal shows that he perceived that the struggle between totalitarianism and democracy was not only one of power but of ideals, and he was determined (as witnessed by the numerous speeches he delivered on the subject both at his post and while on home leave)<sup>38</sup> that the democracies should give no intellectual quarter to their adversaries. For instance, Dodd was strongly opposed to American officials lending their presence to the annual Nazi congresses at Nuremberg, and while back in the United States in August 1937 sent Secretary of State Hull a confidential letter “advising

against attendance at the Nuremberg party show by Prentiss Gilbert, now our Chargé d'Affaires in Berlin."<sup>39</sup> After Gilbert had proceeded there anyhow, Dodd sent Hull a telegram "protesting strongly against this violation of our 150-year-old diplomatic custom of not attending party celebrations in foreign countries,"<sup>40</sup> parts of which letter and telegram soon appeared in the Republican New York *Herald Tribune*. As Hajo Holborn pointed out, "Dodd did not fall in with the desire of many of his contemporaries to come to terms with anyone who happened to be the ruler of the day. . . . His disillusionment was considerable when he began to see that most professors [at the University of Berlin] seemed to acquiesce in their own intimidation. His diary draws a sad picture of a procession of neo-Nazis of all creeds swarming around him, eager to explain the degree of their submission to Nazi dictation."<sup>41</sup>

Almost alone among the leading intellectual and diplomatic figures of the period, Dodd understood that there was a direct connection between the spread of aggression in Europe, Africa, and the Far East, just as he had sought to warn his contemporaries ever since the end of the Great War that the western democracies could no longer stand up to the totalitarian powers without American assistance.

As Professor Julius Pratt first pointed out,<sup>42</sup> Dodd cabled Secretary Hull as early as April 5, 1935, that the

present European situation is parallel to that of 1912. The Hitler triumvirate is however far more powerful than the Kaiser was. The Reichswehr is not as ready now as the old army leaders were but grievances and ambitions of the Nazi forces are much deeper. . . . You may infer from these facts that war is the direct and major aim. Nearly all Germans swear that Germany did not precipitate the great war but they declare with equal equanimity that the United States prevented them from dominating Europe in 1918. Since American intervention will not be repeated the Third Reich will at strategic moment seize the [Polish] Corridor or Austria and if war follows win what was lost in 1918.<sup>43</sup>

Twenty-eight months later the situation had deteriorated further. "The situation in Europe is such," Dodd wrote Roosevelt in a grand exposition of his views in August 1937,

that American action as to the Far East tyranny in conjunction with England would not start Germany into her war scheme. . . . Therefore, I would, in your position, press conservative England (the Government) to join us in pressure upon Japan, even to send American-British navies across the Pacific. Later Germany and Italy would act together if this were done—now they would not move. . . . Russia is in such a critical situation at home that she can't act to save China alone. . . . So, it seems to me just now our Government, England and France with the Holland Navy in the Far East, can ask cooperation of Russia and save the situation. Certainly if this dictatorial system goes on two more years unchecked, as in Ethiopia, Spain and now China, a combination of democratic . . . states may not save themselves. I am taking the liberty to write you because I know we have the same ideals and because I have watched and studied things in Berlin four sad years. All representatives of democratic countries in Berlin have again and again said: the United States is the only



nation that can save our civilization.<sup>44</sup>

Charles A. Beard summed up Dodd's achievement:

[Dodd] saw more clearly than most of his colleagues, American and foreign, in the diplomatic corps, the hard drift of things toward the tragedy of the coming years. He repeatedly predicted, despite the epithets "alarmist" and "sensationalist" applied to him by unfriendly critics, the ruthless course which Germany, Italy, and Japan were destined to take, if unchecked by the concerted action of their neighbors. He divined the frightful crash bound to come from the policy of appeasement, intrigue, and vacillation, and he fought relentlessly, as far as he was able, to stop it.<sup>45</sup>

Those efforts, it is now clear, made Dodd no friends in high places in Washington. In his memoirs, Secretary Hull described Dodd as "sincere though impulsive and inexperienced."<sup>46</sup> Indeed, Dodd became highly unpopular with many of the Department's powerful career officials and political appointees including Sumner Welles<sup>47</sup> and William C. Bullitt who, in December 1936, while serving as American ambassador to France, wrote to Roosevelt that "Dodd has many admirable and likeable qualities, but he is almost ideally ill-equipped for his present job. He hates the Nazis too much to be able to do anything or get anything out of them."<sup>48</sup> All of this, together with the Nazi regime's increasingly insistent demands for his removal,<sup>49</sup> led to his somewhat premature recall at the end of 1937, and his replacement by the colorless, undistinguished, and ineffective Hugh Wilson. Returning to the United States in January 1938, Dodd embarked on a series of lecture tours designed to alert the American people to the growing threat abroad, arguing, as he had throughout his service in Berlin, that the threat to peace and freedom was not only European but worldwide in scope. "When China and Japan, Germany, Italy, and . . . the Danube zone, all come into co-operation, I cannot help thinking democracy everywhere will be in grave danger."<sup>50</sup>

Dodd's account included virtually no direct or indirect criticism of Roosevelt's foreign policy, although he remarked rather caustically in November 1937 on the social ostentatiousness of Sumner Welles, newly appointed Under Secretary of State. Dodd noted that he "was a little surprised to read a day or two ago in the press that Roosevelt had spent a Sunday with Welles at his Maryland mansion. Politics is a strange game, even with a real man like Roosevelt."<sup>51</sup> It is difficult to believe, however, that Dodd was satisfied with the President's largely passive approach to foreign affairs, especially during his first four years in office, about which Roosevelt remarked at a Jackson Day dinner in January 1936: "A Government can be no better than the public opinion which sustains it."<sup>52</sup>

With Woodrow Wilson's example still fresh in Dodd's mind, Roosevelt's position could hardly have been the Ambassador's model of courageous and effective leadership. On the other hand, Dodd was not unmindful either of



the political and intellectual constraints on Roosevelt's leadership in the realm of foreign affairs. After a meeting with Colonel House in January 1935, he wrote dejectedly that it was doubtful "whether President Roosevelt or any other President of our time would venture such an unpopular move [sending an ambassador to Geneva as the first step toward American membership in the League of Nations] with the masses who have been propagandized for fourteen years against any connection or cooperation anywhere."<sup>53</sup> Roosevelt, Dodd believed, "must act this year or surrender in matters of American relations to distraught Europe."

Two weeks later, after the Senate had defeated Roosevelt's proposal that the United States join the World Court, Dodd thought of resigning his post "in protest against Senate minority domination of American foreign policy. It would create a sensation but it would give me the chance to say to the people how foolish it seemed to me for our people to denounce minority dictatorships in Europe and then allow a minority of men, largely under Hearst and Coughlin influence, to rule the United States in such an important matter."<sup>54</sup>

In the end, however, Dodd was dissuaded from such action both by Under Secretary of State R. Walton Moore—who, according to Dodd, wondered nevertheless "whether Roosevelt had really made up his mind as to the importance of better world relations"—and by Secretary Hull, whom Dodd quoted as saying: "I hope you won't resign even if you can do nothing now in Berlin. We also are helpless. All peoples are economically crazy, and our people are being misled all the time."<sup>55</sup>

In the event, Dodd was spared the experience of observing Hitler's annexation of Austria and the Munich crisis from the vantage point of the German capital. But he was not surprised by these developments. "Hitler," he said at the time of Munich, "would not have risked war if the democracies had been united against him over the Czech question."<sup>56</sup>

When it was first published in March 1941, *Ambassador Dodd's Diary* received a cordial public and critical reception, and Dodd—who had long made a practice of keeping careful track of the sales of his books—would have been pleased had he lived to see those of his Berlin account. In a sense, however, Dodd's volume appeared at a rather inopportune time. For by early 1941 world events had persuaded a substantial, perhaps an overwhelming, majority of Americans that Hitler and Hirohito were indeed a direct menace to the United States. For all their wealth of detail and instructive insights, it seems doubtful if Dodd's perceptive observations and conclusions exerted a significant influence on American opinion immediately before and during the war, any more than his splendid personal letters to the President—a few of which were first published in some of the State Department's documentary volumes *Foreign Rela-*

tions of the United States in the 1950's—exerted a demonstrable effect on Roosevelt's thinking and policy in the crucial months and years before Munich.

In any case, it seems clear that Dodd's vision of America's global responsibility in the Munich era was not widely shared at that time. One outstanding American statesman who felt much the same as Dodd was Henry L. Stimson, who had served as Secretary of War under William Howard Taft and as Secretary of State under Herbert Hoover. In his memoirs, *On Active Service in Peace and War*, written in collaboration with McGeorge Bundy (then a Junior Fellow at Harvard University) and published in April 1948—one of the great books on modern American political and diplomatic history—Stimson recalled that he had left office in March 1933 with a sense of moderate optimism, and he admitted that he had “greatly underestimated the Nazis during their first three years in power.”<sup>57</sup>

Like Dodd, Stimson was well aware of the prevailing climate of ideas that exerted such an unfortunate effect on the nation's foreign policy in the Munich era. “In the early 1930's,” Stimson recalled, “many Americans were persuaded by a new school of writers that in 1917 they had gone to war not because of unrestricted submarine warfare, and still less because Imperial Germany threatened the world's freedom, but because of the munitions makers, the bankers, and the sly propagandists of England and France. In these years still more Americans became convinced by the same writers that, whatever the reason for American participation in the First World War, it had been a ghastly mistake.”<sup>58</sup>

Such sentiments anesthetized public opinion and paralyzed official policy. As he recalled in his memoirs, in 1931 and 1932

the diplomacy of America was, in all conscience, quite sufficiently hamstrung by American isolationism. In the years from 1935 to 1939 Stimson was forced to watch a demonstration of still greater and more damaging folly. . . . Stimson watched the course of events, from the betrayal of Ethiopia through the absurd “non-intervention” in Spain, on to the final moral abdication at Munich, in mounting apprehension and dismay, but he spoke no word of these views in public; he agreed with a friend in October 1938, “in feeling (as Americans whose country would not help out in the situation) a great disinclination to criticize those who had the responsibility.”<sup>59</sup>

This is not to say, however, that Stimson had remained silent as regards the spread of aggression and the menace it posed to the United States. Like Dodd, Stimson believed that there was no difference between aggression in Europe, Africa, and the Far East, and failure to deal effectively with aggression in one part of the world only encouraged it in another. As Stimson put it bluntly in his famous letter to *The New York Times*, a document running to several thousand words, written before Roosevelt's “Quarantine Speech,” but not published until two days after that address on October 7, 1937:

Americans [Stimson's letter, which occupied the better part of a full page of *The New York Times*, began] are shocked and outraged at what is taking place in the Far East. But to many of them it presents merely a confused picture of distant horrors with which they think we have no necessary connection and to which they can close their eyes and turn their backs in the belief that we owe no duty to the situation except to keep out of it and forget it.

The Western democracies, Stimson believed, had a real and direct responsibility for what was happening in the Far East.

The lamentable fact is that today the aggression of Japan is being actively assisted by the efforts of men of our own nation and men of the other great democracy in the world—the British Commonwealth of Nations. It is not only being actively assisted, but our assistance is so effective and predominant that without it even today the aggression would in all probability be promptly checked and cease. . . . China's principal need is not that something should be done by outside nations to help her, but that outside nations should cease helping her enemy.

With that Stimson got down to more specific questions and recommendations.

In the light of [the above facts], the first question that I should ask of the American and British peoples is this: Does the safety of the American nation and the safety of the British Empire require that we go on helping Japan to exterminate, by the methods she is daily employing, the gallant Chinese soldiers with which she is confronted—not to speak of the civilian Chinese population that she is engaged in terrorizing? Is the condition of our statesmanship so pitifully inadequate that we cannot devise the simple means of international cooperation which would stop our participation in this slaughter? I for one do not think so. I believe it can be done effectively without serious danger to us.<sup>60</sup>

Stimson was not unaware of the isolationist mood of the Congress, and he realized that he was in no position to alter that mood significantly. He believed, however, that the President had an obligation to provide moral leadership and that he had not done so. "The only person who can effectively rouse and marshal moral opinion is the President of the United States and when he tries to do so I have no doubt of his eventual success,"<sup>61</sup> he had said in a radio address over the Columbia Broadcasting System in October 1935, after Congress had passed, and Roosevelt had approved without serious objection, a so-called "neutrality act" providing for a mandatory ban on exports to all declared belligerents. "The President," Stimson recalled later with some bitterness, "had done little or nothing to head off this legislative folly which would discourage the victims of aggression and not its perpetrators, in the present instance Italy making war on Ethiopia." As Stimson pointed out, "not a word had been said by the administration as to the issues here involved—the moral issue between an aggressor and its victim, the political issue between collective security and international anarchy. Here Stimson saw a clear duty of leadership; he believed that if the President made his appeal on basic moral and political grounds he would be able to enforce a general voluntary trade embargo against Italy."<sup>62</sup>

This was the position to which Stimson returned in his letter to *The New York Times* in October 1937 quoted above. Accepting the fact that American military intervention in Asia was at that time probably militarily impossible and doubtless “abhorrent to our people,” the United States, Stimson was convinced, was not bound to “a passive and shameful acquiescence in the wrong that is now being done” by Japan to China, and he strongly urged the imposition of a complete trade embargo against Japan.

Our recent neutrality legislation [Stimson wrote] attempts to impose a dead level of neutral conduct on the part of our Government between right and wrong, between an aggressor and its victim. . . . It won't work. Such a policy of amoral drift by such a safe and powerful nation as our own will only set back the hands of progress. It will not save us from entanglement. It will even make entanglement more certain. History has already amply shown this last fact.<sup>63</sup>

As already noted, Stimson's letter had been prepared before Roosevelt delivered his “Quarantine Speech,” but after learning of the President's remarks Stimson added a new ending: “Since the writing of the foregoing letter,” he concluded, “has come the President's Chicago speech. I am filled with hope that this act of leadership on his part will result in a new birth of American courage in facing and carrying through our responsibility in this crisis.”<sup>64</sup>

Unfortunately, Stimson's hopes soon proved unfounded. To be sure, in his “Quarantine Speech” the President seemed to be abandoning at last the largely neutralist stance he had followed since taking office, but when he concluded from the response to his address—mistakenly as is now known<sup>65</sup>—that the country was not prepared for such a departure, he quickly denied that any significant change in policy had ever been intended in the first place.<sup>66</sup>

As Stimson wrote later, the climax of “the legislative peacemaking of the ostrich era” was the attempt at the end of 1937 and the beginning of 1938 to enact the so-called “Ludlow Resolution,” named after Democratic Congressman from Indiana Louis Ludlow, which provided that, except in case of direct enemy attack, any declaration of war by the United States had to be approved by a national referendum. For Stimson this proposal—which on the face of it resembles similar proposals bandied about or actually introduced in the Congress in the recent stages of the Vietnam conflict—was “the high point in the prewar self-deception of the American people.”<sup>67</sup>

Stimson saw this proposal as “a first blow at the authority and discretion of the Government in foreign affairs.” It seemed to him that “it would certainly strike an aggressor and potential aggressor as a further demonstration that American foreign policy was in the end dependent on a political campaign”; and he published a devastating critique of the proposal in a long letter to *The New York Times* on December 21, 1937.<sup>68</sup>

Although Stimson did not mention it in his memoirs, it should be pointed

out that, with one or two notable exceptions, the Ludlow Resolution enjoyed the vigorous, indeed overwhelming, support of liberal journals of opinion<sup>69</sup> and members of Congress, including many who had been swept into office by the Roosevelt landslide of 1936.<sup>70</sup> It should further be recalled that both Roosevelt and Hull long delayed coming to grips with the proposal, and that it was only at the last minute, when there was a serious threat that the Ludlow Resolution might be taken up and passed by the House of Representatives, that Roosevelt sent a letter, drafted by the Department of State, to William B. Bankhead, Speaker of the House, opposing the measure.<sup>71</sup> It was defeated — or, to put it more accurately, its discharge from the Rules Committee was defeated — in January 1938 by a vote of 209 to 188, one of those voting against taking up the proposal being a young Congressman from Texas, recently elected to the House, named Lyndon B. Johnson.<sup>72</sup>

It remains only to be observed that by the early 1970's, Stimson, for all his wisdom and foresight, had become, like William E. Dodd, a largely neglected and forgotten figure in modern American history. He is the subject of an inadequate authorized biography,<sup>73</sup> his important papers, including his remarkable personal diary, are still unpublished and largely inaccessible, and the achievements and significance of his life are largely unknown to those for whom they might do the most good.

Stimson, speaking and writing about the course of American foreign policy in the Munich era, was an insider become an outsider, although his old personal contacts in Washington no doubt allowed him to continue to be well informed. On the other hand, Cordell Hull and Sumner Welles, who served as Under Secretary of State from 1937 to 1943, were the most inside of insiders. They met frequently and regularly with the President. They had access to all the State Department's voluminous diplomatic reporting. They met on a regular basis with all leading ambassadors in Washington. In sum, there was nothing about the country's foreign policy that they did not know or should not have known. But when they came to tell the country what had transpired in the Munich era, they produced—Welles especially—rather unsatisfying accounts.

In July 1944 Sumner Welles published the first of two autobiographical volumes. It was entitled *The Time for Decision*.<sup>74</sup> A year had passed since Welles's still unexplained resignation as Under Secretary of State. His book did little to enlighten, and much to confuse, the reader about the 1930's. Not surprisingly perhaps, the name of Secretary Hull, with whom Welles had carried on a long and bitter feud, appeared in the index only once, but throughout the early pages of the volume Hull was subjected to scathing, if indirect, criticism. Roosevelt and his policies, on the other hand, received, with one or two notable exceptions of which mention will be made below, fulsome praise. Welles dwelled at length on Roosevelt's supposed peace



plans in 1937-1938—this being perhaps the single greatest “revelation” contained in Welles’s volume—for which plans the former Under Secretary claimed a large share of the credit.<sup>75</sup> Although elaborated by Winston Churchill in *The Gathering Storm*, the first volume of his memoirs of the second world war,<sup>76</sup> and repeated by innumerable historians and other writers since that time,<sup>77</sup> Welles’s account was substantially inaccurate and misleading and must now be regarded as disproved.<sup>78</sup>

Elsewhere in *The Time for Decision*, Welles asserted that “up till the moment of the final crisis, British, as well as French and American, public opinion was still greatly influenced by many figures in positions of authority who could not understand that Hitler did not care about pacific solutions.”<sup>79</sup> Welles did not identify the individuals he had in mind. On other aspects of the Munich era, however, Welles showed that he had a highly selective memory, and his account of Roosevelt’s diplomacy during his first term is not only factually seriously flawed (for instance, he cites Roosevelt’s foreign policy address at Chautauqua as having been given in 1934,<sup>80</sup> when it was actually delivered in August 1936; and he writes that “in the face of popular agitation” a Presidential veto of the revised neutrality legislation of January 1937 “would not only have been overridden by Congress, but would have been misunderstood by the people. The people had not been really enlightened about the actual issues involved”<sup>81</sup>), but Welles failed to mention that Roosevelt had done little or nothing to discourage the passage of such legislation. While Welles’s bitter criticism of American policy during the so-called Spanish Civil War—“in the long history of the foreign policy of the Roosevelt Administration, there has been, I think, no more cardinal error than the policy adopted during the civil war in Spain”<sup>82</sup>—may be understandable, a careful study of State Department records turned up no evidence that Welles made any attempt to change the policy he later so deplored.<sup>83</sup>

Nor was Welles’s account of American policy during the Munich crisis itself any more enlightening or, for that matter, even factually accurate. Thus Welles recounted, for instance, Roosevelt’s appeals to Hitler of September 26 and 27, and his appeal to Mussolini on the latter date.<sup>84</sup> But Welles conveniently overlooked, as will be seen, that in his second message to Hitler Roosevelt in effect asked the German dictator only not to take by force what he had already gained by diplomatic negotiation.<sup>85</sup> Welles strongly suggested that Mussolini “urged Hitler by telephone, on the morning of September 28, to avoid an outbreak of war and to continue negotiations with the British and French governments” after he had received a message from Roosevelt encouraging him in that direction,<sup>86</sup> although Welles should have known from the cables of the American ambassador in Rome, William Phillips, that Roosevelt’s message to Mussolini had not been delivered until after Mussoli-



ni had urged Hitler to "give peace a chance";<sup>87</sup> Welles made no mention of the fact—although he surely knew—that Roosevelt, upon learning of Chamberlain's dramatic announcement to the House of Commons that he was going to Munich the following day, had sent the Prime Minister a congratulatory telegram;<sup>88</sup> and, finally, Welles curiously forgot to mention that, three days after the Munich conference, he had delivered a nationwide broadcast in the course of which he asserted "today, perhaps more than at any time during the past two decades, there is presented the opportunity for the establishment by the Nations of the World of a new world order based upon justice and upon law."<sup>89</sup>

Welles, in sum, was rewriting history as Roosevelt and his uncritical admirers and associates wished it had happened or would like to have it remembered as having happened.

"During those years [1933 to 1939]," Welles's account of what he called "the tragic years" concluded, "among the highest officials of this Government only the President himself had emphatically sounded the note of danger—and he was at once accused of 'warmongering.' For in a democracy such as ours the people must be kept fully and continuously informed. Except by the President they were not so informed."<sup>90</sup> As already noted and as will be observed in the discussion of the official diplomatic documents published in the 1950's, Welles's account was far from the whole story. It seems only right to add, however, that by the time those documents appeared in the *Foreign Relations* volumes, a decade later, the general public had lost most, if not all, of its interest in the history of prewar American diplomacy, and Welles had succeeded in making a significant contribution to the myth of Roosevelt as the keeper of the democratic faith in the age of the Munich era.

Four years later, in March 1948, Secretary Hull, who had resigned his position in November 1944, published his own account of American foreign policy in the age of Roosevelt. Unlike Welles, who dealt with the Munich era in two summary chapters, Hull devoted nearly two hundred pages to this period, quoting extensively from unpublished—and presumably classified—State Department documents, most of which were not published or available to interested scholars until the 1950's. There is no question that Hull's account of those years was both significant and revealing, although perhaps not exactly in the fashion which Hull had intended.

Like Welles, Hull seems never to have doubted that Hitler meant war. "There could be no shadow of doubt," he remembered back to Hitler's first years in power, "that Germany was rearming, with all that such rearming meant in the way of political disturbance and, eventually, war."<sup>91</sup> If Hull foresaw these developments even in 1933—and there is

no reason to disbelieve his subsequent recollection—his response to the spread of aggression after that date seems all the more ineffective.

Hull's response to Hitler's reinstatement of conscription in March 1935 was characteristic of his, and Roosevelt's, response to what Churchill later called "the gathering storm." As Hull saw it, by this particular action Germany had "tossed overboard the military clauses of the Treaty of Versailles. . . . She was preparing for conquest." On the other hand, the United States, although signatory, had not ratified that treaty, and thus at a press conference a week later Hull confined himself to the meaningless statement that "everybody knows that the United States has always believed that treaties must constitute the foundation on which any stable peace structure must rest. All who believe in peaceful settlement of international problems of all kinds have felt increasing concern over the tendency to fail to live up to the letter and spirit of treaties."<sup>92</sup> It is difficult to believe that such words made any significant impression in Berlin,<sup>93</sup> Rome, or Tokyo, while in London and Paris Hull's statement might well have anticipated Neville Chamberlain's reaction after reading Roosevelt's "Quarantine Speech" in October 1937: "It is always best and safest to count on nothing from the Americans but words."<sup>94</sup>

Hull was not long finding out that there was indeed a connection between armaments and aggression, in Europe and the rest of the world. Thus Hull recalled a cable from Ambassador Dodd in Berlin on March 22, 1935—the same day on which Hull made the press conference statement quoted above—stating that "Japan was pressing the Germans to ask for the restoration of German naval strength."<sup>95</sup> Hull drew the appropriate conclusion: "It was therefore obvious that we had to watch not only a rapidly rearming Germany or a militant, conquering Japan, but a combination or alliance of both, working hand in hand to bring pressure to bear on other nations at strategic moments and places, and being joined in due course by Fascist Italy. The events to come were assuming shape."<sup>96</sup>

There was little doubt that the shape of things to come was clearer with every passing week and month, but what was not assuming shape was an effective response to the growing menace of spreading international aggression. In a long and tortured account of the struggle over neutrality legislation, the Italian attack on Ethiopia, and the Spanish Civil War, Hull recalled that by the middle of 1935 "an avalanche of isolationism was overwhelming any prospect of inducing the American people to agree to a more vital share in world affairs,"<sup>97</sup> but it is apparent from Hull's memoirs that the Secretary of State was no more prepared than was Roosevelt to do battle with this isolationist tide. To be sure, Hull recalled with considerable bitterness the work of the Nye Committee, of which he remarked that "by impugning the

motives and honesty of President Wilson in the First World War, by etching a sordid caricature of our former associates, Britain and France, and by whitewashing the Kaiser's Germany, . . . [the committee] gave the American people a wholly erroneous view as to the reasons why we had gone to war in 1917."<sup>98</sup>

As Hull's *Memoirs* made clear, neither the Secretary nor the President was ready for an open confrontation with the Nye Committee, whose effect, as Hull rightly observed, "was to throw the country into the deepest isolationism at the very moment when our influence was so vitally needed to help ward off the approaching threat of war abroad." The committee "showed the prospective aggressors in Europe and Asia that our public opinion was pulling a cloak over its head and becoming nationally unconcerned with their designs and that therefore they could proceed with fuller confidence."<sup>99</sup> It seems apparent also that even when Hull, for one, sought to impose certain limits upon administration cooperation with the Nye Committee—especially as regards the furnishing of certain official documents which the committee desired to use for purposes of its own—Roosevelt seemed unwilling to go along with his Secretary of State. Thus Hull recalled that on March, 15, 1935, he sent Roosevelt a memorandum urging the President to call the committee to the White House to advise it "to refrain from any unnecessary agitation in public hearings of questions which would handicap this Government in its relations with other Governments."<sup>100</sup> Roosevelt did indeed meet with the Nye committee at the White House four days later, "but for some reason" — Hull did not speculate on what that reason might have been — "Roosevelt did not mention my request"<sup>101</sup> and the Nye committee went on in its irresponsible way.<sup>102</sup>

If Hull was obviously disturbed by Roosevelt's attitude toward that committee, it was a far different story so far as official policy toward the Spanish Civil War was concerned. "The President and I," Hull recalled, "were in complete agreement in our policy of non-intervention in Spain throughout the war";<sup>103</sup> and, whereas Welles had bitterly attacked American policy, Hull offered a warm defense: "The policy of the United States was . . . in full accord with that expressed by the European nations. . . . As time went on, this policy came more and more under attack from certain elements in this country. Some of the more extreme sections have not yet forgiven the Roosevelt Administration for its refusal to become involved in the Spanish conflict by aiding the Government there to the dangerous extent they demanded."<sup>104</sup>

This is not to say that Roosevelt or the Democratic Party, which Hull had served faithfully and long for so many years in the Senate and House of Representatives, paid greater heed to the Secretary's recommendations on broader foreign policy questions. Thus Hull recorded, with some bitterness and resentment, that the Democratic platform of 1936 completely ignored

the State Department's carefully drafted recommendations<sup>105</sup> on that subject, with the result that the party's foreign-policy plank—"one short paragraph"—seemed to Hull "a jumble of ideas or theories in which different persons had stuck their respective notions. It lugged in the theories about bankers and munitions manufacturers which the Nye Committee had exploited to the limit, and its reference to neutrality was directly in conflict with a world organization to preserve the peace."<sup>106</sup>

Hull left no doubt that he was deeply disturbed by the national convention's work. "I was dumbfounded, when the platform came out, to read the planks on tariffs and foreign affairs, which utterly ignored the suggestions I had submitted. I left the convention [in Philadelphia] after the [platform] committee made its report and went to Atlantic City with Mrs. Hull. . . . I protested to the President about these planks, but he gave me no reply of any consequence."<sup>107</sup> The implications of Roosevelt's unresponsiveness should have been clear to Hull. In the summer of 1936 foreign affairs meant little or nothing to Roosevelt, and the one campaign speech he devoted to the subject—his address at Chautaugua in August<sup>108</sup>—was one of the most unfortunate he ever delivered on the subject.

Although Hull did not say so, such presidential indifference, combined with the Secretary's own calculated restraint, could not have been, and no doubt was not, lost on the Germans, the Italians, and the Japanese. If 1937 was, as Churchill later described it, "the loaded pause,"<sup>109</sup> and if the Japanese took advantage of this pause, Hull nevertheless in this period continued to defend official policy which, in effect, sought to steer a middle course between "the extremes" of interventionism and isolationism. Thus for instance, at the Brussels Conference of November 1937, Hull vigorously defended American policy. "The impression has been created at Brussels," Hull cabled Norman H. Davis, the head of the American delegation to that conference on November 17, 1937, "that the other States represented there are willing and eager to adopt methods of pressure against Japan provided the United States would do so. . . . I invite your attention . . . to the fact that questions of methods of pressure against Japan are outside the scope of the present conference."<sup>110</sup> Looking back on Brussels ten years later, Hull remained satisfied with that policy which, he concluded, prevented Japan "from imposing her own peace on China. . . . It kept her from freeing herself for the conquest of all Asia. . . . It gave American public opinion time to perceive the basic issues involved. It gave the American Government time to prepare for the life-and-death struggle the Japanese war lords were planning."<sup>111</sup>

Such restraint, it seems clear, did not affect the desire of the virulently isolationist members of Congress to impose the strongest possible restrictions on the President's warmaking powers. Their efforts, as already observed, centered around the Ludlow Resolution, a proposal for a consti-

tutional amendment to require a popular referendum before war, save in case of attack on American territory, could be declared.<sup>112</sup> As Hull remembered, "to the President and me, the Ludlow Resolution seemed a disastrous move toward the most rigid form of isolationism. . . . If the resolution passed . . . it would indicate to the world that the nation no longer trusted the Administration to conduct its foreign affairs. It would serve notice on the aggressor nations that they could take any action anywhere in the world in direct violation of our rights and treaties, with little if any likelihood of any concrete reaction from Washington."<sup>113</sup>

From what has already been said, it should be clear that such apprehension on Secretary Hull's part was by no means unfounded, and Hull recorded with satisfaction the efforts made by Roosevelt and himself to block adoption of the Ludlow Resolution. These efforts proved in the end to be successful, but Hull neglected to say that some, perhaps most, of the most vigorous efforts in favor of this dubious measure came from the more liberal or radical members of the Democratic Party (many of whom, as already observed, had been elected in the Democratic landslide of 1936); that the President and his administration had waited until it was almost too late to defeat the proposal; that Roosevelt's evident unwillingness to oppose the international outlook of many newly elected members of Congress was in sharp contrast with his determination to alter the composition of the Supreme Court;<sup>114</sup> and that, although the administration ultimately prevailed in its efforts to block the Ludlow Resolution (and thus discourage similar proposals), the ensuing struggle may well have reinforced Hitler's determination to press ahead with his plans for the mastery of Europe—plans which he unveiled to his military leaders at a top secret conference in the Reich chancellory in Berlin on November 5, 1937.<sup>115</sup> The conflict also may have reinforced Neville Chamberlain, who had become British Prime Minister in May 1937, and other members of the British and French governments, in their conviction that, in any future conflict with Hitler and Mussolini, not to mention Japan, they might well have to fight alone. This, given their limited military strength, made it seem to them all the more necessary to attempt to reach some sort of accommodation with the aggressor states.

This state of mind, of course, underlay the policy of appeasement which, begun in the 1920's and early 1930's under very different circumstances,<sup>116</sup> reached a climax in 1938, beginning with the uncontested German annexation of Austria in March of that year. Two days after that event—of whose coming Hull and the State Department had been warned for some time<sup>117</sup>—Hull delivered an address on the foundations of American foreign policy before the National Press Club in Washington. In that address, whose text Roosevelt had approved enthusiastically in advance of its delivery ("C. H. Grand! F.D.R."<sup>118</sup>), Hull stresses the necessity for rearmament but empha-



sized—as the critics of American foreign policy in the Vietnam era would doubtless have been pleased to hear—that “we did not have the slightest intention to police the world.” It is, said Hull on that occasion, “our profound conviction that the most effective contribution which we can make to peace—in the tragic conditions with which our people, in common with the rest of mankind, are confronted today—is to have this country respected throughout the world for integrity, justice, good will, strength, and unswerving loyalty to principles.”<sup>119</sup>

Hull believed, as he put it in his memoirs, that “further than this speech we could not go. The points I made would not please an isolationist determined to confine us to our shores. They would not please an internationalist determined to commit us to alliances.”<sup>120</sup>

Although it seems doubtful whether, by early 1938, this policy of attempting to steer a middle course between isolationism and interventionism any longer served a useful purpose, there can be little doubt that there was much to be said for Hull’s determined opposition to the grandiose peace plans Roosevelt and Welles were considering in 1937-1938.<sup>121</sup> From everything now known about the intentions of the dictators—and from everything that was known at the time—it seems highly unlikely that the kind of spectacular peace initiative which the President and his Under Secretary of State had in mind would produce any substantial results.<sup>122</sup>

Regarding Hitler’s intentions in the spring and summer of 1938 there was no longer the slightest doubt. Czechoslovakia was clearly his next intended victim. To the story of American policy during the Munich crisis Hull added a number of important details, one of them being that American policy did not change essentially during the course of the crisis. Hull recalled, for instance, that on August 16 he had delivered a major radio address designed “to show our own people that an isolationist position would not protect them from the effects of a major war elsewhere,” and “to state to the Axis nations as emphatically as I could, considering the isolationist sentiment in the United States, that they could not count us out in pursuing their plans for conquest.”<sup>123</sup>

Not surprisingly, such a policy gave no material comfort to the beleaguered democracies and did not dissuade Hitler from his chosen path. On September 8, William C. Bullitt telegraphed a confidential inquiry from French Foreign Minister Georges Bonnet whether Roosevelt “would be willing to act as arbitrator in case of dire necessity”—a question Bonnet had previously posed to Bullitt on July 13.<sup>124</sup> Needless to say, Hull and the State Department discreetly turned aside both inquiries. As the *Foreign Relations* documents on the Munich crisis published in 1955 were to show, during that crisis the Department received a steady stream of information from all the major European capitals.<sup>125</sup> There was no shortage of information in Wash-



ington. It was something else, however, to put that information to appropriate use.

On September 21 the Canadian and Hungarian ministers paid separate calls on Secretary Hull, who told them:

Since August a year ago I have proceeded here on the theory that Japan definitely contemplates securing domination over as many hundreds of millions of people as possible in Eastern Asia and gradually extending her control through the Pacific islands to the Dutch East Indies and elsewhere, thereby dominating in practical effect that half of the world. . . . And at the same time I have gone on the theory that Germany is equally bent on becoming the dominating colossus of continental Europe.<sup>126</sup>

This being so, it may seem strange that as the Munich crisis neared its climax Hull did not move, at least in private, to align the United States more fully on the side of the democracies. But it seems clear that Hull made no such effort, not only perhaps because he feared the reaction of the powerful isolationist elements whose efforts he frequently lamented, but more likely also because he knew that the policy he was pursuing was in line with Roosevelt's own thinking and the policy the President wished him to pursue.

Although Roosevelt was clearly reluctant, if not entirely unwilling, to assume a leading role in the desperate search for peace in late August and September,<sup>127</sup> the democratic governments did not abandon their efforts to enlist his aid. On September 24, for instance, Bullitt cabled from Paris suggesting that Roosevelt propose a meeting of the British, French, German, Italian, and Polish chiefs of state at The Hague—carefully omitting all mention of the President of Czechoslovakia, Eduard Beneš—to resolve the mounting crisis.<sup>128</sup> The following day Beneš, acting through the American minister in Prague, asked Roosevelt to “urge the British and French not to desert Czechoslovakia and allow her destruction, thereby bringing closer a great conflict embracing not only Czechoslovakia but also the world.”<sup>129</sup>

Roosevelt ignored Beneš's appeal, and instead proceeded with one last initiative of his own, an effort Hull sought to discourage on the ground, as he recalled telling Roosevelt, that he felt that “nothing short of a sufficient amount of force or complete capitulation would halt Hitler in the pursuit of his plans. This meant that any steps to deal with him short of suitable force would necessarily be of an appeasement nature and purely temporary.”<sup>130</sup>

To be sure, there were limits beyond which even Roosevelt could or would not go. Like Hull, he declined to accept Bullitt's suggestion, made on September 25, that he offer himself as impartial arbitrator; and he likewise said no to Chamberlain's proposal, put forth on the 26th, that he be allowed to address the American people by radio the following evening<sup>131</sup>—a refusal which was bound to confirm Chamberlain's previously expressed conviction that “it is always best and safest to count on nothing from the Americans

but words."<sup>132</sup> There followed, as will be seen, Roosevelt's last appeal to Mussolini and Hitler in which Roosevelt proposed "an immediate conference in some neutral spot."<sup>133</sup> On the surface these appeared to be significant peace-keeping efforts, but, as Hull conspicuously failed to note, underlying all of Roosevelt's last minute appeals for peace was the unspoken assumption that the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia was only a matter of place and time. There is no evidence, even presented by Roosevelt's partisans, that the President thought, much less was ready to propose, that the question of transferring the Sudeten area, with all that such a transfer implied for the future of Czechoslovakia, should be considered on its merits and not on the basis of propagandistic and threatening German claims.

As regards the question whether American diplomacy, including Roosevelt's personal efforts, affected the ultimate outcome of the crisis, Hull found it "impossible to say . . . whether the actions taken by the President brought about" the Munich conference. "Undoubtedly," Hull concluded, "they exercised considerable influence."<sup>134</sup> It seems only fair to add that in his account Hull, like Welles, did not mention Roosevelt's congratulatory telegram to Chamberlain;<sup>135</sup> and as regards the outcome of the four power conference, Hull says nothing about Roosevelt's personal reaction,<sup>136</sup> but recalled that he himself had been "skeptical" of the results while Welles had been "optimistic,"<sup>137</sup> broadcasting to the country, a few days later, as already noted, that the prospects of "a new world order based upon justice and upon law were perhaps better than at any time during the past two decades."<sup>138</sup> Hull recalled that "it seemed to me that the colors in the picture were much darker,"<sup>139</sup> but he failed to mention the ill-starred, not to say rather tasteless, efforts of some administration supporters to paint the Munich settlement as a great victory of Rooseveltian diplomacy. The point did not escape Arthur Krock, the increasingly anti-New Deal Washington correspondent of *The New York Times*.<sup>140</sup>

In the last hours of the Munich crisis a scene took place at the State Department that reminds one of the last phase of the truce negotiations in Vietnam in late 1972, during which the United States apparently promised substantial postwar economic assistance to the North Vietnamese government, and reminds one further that at about the same time the United States also increased its efforts to step up trade with the Soviet Union despite the fact that the USSR had been a principal supplier of war matériel to the North Vietnamese.<sup>141</sup>

On the morning of September 28, the German ambassador, Dr. Hans Dieckhoff, just returned from Berlin, had an interview with Secretary Hull in the course of which, according to the latter, he "denied that Hitler had world ambitions" or that Hitler "wanted to acquire dominion over the territory of others." On the contrary, Dieckhoff reported that he had talked with

Hitler who was "taking a genuine interest in the United States and realized that readjustment of trade practices by his Government and also of the Jewish situation would be important, if not vital, in restoring satisfactory relations between the two countries." Hull replied that he "was deeply gratified to hear this." There was, Dieckhoff went on to say, "a growing interest among German high officials, from Hitler on down, in economic and trade relations." Hull responded that he felt sure "that if the German Government decides to change its course and adopt our liberal commercial policy, . . . capital and businessmen in other countries would immediately discover [the German] Government's basic change of policy, and your manufacturers would soon get credit with which to pay for raw materials."<sup>142</sup> But unlike the administration in office thirty-five years later, Hull made no offer of economic assistance, although the door to "economic appeasement"—a form of appeasement seriously considered, if not yet formally implemented, in London<sup>143</sup>—was clearly left ajar also in Washington.

It is one of the oddities of book reviewing that the aspects of a particular volume or volumes that might attract the most attention or publicity upon their publication may appear much less interesting and important a generation or two later. Thus when Hull's memoirs first appeared, in 1948, they received high praise especially for his fulsome exposition and defense of American policy toward Vichy France and French North Africa in 1940-1942, at that time a highly controversial subject.<sup>144</sup> Little attention was paid to Hull's account of American diplomacy in the Munich era, partly perhaps because there was then so little difference of opinion about the meaning of that period, second, because—in the absence of additional documentation—the course of American foreign policy in the Munich era had not yet attracted much scholarly attention, and, finally, because with the end of the war and Roosevelt's sudden death still fresh in public memory, the prevailing image of the President's prewar policies was still that of the staunch prophet and indomitable defender of democracy.<sup>145</sup>

Hull's account, although undoubtedly not designed for that purpose, should have sufficed to cast considerable doubt on Roosevelt's reputation in this regard, but such was not the case. Nor was Hull's personal response to the spread of aggression subjected to critical examination. In the absence of additional evidence, it would appear that Hull followed the course of action he did not only because he knew that it was in general accord with the President's own views, but because as one of the few surviving Wilsonians, he seems to have believed that, considering the disillusioned political and intellectual climate of the period, he was doing about as much as he could to discourage and contain the spread of aggression. The best example of Hull's posture in this regard may have been his dogged insistence on the continued non-recognition of certain foreign conquests, notably Italy's occu-

pation of Ethiopia, which, as Hull remarked with understandable satisfaction, the United States had never formally recognized.<sup>146</sup> This was one way in which, at minimum political risk, Hull could continue to cling to some tenets of the old Wilsonian faith. It seems clear also that Hull was not for a moment influenced by the highly one-sided and propagandistic efforts of such bodies as the Nye Committee to impugn the veracity of President Wilson and his deep devotion to peace. Thus at the height of the Nye Committee's activities in January 1935 the normally restrained Secretary of State told a press conference with considerable feeling: "I served here in an official capacity during the Wilson Administration and, needless to say, in common with the American public, I have the highest—I had and have always maintained—the highest regard for his patriotism and scrupulous honesty."<sup>147</sup>

Such statements, however deeply felt and passionately delivered, did not and could not reverse the powerful anti-Wilsonian tide, which in a sense was at the heart of the neutralist or isolationist temper of the time. If Hull's account of the Munich era contains a major shortcoming, it would seem to lie in his inability to recognize that he, Roosevelt, and the administration could not hope to win the battle for a truly responsible foreign policy unless they were prepared to confront a hostile or unreceptive political and intellectual climate, and by doing so reverse it.<sup>148</sup> It was a symbolic expression of the prevailing diffidence of power, that they never really tried until, in 1940-1941, it was nearly too late.

### III

Despite the wealth of interesting details contained in the accounts of Ambassador Dodd and Secretary Hull, and the significant judgments of Secretary Stimson, the full story and significance of American policy in the years immediately preceding the second world war did not become known until the 1950's—first with the publication, in 1952, of Professors Langer and Gleason's *The Challenge to Isolation 1937-1940* and the concurrent appearance of the State Department's *Foreign Relations* volumes on American diplomacy in the Munich era.<sup>149</sup>

Based on a wealth of unpublished material from the files of the Department of State, from the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library at Hyde Park, and from numerous other sources, superbly organized and closely reasoned, *The Challenge to Isolation* devoted only two opening chapters,<sup>150</sup> but magnificently achieved ones, to American diplomacy in the Munich era. It did not give Roosevelt or American policy high marks for perspicacity, foresight, or effectiveness. Assessing, for example, Mr. Roosevelt's much-discussed peace efforts in 1937-1938, Langer and Gleason conclude:

Since the publication of Axis records captured during the war, it has become perfectly patent that the ambitions of the Nazi leaders went far beyond what reasonable statesmen in other countries would have thought possible at the time, and that therefore the move contemplated by Mr. Roosevelt, like the appeasement efforts of Mr. Chamberlain, would probably have been doomed to failure. Conceivably, a really strong stand by the United States Government in support of the British might have changed the course of events, but the foregoing narrative should suffice to show that nothing of the kind was even remotely envisaged in Washington. Mr. Roosevelt and his advisers sympathized with the British and wished them well in whatever efforts they felt constrained to make in the direction of peaceful adjustment, but there was never any question of approving or supporting their specific policy and certainly no thought of assuming any political or military commitment in connection with it. Under the circumstances Hitler was perfectly safe in discounting the influence of the United States.<sup>151</sup>

Deplorable as it may be, the fact of the matter is that for a number of reasons Langer and Gleason's outstanding volumes, although warmly received, never quite achieved the recognition and influence they deserved.<sup>152</sup> One reason may have been that their unsentimental treatment of Roosevelt's prewar foreign policy was—and indeed remains—difficult, if not impossible, for the late President's partisans to accept.<sup>153</sup>

By the early 1950's the American public was largely preoccupied with the Communist victory in China, with the protracted war in Korea, and the volatile charges of Senator Joseph R. McCarthy, some of whose most valuable and influential supporters—including Robert A. Taft—had long been critical of Roosevelt's prewar foreign policy, although not for the reasons carefully spelled out by Langer and Gleason but on the alleged ground that the Roosevelt administration had needlessly, if indeed not deliberately, involved the United States in another world conflict.<sup>154</sup>

It was about the same time—the early 1950's—that the Department of State's outstanding documentary series *Foreign Relations of the United States* reached the years after 1933 and that scholars and the interested public alike were able to assess for themselves the precise role the United States had played in world affairs in the years immediately preceding the outbreak of war in September 1939.

By the early 1950's, however, the public which had avidly followed the dramatic disclosures in Churchill's war memoirs had begun to lose interest in the prewar period, and even James MacGregor Burns's *The Lion and the Fox*—the first volume of his outstanding biography of Roosevelt which appeared in 1956 and which contained an excellent account of the President's diplomacy in the Munich era—failed to achieve its full and deserved impact. As Professor Burns rightly pointed out:

[Roosevelt] hoped that people would be educated by events; the error of this policy was that the dire events in Europe and Asia confirmed the American suspicion and fear of involvement rather than prodding them into awareness of the need for collective action by the democracies. In short, a decisive act of interpretation was required, but Roosevelt did not interpret.<sup>155</sup>



In any case, whatever the reason, the publication of works like Langer and Gleason's and of Burns's biography did little or nothing to alter Roosevelt's firmly established image as an inveterate foe of despotism and totalitarian aggression before and after Pearl Harbor—an image carefully cultivated by most of the President's former associates and by such influential liberal writers as John Gunther, and subsequently Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.<sup>156</sup>

Even before World War II [Gunther wrote in *Roosevelt in Retrospect*, published in 1950] he had become the acknowledged leader not merely of American democracy but of that of the entire world. Roosevelt knew perfectly well that the climate of the United States was overwhelmingly isolationist. . . . Confusion, greed, cowardice, inertia paralyzed the public mind. . . . FDR understood Hitler, and this was a highly important contribution; he managed to communicate to the United States how dangerous and menacing he really was. . . . what is more Roosevelt understood the philosophy behind Hitler, the state of mind that produced this ugly genius and monster. . . . he knew that Hitler's real "secret weapon" was the ineptness, the complacency, and the selfishness of the democracies. . . . The President's correct appreciation of the malign forces then at work is the more remarkable in that he was so inadequately—even evilly—served by some of his ambassadors. Several notable emissaries were as isolationist as senators like Nye and [Burton K.] Wheeler. Then too FDR had to wage a running battle with venomous "minor league Metternichs" in his own State Department, some of whom came close to sabotaging their own chief.<sup>157</sup>

On the other hand, it must be said that Gunther, for one, was too independent and honest an observer of the contemporary scene to ignore or suppress contrary evidence.

Many Americans today [Gunther wrote elsewhere in *Roosevelt in Retrospect*] consider soberly that he might have, and should have, taken a much stronger line against the Axis than he did. . . . that his hesitations gave stimulus to the enemy, who may have been deluded into the notion that we would not fight no matter what. FDR, it seemed, forever tiptoed to the edge of a decision, then see-sawed away. His "lack of leadership," a member of Mr. Truman's present Cabinet once told me, "seemed almost criminal." The reason was of course that he had to continue to make every possible effort for peace in order to placate antiwar and isolationist sentiment, and his hold on Congress was getting shaky.<sup>158</sup>

This is not the place for a detailed critical appreciation of the documentary record contained in the *Foreign Relations* volumes on the Munich era, although it may be observed, without much fear of contradiction, that the evidence contained in these volumes told a rather different story from that which Mr. Roosevelt's uncritical admirers preferred to believe and continued to expound. To be sure, the *Foreign Relations* volumes left no doubt that throughout these years the United States had been represented abroad by a number of unusually competent and well-informed diplomats, including men like Robert W. Bingham in London, Claude G. Bowers in Madrid, William C. Bullitt first in Moscow and later in Paris, William E. Dodd in Berlin, Joseph C. Grew in Tokyo, Nelson T. Johnson in Chungking, and George S. Messersmith in Vienna. It was one thing, however, for the United



States to be represented by such able and perceptive diplomats, and quite another for Roosevelt to profit from their remarkably full and informative reports on what was happening abroad; and, as will become evident later, even most of the perspicacious diplomats mentioned above did not entirely escape the temptation to separate evidence and conclusion,<sup>159</sup> and to emphasize the case for American non-involvement on the increasingly troubled international scene,<sup>160</sup> in their reporting and in their personal communications with the President.

It may be said, then, that the *Foreign Relations* volumes included hundreds of cables, letters, and other reports showing how the political, diplomatic, and military situation in Europe and elsewhere in the world had steadily deteriorated after 1933.

The great majority of citizens had not the slightest idea of the existence, much less of the invaluable contents, of these impressive documentary volumes, which were invariably ignored by even the most widely respected book reviews. However, their publication left little doubt that President Roosevelt—who had personally appointed every one of these diplomats, who were in a technical sense his personal representatives to the governments to which they were accredited—was probably the best informed head of state in the world. Moreover, in addition to these formal diplomatic reports, the President received throughout the prewar years, at his own request, a remarkable series of personal letters from his diplomatic representatives, letters which amplified and reinforced the information contained in their official despatches, but which, with few exceptions, were not published until the appearance of the Nixon volumes in April 1969.<sup>161</sup>

But if the documents published in the *Foreign Relations* series left no doubt as regards the volume or quality of the President's foreign intelligence, they left no doubt either about Mr. Roosevelt's unwillingness to respond promptly and effectively to the rising tide of totalitarianism and aggression, whether in Europe, Africa, or the Far East. To be sure, Mr. Roosevelt's wavering course as regards the London Economic Conference of June-July 1933—a course of action or inaction which did the United States considerable political and diplomatic damage—had long been public knowledge, but as things turned out this was only the first and perhaps one of the least damaging of the President's egregious diplomatic blunders.

It should be pointed out that Roosevelt's ineptitude in foreign affairs was not entirely overlooked even by those of his former associates who continued, in the main, to hold him in high esteem. For example, in the closing pages of his affectionate memoir *1933: Characters in Crisis*, the late Herbert Feis, at that time Economic Adviser to the Secretary of State, recalled,

that there was a great gap in thoughts about foreign affairs between [Roosevelt's] aspirations and his command of the means of attaining them was evidenced in an address he

made on December 28 [1933] at the annual dinner of the band of Woodrow Wilson devotees—of which he had once been the leader. The crystal and silver on the white table cloths as well as the uplooking faces all gleamed the more warmly as he spoke. But his utterance, I reflected as I listened, was really a speech in defense of having to turn at least half way from Wilsonian ideas, and of the American people for requiring him to do so. In this he seemed to me to be trying to cover over or cover up the gap, but he failed.<sup>162</sup>

It was not long before the Roosevelt administration began to give more concrete demonstration of its response to the growing world crisis. "We are furthermore willing," Norman H. Davis, a close friend of the President and chairman of the American delegation to the General Disarmament Conference at Geneva, told a meeting of the General Commission of that conference on May 29, 1934, "in connection with a general disarmament convention, to negotiate a universal pact of non-aggression and to join with other nations in conferring on international problems growing out of any treaties to which we are a party," but—as if to emphasize the schizophrenic nature of American foreign policy—he quickly added that "the United States will not, however, participate in European political negotiations and settlements and will not make any commitment whatever to use its armed forces for the settlement of any dispute anywhere."<sup>163</sup>

Shortsighted as were his policies during the London Economic Conference, un reassuring as was his address to the Woodrow Wilson Foundation, and discouraging as was American policy at the Geneva Disarmament Conference, far more ominous was Mr. Roosevelt's inadequate response to several other fateful international crises preceding Munich, including the Rhineland crisis, the Spanish Civil War, and finally the Nine Power or Brussels Conference of late 1937. In all these instances the *Foreign Relations* volumes told the essential story of Rooseveltian diplomacy in damaging detail.

As regards the Rhineland crisis, the *Foreign Relations* documents (published in late 1953) revealed that on March 8, 1936, the day after German military forces had moved into the demilitarized zone, the French Government, acting through Jesse Isidor Straus, former President of R. H. Macy and a close personal friend of the President, asked "that [because of England's vacillation] some statement might be made by [the President] or by the Secretary of State condemning on moral grounds any unilateral repudiation of a treaty . . . the President's words would have wide attention and real effect particularly in England," to which Straus—who doubtless knew what sort of response the President wanted made to such a request—replied that "in view of the state of public opinion in the United States on the question of neutrality I could not comment on [the] request or on the reception it might encounter but that I would be glad [to] transmit it in the precise terms in which [it] had [been] outlined . . . to me."<sup>164</sup>

Coming as it did less than eight months before the Presidential election, and although made through diplomatic channels, the French request must

have been an acute embarrassment to Roosevelt. To be sure, the French Government had not asked the United States for direct assistance in the crisis, nor indeed was it suggesting any specific course of action. The French no doubt hoped, however, that the President would make some sort of statement that would clearly align the United States on the side of Britain and France and against this latest German violation of its international obligations.

Roosevelt, who was no stranger to the subtleties of international relations, quickly perceived the possible danger the French request posed to his studied policy of American neutrality. Even before the French request was formally received in Washington, the question of American interest in the continued demilitarization of the Rhineland had been referred to the legal experts of the Department of State. After examining the appropriate documents, especially the separate American-German peace treaty of Berlin of October 1921, they quickly came to the conclusion that while the latter treaty gave the United States all the rights and privileges the treaty of Versailles had given Britain and France, the treaty of Berlin made no mention of the demilitarization of the Rhineland, thus relieving the United States of any formal obligation to act or even to express a formal opinion as regards Hitler's move.<sup>165</sup>

The French Government was at once informed accordingly. "We understand and appreciate thoroughly the French Government's desire that we give a public statement with regard to the present situation," Secretary of State Hull cabled Ambassador Straus in Paris, "but I feel sure that they will also understand that in view of the procedure provided for application to the present situation we do not feel that we could appropriately make any comment at this time."<sup>166</sup> It is not known whether the French Government made any response to this message. It requires no special powers of imagination, however, to surmise what the reaction of the French Government was when the formal American response was delivered in Paris a few days later.

It remained for George S. Messersmith, the American minister in Austria, and one of the truly outstanding diplomats of his time, to sum up the significance of Hitler's Rhineland coup, and he did so in a magnificent memorandum to Secretary Hull on March 9, 1936 (a memorandum which should be required reading for every student of the 1930's and of contemporary world politics):

Perhaps the most important single basic factor disturbing Europe today [Messersmith began] is that facts are not being generally faced and given the interpretation which common sense dictates and met with the action which elementary prudence obviously requires. This applies whether the facts be political, economic or fiscal.

The greatest danger and the one which threatens to destroy Europe is not facing the facts with respect to Germany and Italy, particularly with respect to Germany, in which the situation is essentially more dangerous, because of its nature and the potential power of the forces behind it. . . . Europe is now hampered in facing facts through an unprepared

public opinion. Even in some of the best informed foreign offices and in some well informed financial and industrial circles there is a tendency to hold to illusions. . . . The fundamental fact which Europe has to face today is that the National Socialist régime in Germany is based on a program of ruthless force, which program has for its aim, first, the enslavement of the German population to a National Socialist social and political program, and then to use the forces of these 67 million people for the extension of German political and economic sovereignty over South-Eastern Europe—thus putting it into a position to dominate Europe completely and to place France and England definitely in the position of secondary powers. From this position of vantage the National Socialist program contemplates that Germany will be able to dictate its policies to the rest of the world.

Hitler had already made substantial progress toward that goal and unless his methods and tactics were understood and effectively countered, the prospect for avoiding the triumph of National Socialism were dim indeed.

If the present progress of fulfillment of the National Socialist program continues, she will become the most powerful country in Europe and its dictator, without striking a warlike blow. . . . It is known that National Socialist Germany holds as one of its primary doctrines that agreements are only entered into as a means to an end, and that they must be denounced ruthlessly when they have served their purpose. . . . [Outside] Germany [National Socialism] knows how to play upon the fears of Europe as well as the better feelings of its people and governments. National Socialist Germany knows that Europe, with the memories of the horrors of the last war, does not want another. It knows that the veterans of the last war in every country, with the horrors of that war still so vivid in their minds, are inclined to listen to and support the peace moves from Germany. . . . The policy of National Socialism of a series of *faits accomplis* towards the gaining of its ends is, therefore, based on this idea that the fear of war outside of Germany will keep off actual war against Germany or definite action against her until Germany herself is ready to strike the crushing blow.

Messersmith reminded Hull that the remilitarization of the Rhineland had been anticipated for months and that it was clear that Austria was next on Hitler's list.

At least four months ago, it was known what the next German move would be and that it would be the reoccupation of the Rhineland. It was known that this move would be made, and at the first opportune moment. This information came from party sources, and time has shown how correct it was. The same party sources indicated at that time that after the reoccupation of the Rhineland the next step would be the absorption of Austria. If Hitler endeavored to divert attention . . . from Austria to colonies, it is only one of the characteristic moves of the Hitler régime.

Summing up, Messersmith had no doubt as to what needed to be done and what lay ahead.

The task for England and France is as difficult as any by which they have ever been confronted. The only solution would seem to lie in their determined and complete common action expressed in such a way that it will be understandable to public opinion in Germany and throughout Europe and most unmistakably to those in control in Berlin. There is only one way to deal with the German régime of today, and that is to meet its brutal ruthless action by an equally determined stand. It is the only language which that régime understands, as it is the only language which it can talk. . . .

It is up to Europe now to decide whether it will face the facts, and there is still time. It is perhaps too much to say that this will be the last chance which Europe has to save itself from the ultimate catastrophe of a great war, but there are many indications that this is the turning point on which the future course towards the war or peace will be determined.<sup>167</sup>

In his memorandum, Messersmith made no reference to the possible role of the United States in the stabilization of the European balance of power, but in a communication to Assistant Secretary Phillips, Messersmith made clear what the Rhineland coup might ultimately mean to the United States and—somewhat surprisingly perhaps—where he himself stood as regards American intervention.

I feel that we have a great interest in [British and French firmness] for if this question is settled now as it can be settled, the chances are 99 out of 100 that we can stay out of [any war risked in the process] and that it will soon be over. If there is weakness and the Germans are allowed to fortify their western frontier, a war in a year or so hence is inevitable if the régime is able to hold on that long, and in that case the chances of our being able to stay out will certainly be less than 50-50, and in my opinion a good deal less, and this is the opinion, as you know, of one who believes so strongly that we should do everything to endeavor to stay out.<sup>168</sup>

It is not known whether Roosevelt saw Messersmith's memorandum to Secretary Hull, or what his response was if he did. In any event, as far as the United States was concerned, the remilitarization of the Rhineland was an accomplished fact and the government in Washington seemed disinclined to worry much about its immediate or long term consequences.

No sooner had the shock waves from the Rhineland crisis begun to fade away than the United States and the other western democracies were confronted with another, and in some ways even more serious, challenge—the so-called Spanish Civil War. There can be little doubt that, for the first few days and weeks perhaps, the Spanish struggle was indeed the result of purely domestic issues, and that, initially at least, the Franco rebellion was entirely a Spanish affair. It seems clear that in several respects the Spanish Republican government had not managed its affairs well, and that there was doubtless some justified reason for widespread disaffection in that long troubled land.<sup>169</sup> On the other hand, whatever the domestic origins of the Spanish struggle, it seems equally clear that if Franco had not soon begun to receive substantial military assistance from Mussolini and Hitler, his rebellion would probably have been speedily crushed. Before long, the Spanish Civil War was no more an internal conflict than the Vietnam struggle of the 1960's and early 1970's; there is no longer any doubt that the ultimate triumph of Franco, in early 1939, was by no means the result of his greater wisdom and political vitality. It was the direct result of outside—that is, German and Italian—intervention.

There is no question that Roosevelt's personal sympathies were from the



beginning of the struggle entirely on the side of the Republic. It seems likely also that Roosevelt was well aware that the policy of so-called "non-intervention"—which the British and French had incomprehensibly enough agreed on with the Axis powers<sup>170</sup>—was faithfully adhered to by the former and continually violated by the latter, and was in effect therefore a sure prescription for fascist victory. It seems equally clear that domestic political considerations were largely responsible for his unwillingness to speak out on behalf of the Republic and to find some means of allowing the embattled legitimate government to purchase arms for its defense. In retrospect, it seems likely that Roosevelt overestimated the degree of American Catholic support for the Franco rebels. But as is so often the case in history, appearances are more important than reality. So Roosevelt accepted—and eventually strongly defended<sup>171</sup>—the misconceived policy of "non-intervention."

There is no question either that Roosevelt and the Department of State were well informed about what was going on in Spain. The American ambassador there, Claude G. Bowers, the Jefferson biographer and Wilsonian Democrat, was one of Roosevelt's ablest and most conscientious diplomats.<sup>172</sup> As the *Foreign Relations* documents on Spain, published between 1954 and 1956, show at length, Bowers bombarded Washington with a steady stream of telegrams and personal letters calling the government's urgent attention to what was going on in Spain and the meaning of those events.<sup>173</sup>

None of these messages seems to have had the slightest effect. On the contrary, as James MacGregor Burns has pointed out, Roosevelt's "first decisive step—taken significantly during the 1936 campaign—was to put a moral embargo on the export of arms to both sides."<sup>174</sup> Shortly after, he asked the Congress to ban all arms shipments to Spain under the existing neutrality act. Early in 1938 Roosevelt seems for a brief moment to have wavered and to have considered lifting the embargo, but he soon dropped the idea, supposedly because, as he told Interior Secretary Harold Ickes, "to raise the embargo would mean the loss of every Catholic vote in the coming fall election . . . and Democratic congressmen opposed it."<sup>175</sup>

The totalitarian states, of course, followed closely Roosevelt's response to the Spanish conflict, and the German government, as we know from its diplomatic documents captured during the second world war, was well aware of Roosevelt's "non-intervention" policy and the benefit it conferred on the rebel forces.<sup>176</sup> It is more difficult to say what was the worldwide effect of Roosevelt's abstemious course, but the unwillingness of the United States to consider the global implications of the Ethiopian and Spanish conflicts undoubtedly encouraged those elements in Berlin, Rome, and Tokyo who believed that the time had come to push their expansionist policies with new and undiminished vigor.

While Washington and the other democratic capitals were still largely

concerned with the war in Spain, the struggle in China, which had been intermittently dormant the last few years, broke out with new intensity in the summer of 1937. And as regards the Far Eastern crisis of 1937—and particularly the Nine Power (or Brussels) Conference of November 1937—the American response to the growing menace of Japanese expansion was no more reassuring to Britain, China, France, and Holland than had been the American response to Hitler's aggressive moves in Europe. The Nine Power treaty of 1922, to be sure, did not formally oblige the United States to take concerted action to preserve the territorial and political status quo in China. Indeed, Article VII of that treaty provided merely that "whenever a situation arises which in the opinion of any one of them involves the application of the stipulations of the present Treaty, and renders desirable discussion of such application, there shall be full and frank communication between the Contracting Parties concerned."<sup>177</sup> Hence, although the status quo had clearly been challenged by repeated Japanese actions beginning with the Manchurian invasion of September 1931, the United States never seriously considered joint action with Britain, France, and Holland to counter Japanese moves against China. This was made unmistakably clear to the other democratic governments, and to their diplomatic representatives in Washington.<sup>178</sup> When Norman H. Davis, head of the American delegation to the Brussels conference, called on the President at Hyde Park just before sailing for Europe, in October 1937, he was specifically instructed by Mr. Roosevelt not to enter into, indeed not even to discuss, any possible joint action with the other democracies to stop the spread of aggression in the Far East:

It should be recognized by the British Cabinet [declared a Presidential memorandum designed for Ambassador Davis's guidance] that there is such a thing as public opinion in the United States, as well as in other nations . . . it is necessary for Mr. Davis and his associates in the Nine Power meeting to make it clear at every step: (a) That the United States is in no way, and will not be in any way, a party to a joint action with the League of Nations. (b) That the United States policy does not envisage the United States being pushed out in front as the leader in, or suggestor of, future action. (c) That on the other side of the picture, the United States cannot afford to be made, in popular opinion at home, a tail to the British kite, as has been charged and is now being charged by the Hearst press and others.<sup>179</sup>

Under these circumstances—and not because of the Japanese boycott of the conference (the reason frequently given for its failure)—the Brussels conference was doomed to certain failure from the moment of its convocation. After three weeks of pointless discussion, public and private, the conference was adjourned without proving anything except the continued disunity and ineffectiveness of the Western democracies, headed by the United States, in the face of spreading international lawlessness and aggression.<sup>180</sup> It is not difficult to imagine what conclusion the Japanese

Government—and for that matter the German also—drew from American policy statements at Brussels.<sup>181</sup>

As expected, other top officials in the Roosevelt administration followed faithfully the President's own neutralist stance. Thus following repeated German treaty violations after January 1933, Secretary of State Hull, as already noted, issued carefully worded statements in which he invariably deplored such German measures, but immediately qualified his disapproval by disavowing any direct American concern over such German action, leaving no doubt that the United States would take no steps to guard against additional German treaty violations in the future.<sup>182</sup> For instance, when Secretary Hull delivered such a pronouncement at a news conference two days after the German remilitarization of the Rhineland, the German ambassador in Washington, Hans Luther, reported dutifully to Berlin that Mr. Hull had said that "although he was keeping himself informed of events in Europe, he had no cause at all to concern himself with the Rhineland question."<sup>183</sup>

Sometimes, to be sure, President Roosevelt himself let the cat out of the bag. There is a good illustration of such an incident in Anthony Eden's memoirs of the 1930's.

There now came [Eden wrote] in January 1936 from the other side of the Atlantic an indication of the potential strength and actual limitations of American policy. On January 6th, President Roosevelt, in a public speech, roughly criticized the aims and methods of dictators. I heard from our Ambassador in Berlin that the Führer was surprised and upset by these remarks. [Sir Eric] Phipps added, however, that this aspect of the President's speech carried no weight with Hitler, in comparison with Roosevelt's renewed declaration that America would in future remain aloof and observe neutrality in European affairs. 'There has', Hitler said, according to Phipps' report, 'been no development during recent years more welcome than this.'<sup>184</sup>

Three months afterward Hitler marched into the Rhineland, with the American response already noted, and two summers later followed the Munich crisis.

There have been many books on Munich, and this is not the place to discuss at length the history of American diplomacy during that crisis save to point out, as already suggested, that, at the height of the crisis, in September 1938, Roosevelt revealed himself to be largely insensitive and indifferent to the needs and feelings of the democratic states—including Czechoslovakia. Yet, by the end of the crisis, Roosevelt emerged with his reputation as a champion of peace and freedom more firmly established than ever, and, although Roosevelt clearly approved of Chamberlain's course of action, the President himself was never tarnished with the brush of appeasement.<sup>185</sup>

That Roosevelt should have thus escaped must be reckoned part of his charmed political life and reputation. It seems not to have occurred to most historians to ask whether Britain and France could have been expected to

stand by Czechoslovakia without some form or expression of support from the United States, and until very recently it was not clear whether Roosevelt ever considered, or was ever confronted with, the question of whether or not to express himself—publicly or through diplomatic channels—to the point where Hitler was likely to think twice about moving against Czechoslovakia. Although the Roosevelt Library has not yet published all its documents for this period, the recently printed correspondence of Roosevelt and Ambassador Bullitt confirms that the latter did, six weeks before Munich, pose the problem squarely for the President:

Fear of the United States [Bullitt wrote Roosevelt in a "personal and strictly confidential letter" on August 17, 1938] is unquestionably a large factor in Hitler's hesitation to start a war. If, in September, Europe should again appear to be on the verge of war, a quiet conversation between you and the German ambassador in the White House might have more effect in deterring Germany from acting against Czechoslovakia with armed force than all the public speeches you or anyone else could make. You would not have to say anything except recite a few facts. Suppose you were to say that you hoped Germany was not about to place you in the same position in which President Wilson was placed in 1914. Suppose you should add that he must be as aware as you were that although public opinion in America before the commencement of the war in 1914 had been very favorable to Germany, public opinion in America was now most hostile to Germany; and that he must be as aware as you were that if war should begin between England and France on one side and Germany on the other, there was a possibility that the United States would be drawn in.

You might add that you would be glad if he would transmit what you had said to Hitler and bid him good-bye.<sup>186</sup>

It is interesting to speculate, thirty-five years later, what might have happened if Roosevelt had indeed called in the German ambassador and talked to him as Bullitt had suggested. In the event, no such meeting ever occurred, no doubt in the first place for the reason that Roosevelt did not agree with Bullitt's suggestion and was determined to follow a very different course of action in the last weeks and days of the crisis.

Thus the documentary record, as published in *Foreign Relations of the United States* in 1955, reveals for instance that when, on September 25, President Beneš of Czechoslovakia appealed to Roosevelt "to urge the British and French Governments . . . not to desert [his] country and permit it to be destroyed and thus bring nearer a greater conflict vital to them as well as to the peace of the world,"<sup>187</sup> Roosevelt declined to make any direct reply to Beneš's appeal but instead, the following day, sent identical messages to Hitler, Chamberlain, Prime Minister Daladier of France and Beneš, expressing to each his confidence that "so long as these negotiations continue"—this message, it should be noted, was dispatched several days after the Czech Government had, under severest Anglo-French pressure, accepted Hitler's humiliating Godesberg terms—"so long will there remain the hope that reason and the spirit of equity

may prevail and that the world may thereby escape the madness of a new resort to war."<sup>188</sup>

Even more deplorable was the message Roosevelt sent to Hitler on the evening of September 27. It conveniently sidestepped the question of Hitler's responsibility for the growing crisis, included an evocation of the fashionable theory of "peaceful change" (which held that the single most important characteristic of any international agreement was that all political and territorial changes should be made by "peaceful" means, however distasteful, dangerous, and unwise such changes might otherwise prove to be),<sup>189</sup> suggested the possibility of an international conference to deal with Hitler's insatiable ego, and concluded with a reassertion of American determination to have nothing to do with any European political settlement. In all, it was a message that could not possibly have discomfited Hitler:

The question before the world today, Mr. Chancellor [Roosevelt cabled Hitler], is not the question of errors of judgment or of injustice committed in the past. . . . It is, therefore, supremely important that negotiations should continue without interruption until a fair and constructive solution is reached. . . . Whatever existing differences may be, and what their merits may be—and upon them I do not and need not undertake to pass—my appeal is solely that negotiations be continued until a peaceful settlement is found, and thereby a resort to force be avoided. Present negotiations still stand open. They can be continued if you give the word. Should the need for supplementing them become evident, nothing stands in the way of widening their scope into a conference of all the nations directly interested in the present controversy. Such a meeting to be held immediately—in some neutral spot in Europe—would offer the opportunity for this and correlated questions to be solved in a spirit of justice, of fair dealing, and, in all human probability, with greater permanence. Should you agree to a solution in this peaceful manner I am convinced that hundreds of millions throughout the world would recognize your action as an outstanding historic service to all humanity. . . . The Government of the United States has no political involvement in Europe, and will assume no obligation in the conduct of present negotiations.<sup>190</sup>

Worst of all, however, was the personal message to Ambassador Joseph P. Kennedy in London which Roosevelt wrote out in his own hand at the White House upon being informed that Neville Chamberlain had just told a stunned House of Commons in London that he accepted Mussolini's invitation to meet with him, Hitler, and Daladier at Munich the next day—a message which was dispatched from Washington at 1 p.m. September 28. The message read simply:

Personal for the Ambassador. Transmit urgently following message to Prime Minister Chamberlain: "Good Man. Signed Franklin D. Roosevelt."<sup>191</sup>

Within forty-eight hours Roosevelt, together with Neville Chamberlain, was being inundated with, and graciously accepting, the voluminous plaudits of a grateful world for everything he had done to save mankind from the ravages of another great war.<sup>192</sup>



It remained for George Messersmith, whom Roosevelt had by that time brought back from Vienna and appointed Assistant Secretary of State, to sum up the meaning of the Munich crisis and settlement as he had so presciently commented on the Rhineland coup thirty months earlier. In a memorandum addressed to Secretary Hull on September 29, 1938, Messersmith wrote:

Needless to say I shared yesterday the general relief which was felt by, I am sure, all of us when the news came over the ticker that an immediate outbreak of hostilities was to be avoided by the four-power meeting at Munich today. I believe, however, that thoughtful, well-informed persons must have this optimism and relief seriously tempered by fears that the greatest mistakes made in handling the European and German problem may be made now. If, in the desire to avoid the war with which Hitler is threatening Europe and the world, too far-reaching concessions are made, we will find that instead of arranging for peace a war has been made inevitable. . . . If arrangements are made at Munich now or in a general conference elsewhere later which are a cynical sellout of principle—just to avoid a war, and if Hitler will get promises of economic help, which he is certain to ask for, it will mean that the present Government in Germany will be solidified in power, given permanence and means to exist and fatten, and then through the avoidance of war now we should only have put Germany in a position to carry through successfully the war which she intends to fight and which she is not in a position to wage successfully now.

I do not wish to assume [Messersmith continued] and am not assuming a defeatist attitude. I have continuously from the beginning of the totalitarian regimes endeavored to maintain a constructive but at the same time a realistic attitude. To face the real situation is not taking a defeatist attitude but a realistic one. The Germany with which certain arrangements could have been made under Stresemann and Brüning is a different Germany from the one we have to deal with under Hitler today in many ways. And arrangements which were then possible, and which would have been constructive, are today impossible until there is a regime of law and order in Germany. Certain economic arrangements will eventually have to be made and should be made as soon as possible but they can only be made with safety with a Government in Germany which has definite respect for the rights of others—large and small—and which is not aimed at world domination.

Messersmith concluded:

It is necessary for us, as I feel all of us in this country will, to keep our heads and maintain the long-range view. There are grave dangers in the situation even in this country. A few months after the present Government came into power, Goebbels was telling me what the Party was going to do in order to regiment the German population in every way and to make it an instrument of the state. I remarked that the methods which had been employed in Russia and which he was planning to employ in Germany would probably not be successful as the German population was much more intelligent and informed. Goebbels, who is the most profound cynic in the world today, said in German the equivalent of the following, "There is nothing so untrue which if repeated often enough all the people will not end in believing." As a fundamental practice of National Socialist Government this requires no elucidation. How dangerously true it is is reflected in the growing opinion in this country that the Czechoslovakian Government has really oppressed and ravaged the Sudeten area. The world has apparently ended in believing that what was in reality a certain unequal treatment of the Sudeten was in effect a regime of barbarity and oppression. There is food for thought in this.<sup>193</sup>

Hull was so impressed with Messersmith's memorandum that he sent it on to President Roosevelt for his perusal.<sup>194</sup> It is not known if Roosevelt read Messersmith's memorandum, and if so, what he thought of it, but there will be few who, reading Messersmith's assessment thirty-five years later, will not regret that he did not exert a greater influence on American foreign policy in the Munich era.

#### IV

Nearly fifteen years passed between the appearance of the *Foreign Relations* documents on the Munich crisis and the publication by the Roosevelt Library, in April 1969, of a three-volume compilation, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and Foreign Affairs 1933-1937*, an official U.S. government publication prepared by Edgar B. Nixon, former Assistant Director of the Library.

This is not the place to discuss the background of these volumes, the propriety of their publication by a private university press, the unsuccessful attempt of that press (with the connivance of the government) to obtain an illegal copyright on these volumes, the systematic concealment of that compilation during most of the decade it was in preparation, or, as already noted,<sup>195</sup> the deliberate concealment and withholding of some of the most interesting and important documents in this compilation from scholars who wished to use them for their own work.<sup>196</sup> Whatever one's judgment on these aspects of the Nixon volumes, or on their editorial design and adequacy, they are bound to add considerably to our knowledge and understanding of Roosevelt's approach to foreign affairs during the Munich era. On the other hand, separate publication in November 1972 of the correspondence of Roosevelt and Bullitt revealed that the Nixon volumes had omitted a number of important letters, raising anew the question of the usefulness and completeness of Nixon's work.

In his introduction to the recently published Roosevelt-Bullitt correspondence, George F. Kennan has suggested that the President was not a great letter writer and has gone on to draw certain larger conclusions from the nature of Roosevelt's exchanges with Bullitt.

It was no doubt [Kennan writes] the part of wisdom in the President not to reveal his thoughts in letters which were, for the most part, dispatched abroad and might easily find their way, by the vicissitudes of politics and war, into the wrong hands. His responsibility, after all, was greater than that of his Ambassador. Still, such is the level of triviality in these brief Presidential notes—the superficiality, the forced and often unsuccessful humor, the studied avoidance of every serious subject—that they do not reflect very happily on the qualities of the author.<sup>197</sup>

There is little doubt that Roosevelt's letters to Bullitt do, indeed, "not reflect very happily on the qualities of the author," although it should be added that it has been known, at least since the publication of *FDR—His Personal Letters 1928-1945*, that Roosevelt's correspondence—with the sole exception perhaps of his wartime correspondence with Winston Churchill<sup>198</sup>—lacked the intellectual and stylistic distinction for instance of the letters of his famous cousin TR.<sup>199</sup> On the other hand, the Nixon volumes do, on the whole, especially when taken together with the previously published *Foreign Relations* documents, give us a remarkably good idea of Roosevelt's approach to foreign affairs during the Munich era, or more accurately perhaps, his lack of an approach.

The Nixon volumes, moreover, are important for two other reasons. In the first place, they allow us to understand better than we have previously been able to do something of the personal and political factors and pressures that influenced Roosevelt during his first term in office. If Roosevelt, for instance, never publicly attacked the pillars of isolationist history and foreign policy, it is interesting to observe that he was equally cautious and circumspect in his private correspondence with Oswald Garrison Villard and other leading isolationists and pacifists.<sup>200</sup> In the second place, it has long been known that Secretary Hull (and Under Secretary R. Walton Moore) passed on to Roosevelt from time to time some of the important telegrams that came into the State Department from abroad, but it has hitherto been difficult to judge which of these messages Roosevelt actually read and how he responded to them. It has also been known for some time that Roosevelt carried on an extended personal correspondence with some of his leading ambassadors, including Claude Bowers, William Bullitt, Josephus Daniels,<sup>201</sup> and William E. Dodd. The Nixon volumes now allow us to read a substantial portion of that correspondence during Roosevelt's first term. They allow us to read what Roosevelt read and how he responded. Whatever the questionable background and editorial shortcomings of the Nixon volumes, that is a significant contribution to recent American history.

It will come as no surprise perhaps that some of the letters addressed to the President were inaccurate, superficial, and misleading, an early example of such a communication being for instance the endorsement of Hitler's rearmament program by Breckenridge Long, the American ambassador to Italy, in December 1933, about whose egregious political misjudgments more will be said later.<sup>202</sup>

Some [German] rearmament is necessary to satisfy her national self-respect. The non-aggression pacts will lend substance to her professions of peaceful intent. And the program offers a practical solution for the impasse in Europe. . . . If France and her allies continue opposition—the show is over. Germany will arm anyway. There will be no supervision and no agreement of any kind. France cannot attack. It is too late. . . . It would be a difficult

task indeed to penetrate Germany, even on the pretext of preventing armament. So, while the German proposals may look like a program for armament, it is the best Europe can produce today. It seems the only practical step to get somewhere on the road to armament reduction during the next ten years.<sup>203</sup>

Following a visit to various European capitals, including Berlin, John Cudahy, the American ambassador in Poland, reported to Roosevelt at the end of December 1933 that he had embarked on that tour

with a prejudice that Germany was engaged in large-scale preparations threatening the peace of Europe. This prejudice was entirely dissipated after my visit to that country. . . . This does not gainsay the fact that the country is being organized on a military basis. . . . This appears menacing unless one is on the ground to realize that there is nothing essentially belligerent or alarming about these activities. They are really only a manifestation of Germany affording an outlet for the peculiar social need of the country which loves display and pageantry. . . . The German feels important and distinguished in a uniform and what has been taken for a blatant display of militarism is merely an expansion of the unique German gregarious instinct, accountable on the same grounds that Elks, Eagles, Woodmen, etc. are accountable.

Cudahy took note of Hitler's declared ambition to achieve by political methods the annexation of Austria, but he discounted the significance of such a move on the ground that "dismembered Austria has a population of only 6 million and no capital resources for war. The Anschluss should weaken rather than strengthen Germany's position in Europe."<sup>204</sup>

It may be interjected at this point that Cudahy's last assertion was in a class with the judgment of Grenville T. Emmet, the American minister to Holland, who on February 26, 1936, informed Roosevelt that "I think one of the things for which one must give Hitler credit (and there are not many in that category) is that he has perceptibly eased the anti-French feeling in Germany. . . . My feeling is that Hitler really has not at the moment deep designs against the French. He is more concerned with what Russia and Poland are doing and also Czechoslovakia";<sup>205</sup> or the report of Anthony J. Drexel Biddle, the American minister to Norway, who at the close of a long *tour d'horizon* from London written two days earlier, had reported to Roosevelt that "as regards the British political picture, it is expected here that Mr. Winston Churchill will eventually replace Mr. Baldwin,"<sup>206</sup> or Biddle's equally correct assertion, on March 18, 1936: "I am led to believe that we are about to enter upon an era where we may watch for vast peace proposals on the part of Great Britain. . . . The definitive objective of this course is to bring about a 'New Deal' in Europe in which Germany must have a part. There must be security for Belgium and France and equality and security for Germany."<sup>207</sup>

Roosevelt, who did not invariably reply to or even acknowledge all communications from his ambassadors and ministers, and whose reaction to their reports is therefore not always clear, responded to Cudahy on January

8, 1934, thanking him for his "most interesting letter," but expressing some doubts about Cudahy's optimistic survey: "I do hope you are right in what you say of preparations in Germany. The chief problem is, of course, whether the marching of the general spirit of things is heading consciously or sub-consciously toward an idea of extension of boundaries."<sup>208</sup>

Roosevelt did not have long to wait before increasingly gloomy analyses of the European political situation began to reach his desk. In late March 1934, J. V. A. MacMurray, the American minister to Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, reported on the development of a surreptitious Nazi movement in those Baltic countries.<sup>209</sup> A month later, Robert Bingham, the publisher of the *Louisville Courier Journal* whom Roosevelt had appointed ambassador to Great Britain, reported from London that "the British are deeply concerned over the situation, both in Europe and in the Far East. They realize they are in no position to repel an attack from the air. They believe all hope for disarmament is gone, and I am convinced that all thoughtful people here believe that the only hope for peace in the world lies in cooperation between the British and ourselves, and that they eagerly desire it."<sup>210</sup> By mid-July 1934, John F. Montgomery, the American minister to Hungary, saw the deepening totalitarian shadows over the Balkans and the rest of Europe:

Possibly the situation will become so bad that the great European Powers will be forced to agree on a common program to save themselves. Nothing, however, that has happened in the past could encourage anyone to believe they will; everything has been done too late. If France had granted Brüning one half of what she has been willing to give Hitler, there would have been no Hitler. Europe never seems to realize that it is all tied up in one sack, and that it must be saved as a whole if the individual States are to save themselves.<sup>211</sup>

By the close of 1934, moreover, the Far Eastern situation and its relation to the troubled European picture were becoming of increasing concern to Roosevelt. Indeed as early as April of that year Roosevelt had received a copy of a long memorandum prepared by Stanley K. Hornbeck, chief of the Division of Far Eastern Affairs of the Department of State and probably its outstanding expert on that part of the world. The memorandum numbered more than sixteen printed pages and discussed the rapidly gathering storm in the Far East. Responding to a recent "personal suggestion" by the Japanese ambassador to the United States that the two countries issue "a joint declaration that each reposed full confidence in the sincerity of the other's motives," Hornbeck declared himself strongly opposed to any such statement:

From beginning to end [he wrote], we should keep in mind the thought that the ultimate objective of the Japanese is to promote and facilitate the attainment by Japan of a paramount and discriminating position in the Far East and that their immediate objective is to discover what is our present attitude and probable future attitude and intent.



Hornbeck had no doubt as to what lay behind Japan's innocuous-looking approach:

What the Japanese especially desire at the present moment is relief from any apprehension of possible action of restraint or coercion (sooner or later) by or from the United States and/or Great Britain. If Japan could be sure that the United States and Great Britain would stand completely aside, Japan could (and probably would) rapidly proceed with new steps in a program intended ultimately to establish Japan's authority not only in Manchuria and Mongolia but in certain portions of China and Siberia.

As Hornbeck saw it, the Japanese proposed to accomplish this objective in two ways—first in the realm of power.

In their approach to any of the so-called "problems" or "issues" in relations between Japan and the United States, Japan's spokesmen make it a point to rely heavily upon the fact that the American Government and people are imbued with a certain emotional idealism and are enamored of certain idealistic concepts with regard to international relations. They endeavour to induce the American Government to make to the Japanese Government real concessions desired by Japan, in connection with Japan's Asia policy, in return for nominal adherence by Japan to idealistic objectives to which the United States is committed in connection with world problems. Regularly, the Japanese ask for concessions in fact by this country as the price of concessions in principle (or to principle) by Japan.<sup>212</sup>

It is not known what Roosevelt thought of Hornbeck's important memorandum, which reached him by way of Secretary Hull and Under Secretary of State William Phillips. Before the year was out, on December 14, 1934, Norman H. Davis, then chairman of the American delegation to the London naval conference, wrote at length about the growing crisis in the Pacific stemming from Japan's decision to denounce the Washington treaty and about British uneasiness concerning American policy in the Far East.

I have been proceeding on the theory [Davis wrote] that it was our policy, and in our interest, to maintain an Anglo-American front as the best means of avoiding trouble with Japan or of minimizing it if it could not be avoided. [The British] have an inordinate fear that if the tactics we propose so estrange Japan as to lead to ultimate trouble, we may not be with them when the trouble comes. For instance, they intimate that under American pressure the League adopted our views with regard to Manchuria, which forced Japan out of the League; and that, since the action thus taken was not followed by cooperative steps looking to a solution, the situation has become increasingly a source of trouble and embarrassment; and that our active interest in promoting a policy of non-recognition and moral condemnation was followed by a policy of more or less withdrawal from the Far East, including the ultimate withdrawal from the Philippines.<sup>213</sup>

By the time Roosevelt received Davis's letter, other foreign problems, or problems related to foreign affairs, had begun to claim his attention. First, there was the brief, unsuccessful struggle to secure Senate approval of American membership in the World Court; second, there was the approach of the Italo-Ethiopian war, which was in the making throughout the spring and summer of 1935 and finally broke out in October of that year.<sup>214</sup>

As regards American membership in the World Court, which had been discussed for many years but never formally acted upon by the United States

Senate, it does not seem likely that Senate concurrence would have substantially changed the course of international affairs at that time. The fact that the Senate—in which Democrats outnumbered Republicans 69 to 25—declined by a vote of 52 to 36 (seven votes short of the required two-thirds majority) to ratify American membership could by no means be ascribed solely to the last-minute propaganda campaign mounted by the Hearst newspapers and other anti-Court elements.<sup>215</sup> It seems likely that the Senate's action was in part at least the result of uncertainty about, and disaffection with, Roosevelt's foreign policy. As Senator Key Pittman, the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, put it frankly to the President on February 19:

No one today knows what is the foreign policy of our Government. Are we going to participate in European affairs, or are we going to keep out of them? Are we going to enforce treaties, or are we going to abandon them?<sup>216</sup>

It seems unlikely that the defeat of American membership in the World Court exerted any significant effect upon Mussolini's well-advanced plans to take over Ethiopia, but the Senate's repudiation of Roosevelt's ineffective leadership could scarcely have discouraged the Italian dictator from proceeding with his long intended African adventure. In this connection, it must be observed that while the United States had the benefit of an outstandingly able and conscientious diplomat in Addis Ababa, Cornelius Engert, the American Minister Resident, who reported regularly and at length about Italian designs on the country to which he was accredited,<sup>217</sup> Roosevelt's ambassador in Rome had no such evident interest. On the contrary, after first adopting a highly sanguine view of German rearmament, his main concern suddenly shifted to Hitler's next moves, apparently forgetting all about Mussolini's in the process.

[The Italians] all feel [Long reported to Roosevelt on February 8, 1935] that the Saar plebiscite has acted as a big drink of Schnapps to the Germans and that Hitler will be emboldened now to pursue his Pan Germanic ideas into the fields of former German territories and Austria. They are convinced that Germany is very well equipped for war but not yet prepared to take the offensive or to commit an act which might lead immediately to open warfare.<sup>218</sup>

Nine paragraphs later Long finally got around to the subject of Abyssinia, and he left no doubt that he had no stomach for a determined stand against Mussolini's intended depredations:

. . . there have been Ethiopian aggressions against the French which have been well advertised in the European press . . . also . . . the Italian papers state that the American Minister — or Chargé d' Affaires — has been subjected to some mistreatment and indignity. . . . The League of Nations is apparently not to take up the subject but has referred it back for settlement between Italy and Abyssinia. So that our absence from membership in the League would not serve as a predicate. There would remain only our interest in universal peace—but it does seem a long way outside our bailiwick.<sup>219</sup>

If the President disagreed with Long's fundamental assessment of the situation there is no evidence of it in the Nixon volumes. On March 9 Roosevelt responded to Long

Those letters of yours are extraordinarily interesting even though they are pessimistic in tone. I fear I must agree with you about the general situation.

These are without doubt the most hair-trigger times the world has gone through in your lifetime or mine. I do not even exclude June and July, 1914 because at that time there was economic and social stability.

Keep on writing to me.<sup>220</sup>

There can be little doubt about the general correctness of the President's assessment of the prevailing world situation. The day before he wrote to Long—and Roosevelt's letter may well have been a reflection of the news—Hitler had announced the establishment of a new German air force, and he followed this on March 15 by informing the world that Germany would no longer be bound by any military provisions of the treaty of Versailles and would immediately increase the size of the German army from 100,000 to 500,000 men.<sup>221</sup> The handwriting was now on the wall in Europe, but it seems apparent that its meaning was not clearly understood by most of Roosevelt's ambassadors. It was apparent that Britain and France were no longer sufficiently strong to deter German treaty violations. If ever there was a time for increasingly close cooperation between the western democracies that time was 1935.

This was not, however, the way that men like Robert Bingham in London and William Bullitt in Moscow viewed the situation. "In the last analysis," Bingham confided to Roosevelt on March 26, "peace depends on economic security."

I am more than doubtful [he continued] whether we could keep out of a great European conflagration. We tried that once before, with no success. Therefore the question arises as to what we can do in our own interest to aid an appeasement in Central Europe. Certainly our contribution is not that special form of "moral leadership" which was the easy answer of the previous Administration to every difficult problem. The practical substantial benefit which we can confer lies in the progress we make in the United States toward economic recovery. May I repeat my belief that the possibility of war is inextricably joined to world economic recovery and that the greatest contribution the United States can make, indeed perhaps the only one, would be the confidence and benefit the world would obtain from a decided economic upturn in North America.<sup>222</sup>

An even more strongly worded plea for the United States to keep out of the growing imbroglio abroad came on April 8 from Bullitt, then visiting Paris. It seems worth recalling that, of all American diplomats in Europe, none had better sources of information than did Bullitt, none had fewer illusions about the declining strength of Britain and—especially—of France, and yet—as a deeply disillusioned Wilsonian—none pleaded more frequently with Roose-

vult to keep the United States out of the conflict he was sure lay ahead.

It is obvious, of course [Bullitt told Roosevelt] . . . that no one in Europe is any longer thinking of peace but that everyone is thinking furiously about obtaining as many allies as possible for the next war. As each day passes I become more convinced that our only sane policy is to stay just as far as possible outside the mess.<sup>223</sup>

If Bullitt feared anything more than a Nazi triumph it was the spread of Russian Communism, toward which he had once—especially during the early years of the Russian revolution—been rather sympathetic,<sup>224</sup> but which upon closer acquaintance he had come to loathe and dread. After his return to Moscow, Bullitt remarked to Roosevelt on May Day 1935:

The terror, always present, has risen to such a pitch that the least of the Moscovites, as well as the greatest is in fear.

. . . Do you remember our bet of one red apple or whatever (I have forgotten what) as to the scene of the first outbreak of war? You picked Europe and I picked the Far East. I am beginning to be inclined to think that you will probably turn out to be right as usual. . . . The long range outlook everywhere is about as bad as can be and the worst of it is that we can do nothing whatever to stop the march of events. . . . I see no way that we can achieve anything by attempting to stop the march of events—horrible as it is—except our own involvement in war and I hope you will turn a very deaf ear to the songs of the sirens who must be keeping you awake nights with their music. I saw that Stimson had donned the mermaid's tail and there must be a thousand others whose hearts are better than their heads.<sup>225</sup>

Bullitt's counsel did not fall on entirely unsympathetic ears. In the summer of 1935, with the Presidential election only a year away, Roosevelt was in no mood to become deeply involved in foreign affairs. Perhaps because of the continuing isolationist feeling at home, perhaps because of his concern over the recently signed Anglo-German naval agreement, and perhaps also because of that slight touch of Anglophobia from which he was never entirely free, Roosevelt poured out his personal feelings in a rarely revelatory fashion to Ambassador Bingham in London on July 11:

[The British] are beginning to realize that a greater friendliness to us would not hurt them.

Many years ago I came to the reluctant conclusion that it is a mistake to make advances to the British Government; practical results can be accomplished only when they make the advances themselves. They are a funny people and, though always polite, can be counted on when things are going well with them to show a national selfishness towards other nations which makes mutual helpfulness very difficult to accomplish. Their average conception of mutuality differs from mine.<sup>226</sup>

Roosevelt, it appears, was deeply concerned about the new Anglo-German naval agreement, which the British had secretly negotiated behind the back of France,<sup>227</sup> an agreement which allowed the Germans—in violation of the treaty of Versailles—to build a navy thirty-five per cent as large as that of Great Britain, as well as an unlimited number of submarines.<sup>228</sup>

I fear me [the President went on to say] that the British have, in the German Naval

Agreement, let themselves in for real resentment on the Continent, and also for much trouble to themselves in the days to come. I cannot forget that Germany's new Naval program, just announced, shows a number of submarines and other ships practically completed. In other words, Germany began to violate the Treaty obligations from two to three years ago. What is to prevent Germany from violating this new agreement and calmly announcing the violation after she has doubled her new allowance of submarines, cruisers, etc.?

Roosevelt, it seems clear, was also suspicious, mistakenly as it turned out, that there was more to the Anglo-German naval agreement than had been publicly announced, but while he was struggling with the Congress over neutrality legislation, he was not about to allow the country to become involved in additional international complications.

Most highly confidential [Roosevelt concluded]—will you try to keep your ear open for any suggestions that England and Germany have agreed on certain other important points not connected with or included in the naval announcement? A very wise old bird tells me that a number of important world forces, including the British, would much like to involve us in some way—any way—in the world's critical problems.

This is not the appropriate place to review at length the long and acrimonious debates over neutrality legislation that preoccupied the Congress during much of 1935, or the debates over the revision and extension of this legislation in 1936.<sup>229</sup> However, to judge by the materials included in the Nixon volumes, Roosevelt made little or no effort to check the isolationist forces solidly in command of Capitol Hill, any more than (as already indicated by Secretary Hull)<sup>230</sup> he took a determined stand to curb the investigative abuses of the Nye Committee,<sup>231</sup> whose highly publicized attacks on the financial community, especially the house of Morgan, may in fact have suited his political purposes. Indeed, when the neutrality legislation finally reached Roosevelt, he had little complaint about it. "It is," he told a press conference on August 28, 1935, "entirely satisfactory, except that it does not include any power over loans for financing. . . . The question of embargoes against two belligerents meets the need of the existing situation. What more can one ask? And, by the time the situation changes, Congress will be back with us, so we are all right."<sup>232</sup>

Similarly, when Roosevelt, on February 29, 1936, signed the House Joint Resolution extending the neutrality legislation enacted the previous summer, he had nothing but kind words about the latest Congressional handiwork. "By the Resolution approved August 31, 1935," Roosevelt said in a prepared statement, "a definite step was taken towards enabling this country to maintain its neutrality and avoid being drawn into wars involving other nations. . . . By the Resolution I have just signed the operation of the August Resolution is extended and strengthened until May 1, 1937."<sup>233</sup>

If Roosevelt believed that the enactment of new American neutrality legislation was a harbinger of a period of increased international harmony



and cooperation, he was soon to be disabused of such unfounded optimism. His invocation of the original neutrality act had done nothing to stop Italian aggression against Ethiopia. Roosevelt did himself no credit by proudly proclaiming, as he did at a press conference in June 1936, that the United States had been the first to recognize that a state of belligerency existed<sup>234</sup> between Italy and Ethiopia, thus—although Roosevelt was careful to omit any suggestion of this—making it impossible for the victims of Italian aggression to attempt to procure arms to defend themselves. On the other hand, oil shipments to Italy which Mussolini needed to carry on his war were not cut off.<sup>235</sup>

The Italo-Ethiopian war, which at first seemed so far removed from the mainstream of world politics, was a foretaste of the international lawlessness which was soon to rise in a steady crescendo. Of this, the German remilitarization of the Rhineland on March 7, 1936, and the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in July of that year, were additional ominous examples.

Roosevelt's response to the German move into the Rhineland, or rather his lack of response, has already been discussed at some length.<sup>236</sup> It is interesting that the Nixon volumes add little to the story as revealed by the *Foreign Relations* documents published in 1953. If Jesse Isidor Straus, the American ambassador in Paris, had any inkling of what was afoot and accordingly informed Roosevelt, there is no evidence of it in the Nixon volumes. This is not to say that Roosevelt was not being kept informed concerning the significance of the German *coup*. The first to discuss the importance of the German stroke appears to have been John Cudahy, the American ambassador to Poland, usually considered one of Roosevelt's most "non-interventionist" diplomats, who on March 20 commented to the President:

The past week has demonstrated very clearly that [the common working-day sense base of security] has crashed in European international affairs and that the League of Nations and collective security are all illusory. Only a miracle can preclude war in Europe. . . . The catastrophe may be averted for a time but if Hitler is not overthrown a war in Europe is as certain as the rising sun. It may be a matter of a year, two years, five years. But that another contest with Germany is coming is universally conceded now even by the most conservative.<sup>237</sup>

The word from Berlin was no more encouraging. On April 1 Ambassador Dodd concluded:

. . . Germany's dictatorship is now stronger than ever. If she keeps the peace three more years she can beat the whole of Europe in a war. . . . If Woodrow Wilson's bones do not turn in the Cathedral grave, then bones never turn in graves. Possibly you can do something, but from reports of Congressional attitudes I have grave doubts. So many men, including my friend [Charles A.] Beard, think absolute isolation a coming paradise.<sup>238</sup>

Roosevelt, perhaps sensing the correctness of these observations, as well as

the difficulty if not undesirability of attempting to respond to the German stroke in some effective fashion in an election year, was not inclined to become involved in long exchanges concerning this latest European disaster. Dodd's letter, therefore, went unanswered, and to Cudahy Roosevelt replied, in a perfunctory note, on April 15, "I am delighted to find yours of March twentieth on my return from a two weeks cruise in the Bahamas. The excitement seems still to continue throughout Europe, and the situation changes from day to day."<sup>239</sup>

No sooner had the shock waves from the Rhineland crisis begun to fade than hostilities broke out in Spain. A substantial number of books have by now been written on that subject,<sup>240</sup> and the policy of the United States toward that tragic conflict has, as already noted, likewise been discussed at some length.<sup>241</sup> Although the *Foreign Relations* documents on this subject showed at great length how well Claude G. Bowers, the American ambassador to Spain, had kept his government informed, the Nixon volumes added a significant dimension to what was previously known in this regard.<sup>242</sup>

"There is," Bowers informed Roosevelt on August 6, "no possible justification for the rebellion in anything done by the legal, legitimate Government, voted in overwhelmingly a few months ago." Moreover, from the first days of the conflict, Bowers had no doubt that far more was involved here than a purely domestic struggle.

The possibilities of this crisis precipitating a European war are really grave. Germany and Italy have been openly, brazenly, against the Government. . . . France and the French Ambassador are as openly with the Government and against the rebels. I have found the diplomatic corps generally with the rebels. . . . They are constantly seeking an opportunity . . . to deal a blow to the Government.<sup>243</sup>

Nevertheless, in spite of his unswerving loyalty to the Republican Government, Bowers was far from urging American intervention on the President. "When one reflects," he commented to Roosevelt on September 16, "on the possibility that European Governments may determine policies on this very elemental conflict on the advice of such men [as the foreign diplomats in Spain] one wonders how old Europe can escape war, pestilence and famine long. By staying out we are protecting our neutrality in the best manner."<sup>244</sup>

By late September the internationalization of the war was proceeding apace, but with the significant difference that Britain and France were faithfully observing their pledge of "non-intervention" and the pro-rebel powers were not. On September 23 Bowers wrote Roosevelt from Saint-Jean-de-Luz in southern France:

For some weeks now there has been nothing to indicate that France is not rigidly enforcing its neutrality. There is every indication that the fascist Powers are violating their pledge and furnishing arms, ammunition and men. More and more the controversy here is taking the form of an international conspiracy to destroy the democracy of Spain under the

pretext of saving it from Communism. This is being carried forward quite openly and with true fascist arrogance. I am informed by Knickerbocker of the Hearst press, John Whitaker of the New York *Herald-Tribune*, and Floyd Gibbons, who recently returned from a survey of the military situation in the south, that when in Seville they saw night after night in a cafe, German aviators who are accompanied by German mechanics. They admit they are not giving this important news to the public, and explain their silence by saying that the publication of this fact would result in their expulsion, if not their arrest. They tell me that the rebels are using German bombing planes and Italian pursuit planes.

Even so, now that German and Italian intervention in Spain was virtually out in the open, Bowers maintained that the United States should keep hands off. "I think," he concluded, "we should continue our present policy without deviation. This is a serious European quarrel in which we have no proper part."<sup>245</sup> Although Bowers became increasingly critical of the non-intervention policy as time went on (it is, he was writing by the end of October, "nothing more than a device conceived by France to excuse herself from selling arms to the legal Government"<sup>246</sup>) there is no evidence to suggest that Bowers changed his mind concerning what the United States should do about the conflict, and none that Roosevelt—despite all the domestic controversy that continued to surround the subject—ever changed his mind about it either.<sup>247</sup>

By the end of the summer the United States was preoccupied with the presidential election campaign. Not surprisingly, Roosevelt, as already suggested, sought to minimize the importance of foreign affairs and possible American involvement in another international conflict. As already noted also, he devoted only a single address, that at Chautauqua, to the subject of foreign policy, summing up his own position on that occasion in effect: "I have seen war . . . I hate war."<sup>248</sup>

This is not to say, however, that privately Roosevelt did not continue to be concerned with the darkening world situation. Certainly there was nothing in his correspondence with his ambassadors in Europe that would have encouraged him to adopt even a modestly hopeful outlook. As early as February, William C. Bullitt, following a visit to London, Paris, Brussels, Berlin, and Warsaw had sent the President the first of a long series of gloomy forecasts about Hitler and the future of Czechoslovakia. "There is a rising wave of feeling [in Paris] that France should not go to war with Germany to save Czechoslovakia. . . . Needless to say, all the way from London to Moscow the chief topic was the dangerous situation of Czechoslovakia. The Czechoslovak position is made somewhat desperate by the fact that nobody in Europe likes the Czechs, to say nothing of Czechesses, whose piano legs and aversion to soap are notorious from one end of the continent to the other."<sup>249</sup> In late November, by which time he had succeeded Jesse Straus as American ambassador to France, Bullitt returned to the subject:

Czechoslovakia is clearly the next item on Hitler's menu.

If Hitler should send forces into Czechoslovakia the position of France, as well as of Czechoslovakia, would become tragic. (No military man with whom I have talked believes that the Soviet air force can bring any effective aid to Czechoslovakia.) The French would have to decide whether or not to carry out the obligations of their treaty of alliance with Czechoslovakia.

The Quai d'Orsay would be all for carrying out these obligations but I am inclined to believe that the greater part of the country would be dead against carrying them out.

The Belgian Ambassador here is an able man of long experience. He said to me a few days ago that it was certain France would not march in support of Czechoslovakia. He predicted that France would first ask Belgium and England what they would do. He said he was certain both his own country and England would refuse to do anything; that the French would then be faced with the problem of attacking Germany, unsupported, or allowing Czechoslovakia to be swallowed and denying their pledged word. He added he was certain the French, under the circumstances, would not march.<sup>250</sup>

To this remarkably prophetic message Roosevelt made no response. Although by this time he had scored one of the greatest electoral victories in modern American history, the President seemed disinclined to change the course of American foreign policy, any more than he had been willing earlier in the year (when it was clear to nearly all close observers of the political scene that he was going to win an overwhelming victory) to try to educate his country about the rapidly deteriorating world situation.

There is no question that, while on the one hand the kind of post-Wilsonian collective security espoused by farsighted men like Henry L. Stimson enjoyed little or no public support, Roosevelt continued to be the target of widespread and well-organized efforts by self-styled "peace groups" aiming to keep the President on a firmly isolationist course. The history of these groups in the 1930's, and of Roosevelt's response to their efforts, is still to be written,<sup>251</sup> but it may be observed that Roosevelt's response to these elements and their political propaganda was remarkably passive and ineffective, especially when compared with the vigorous fashion in which Roosevelt invariably confronted and attacked the critics of his domestic policies.

This is not to suggest that Roosevelt was not disturbed—indeed sometimes affronted—by the historical distortion of these "peace groups." It seems evident that from time to time Roosevelt became thoroughly fed up with some of the more outlandish isolationist claims and reinterpretations of recent American history. As Roosevelt put it to Colonel House in September 1935:

You may be interested to know that some of the Congressmen and Senators who are suggesting wild-eyed measures to keep us out of war are now declaring that you and [Robert] Lansing and [Walter Hines] Page forced Wilson into the war! I had a talk with them, explained that I was in Washington myself the whole of that period, that

none of them was there and that their historical analysis was totally inaccurate and that history yet to be written would prove my point. The trouble is that they belong to the very large and perhaps increasing school of thought which holds that we can and should withdraw wholly within ourselves and cut off all but the most perfunctory relationships with other nations. They imagine that if the civilization of Europe is about to destroy itself through internal strife, it might just as well go ahead and do it and that the United States can stand idly by.<sup>252</sup>

In public, however, Roosevelt was considerably more circumspect. He continued to hold meetings with such representative organizations as the National Peace Conference. After their meeting at the White House, the president of that association informed Roosevelt that "we were very pleased to learn from you that the administration had repudiated the speech of Senator Pittman in which provocative references were made to Japan." He added that the members of his delegation—which included not only strong pacifists like Dorothy Detzer of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, but more moderate men like William Stone of the Foreign Policy Association and Professor James T. Shotwell of Columbia University, a member of the House Inquiry who had accompanied President Wilson to Europe on the S.S. *Washington*—"were still not convinced that huge military and naval expenditures were necessary for defense purposes."<sup>253</sup> Roosevelt also met with representatives of the People's Mandate to Governments to End War Committee, headed by its president, Mary E. Woolley of Mount Holyoke College, one of his more frequent correspondents. Receiving them at Hyde Park after returning from a Sunday church service, he "endorsed their objective to secure 50 million signatures throughout the world to a petition to all governments to renounce war and reduce armaments."<sup>254</sup>

Nor did Roosevelt take a stronger stand in personal correspondence with some of his liberal supporters, who were urging on him much the same foreign policies as did various peace groups. J. David Stern, the publisher of the liberal New York *Post* wrote Roosevelt in late 1935 that he believed that "an overwhelming majority of Americans care more about keeping out of war than about any other one thing. If the average citizen suspects, rightfully or wrongfully, that your administration is backing up the League or Great Britain, it would cause a most unfortunate reaction." Roosevelt replied blandly that his own policy "neither had nor has the slightest connection with League action or British action. . . . By checking the dates you will see that, as a matter of fact, we have preceded Great Britain and the League in every move made. Perhaps in January Congress will give me a little more power which I do not need to say will be exercised for the primary objective of keeping us out of this or any other war!"<sup>255</sup>

Even more damaging—and unintentionally revealing—was an exchange between Roosevelt and Oswald Garrison Villard, the veteran editor of *The Nation*, whose bitter opposition to Woodrow Wilson and the Paris peace



settlement had led him to become one of the most determined and influential opponents of renewed American involvement in world affairs.<sup>256</sup> Anticipating by a generation the kind of misuse of history characteristic of New Left historians and “peace groups” in the Vietnam era,<sup>257</sup> Villard and his fellow liberals—of whom Senator Nye and his associates were a good example—sought to persuade the country that Wilson had improperly and unnecessarily dragged the United States into the world war and that a repetition of that experience must be avoided at all cost. If Roosevelt could be persuaded to accept that reading of recent American history and its contemporary implications, at least in some respects, a large part of their objective would have been won.

It cannot be said that Roosevelt successfully parried the thrust of Villard’s argument. After his Chautauqua speech, Villard wrote Roosevelt thanking him “from the bottom of my heart for your noble utterance . . . quite the finest peace speech that has been voiced by any man in high position,” and went on to remark:

When you say that “we can keep out of war if they (our officials) possess the courage to say ‘no’ to those who would selfishly or unwisely let us go to war,” I think you prove my contention that Wilson could have kept us out of the war in 1917 had he had the backbone, the courage and the desire.<sup>258</sup>

Villard’s misreading of the circumstances leading to American entry into the first world war<sup>259</sup> deserved something like Roosevelt’s unvarnished remarks to Colonel House in September 1935, quoted above.<sup>260</sup> Unfortunately, and no doubt symptomatically, Roosevelt sought to strike a different note. Having been a member of the Wilson administration, and as Assistant Secretary of the Navy undoubtedly acquainted with the nature and significance of the German submarine menace and other reasons for American entry into the war, Roosevelt might have been expected to use this opportunity to correct, firmly but politely, his old friend’s historical misinterpretation, but he deliberately chose not to do so.

You are right in part about Wilson [Roosevelt replied]. The difficulty is that in those days most people were thinking in terms of the old international law which is now completely disappeared. From the point of view of hindsight, we might have kept out, but at the time we were following the precedent of several centuries.<sup>261</sup>

Looking back on the election campaign of 1936 and its aftermath, it seems apparent that Roosevelt and his diplomats were, on the whole, agreed that the United States should do everything possible to stay out of the European conflict that to most of them seemed sure to come. If Roosevelt and his diplomats—with the conspicuous exception of William E. Dodd in Berlin—recognized that Britain and France were no longer in a position to defend themselves against the threat of totalitarian aggression, there is little evidence of it in the Nixon volumes. There is no evidence either that Roosevelt and

most of his ambassadors were familiar with *Mein Kampf* and other expressions of the Nazi program or that they drew the appropriate conclusions from such expressions.

As late as December 1936, Bullitt—who in 1917-1919 had been equally oblivious to the international implications of Marxism-Leninism<sup>262</sup>—appeared to believe that a “reconciliation” between France and Nazi Germany was a serious possibility. “I think it might be useful,” he suggested to Roosevelt, “if when you see [André] de Laboulaye and [Hans] Luther,” the French and German ambassadors in Washington, “you should stress the idea that peace in Europe is purely a question of Franco-German reconciliation.”<sup>263</sup> Meanwhile Robert Bingham, in London, cautioned Roosevelt against “rousing false hopes on this side of the Atlantic;”<sup>264</sup> and John Cudahy, in Warsaw, agreeing that “the outstanding menace to peace, of course, is Hitler,” advised Roosevelt that “any intervention without some specific remedy for the difficulties over here would not only be unavailing but would be a mistake from the viewpoint of American prestige. I do not know what to do.”<sup>265</sup>

Probably neither did Roosevelt. For the time being, his main concerns remained his domestic program, including his proposed reorganization of the United States Supreme Court, on which he embarked early in the new year,<sup>266</sup> and his efforts to keep out, as far as possible, of any involvement in the Spanish struggle, then the major international threat to peace.

But Roosevelt seemed unable to avoid taking a position on the war in Spain. On December 29, 1936, Norman Thomas, the veteran Socialist leader, whose isolationist credentials were unchallenged, wrote Roosevelt pleading with him not to “make it impossible for the Spanish Government to buy any military supplies whatsoever in the United States.” He reminded Roosevelt that the Socialist Party had long advocated “very drastic laws against supplying belligerent nations or prospective belligerents with the means of war.” But Spain was a very different kind of war. “We plead for recognition of the possibly disastrous effect of your action in disarming the Spanish Government in the face of well armed and ruthless rebel armies.”<sup>267</sup>

Roosevelt, however, was unmoved by Thomas’s appeal, and in late January 1937 responded in a letter prepared by Assistant Secretary of State R. Walton Moore, a legalistic advocate of existing policy:

. . . the very circumstances which you set forth so fully in your letter [Roosevelt informed Thomas] must make it clear that the civil conflict in Spain involves so many non-Spanish elements and has such wide international implications that a policy of attempting to discriminate between the parties would be dangerous in the extreme. Not only would we, by permitting unchecked the flow of arms to one party in the conflict, be involving ourselves directly in that European strife from which our people desire

so deeply to remain aloof, but we would be deliberately encouraging those nations which would be glad of this pretext to continue their assistance to one side or the other in Spain and aggravating those disagreements among the European nations which are a constant menace to the peace of the world.<sup>268</sup>

It is not difficult to imagine the dismay with which Norman Thomas read those lines. But remembering that letter, Thomas would probably not have been entirely surprised by Roosevelt's remark to Ambassador William Phillips in Rome, nearly three weeks after Munich, in October 1938: "I want you to know that I am not a bit upset over the final result."<sup>269</sup>

### NOTES

1. *National Security Policy and the Changing World Power Alignment*, Hearing-Symposium before the Subcommittee on National Security Policy and Scientific Developments of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, 92nd Congress, 2nd Session (Washington, 1972), p. 309.

2. Fritz Stern, *The Failure of Illiberalism—Essays on the Political Culture of Modern Germany* (New York, 1972), p. xli.

3. President Johnson, in an interview with Professor Henry F. Graff of Columbia University at the White House in June 1965, recalled, as the latter has written, "with feeling and pride . . . his 34 years in Washington, which he pointed out, began when 'Hitler was first rising to power'. . . . He talked of how President Roosevelt had wanted him on the Naval Affairs Committee, because the United States had 'gotten rid of the Navy' and it had to be rebuilt. He mentioned 'the Nyes, the Borahs, the LaFollettes and Chamberlain'—as if the panorama of the isolationist years were to him like a remembered nightmare." *The Tuesday Cabinet—Deliberation and Decision on Peace and War under Lyndon B. Johnson* (New York 1970), p. 55. In a conversation with Graff in December 1967, Secretary Rusk pointed out that "more than twenty years have passed since World War II. There is an inclination to forget or get careless. Others have had no chance to remember." He listed, Graff noted, "Manchuria, Ethiopia, the Rhineland, Austria, and spoke of the general attitude toward Hitler at first; it had been: 'Give him another bite; he doesn't really mean it.' Rusk mentioned *Mein Kampf* and equated with it 'the doctrine spewing out of Peking.'" *Ibid.*, pp. 134 and 135.

4. In February 1966 Graff had a second interview with President Johnson. "I asked the President," he wrote later, "how he explained [Senator] Fulbright's opposition. 'It's some little racial problem.' Fulbright, who had studied at Oxford, simply 'cannot understand that people with brown skins value freedom too. I say,' added the President, clearly as if it were not for the first time, 'if you want a social revolution in the Dominican Republic, why don't you start it in Little Rock. . . . Some people say he votes against civil-rights bills because that's the only way he can get elected in Arkansas. I'll tell you why he votes against civil rights: he's against civil rights!'" *Ibid.*, pp. 99-100.

5. As of a personal conversation in March 1969, for instance, Neil Sheehan (Harvard '58), *The New York Times* White House correspondent at the end of the Johnson administration, subsequently its Pentagon specialist, and, finally, the principal author of the *Times'* articles on the purloined Pentagon Papers, had never heard of, much less knew anything about, so important a diplomat of the Munich era as Claude G. Bowers, the well-known historian and American ambassador to Spain from 1933-1939.

6. New York, 1956.

7. New York, 1952.

8. New York, 1963.

9. Ithaca, 1966. To all of which volumes may be added the somewhat less satisfactory account of Arnold A. Offner, *American Appeasement—United States Foreign Policy and Germany 1933-1938* (Cambridge, Mass., 1969); and the important new volume edited by Orville H. Bullitt, *For*

*the President—Personal and Secret—Correspondence between Franklin D. Roosevelt and William C. Bullitt* (Boston, 1972); hereafter cited as Bullitt. Hans-Jürgen Schröder, *Deutschland und die Vereinigten Staaten 1933-1939—Wirtschaft und Politik in der Entwicklung des deutsch-amerikanischen Gegensatzes* (Wiesbaden, 1970) is a crass economic interpretation, of which A. J. P. Taylor has rightly observed that “great ingenuity is required if the Second World War is to be reduced to a trade war in the eighteenth-century fashion.” *English Historical Review*, LXXXVII (July 1972), 655.

10. Chicago, 1951.

11. J. William Fulbright, *The Arrogance of Power* (New York, 1966).

12. Ronald Steel, *Pax Americana* (New York, 1967).

13. See the important new study of Robert J. Maddox, *The New Left and the Origins of the Cold War* (Princeton, 1973).

One of Senator Fulbright's most reprehensible practices, and one of the most serious abuses of his position and power as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, was his deliberate policy, especially after 1966, of excluding from hearings before his committee most or all of those who held positions significantly different from his own. This made it immeasurably more difficult for such opinions to be heard effectively throughout the country. Deliberately or not, he sought to create the impression that his own position was shared by virtually all serious and informed persons. One of those ostracized from Senator Fulbright's television spectaculars was General Maxwell D. Taylor, who was later to write of his February 1966 appearance before that committee: “The committee was and remained loaded with doves, some bitterly hostile to the Administration's policy and all wanting to look good before the vast TV audience while making Administration witnesses look bad. . . . I prepared a brief opening statement setting forth . . . [that] the purpose of the enemy was to impose a Communist regime on the South Vietnamese against the will of the vast majority of the people. . . . Needless to say, my statement drew no applause from the majority of the Committee . . . [and] for lack of another invitation I was never privileged to use this forum again.” *Swords and Ploughshares* (New York, 1972), pp. 365-366.

14. *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States—John F. Kennedy—1963* (Washington, 1964), p. 894.

15. *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States—Lyndon B. Johnson—1965* (Washington, 1966), vol. II, p. 794.

16. *Ibid.*

17. Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs*, vol. I, *Year of Decisions* (New York, 1955), p. 121.

18. *Ibid.*, vol. II, *Years of Trial and Hope* (New York, 1956), pp. 332-333.

19. Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change 1953-1956* (New York, 1963), pp. 346-347.

20. James MacGregor Burns, *John Kennedy—A Political Profile* (New York, 1960), pp. 37-38.

21. John F. Kennedy, *Why England Slept*, revised edition (New York, 1961), p. 230.

22. *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States—John F. Kennedy—1962* (Washington, 1963), p. 807.

23. New York, 1961.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 18. It might be added that Rowse's account goes a long way toward confirming President Johnson's observation to Professor Graff in February 1966: “Oxford didn't recognize the danger till the Battle of Britain.” Graff, p. 102.

25. See, for instance, Thomas A. Bailey, *A Diplomatic History of the American People*, third edition (New York, 1946), pp. 740ff. and 767ff.; and Samuel Eliot Morison and Henry Steele Commager, *The Growth of the American Republic*, fourth edition (New York, 1958), vol. II, ch. xxvi. It may be suggested that the same liberal bias was largely responsible for the prolonged silence about Roosevelt's tragic unresponsiveness to the plight of European Jews, a silence that was not broken until the appearance of the work of a free-lance writer,

Arthur D. Morse, *While Six Million Died—A Chronology of American Apathy* (New York, 1968); and of Henry L. Feingold, *The Politics of Rescue—The Roosevelt Administration and the Holocaust 1938-1945* (New Brunswick, N. J., 1970).

Finally, it may be added that such gross misjudgments about Roosevelt's foreign policy have been made not only by historians of note but by diplomats who served under him and presumably should have known better. Thus as late as 1972, Charles W. Yost, a member of the U.S. Foreign Service for more than 35 years, Deputy Representative to the United Nations from 1961 to 1966 and Permanent Representative to the world organization from 1969 to 1971, wrote that "in foreign affairs Roosevelt was usually right about the great issues," that his "judgment on the basic issues was sound and prescient, and therefore he was successful in his lifetime." *The Conduct and Misconduct of Foreign Affairs* (New York, 1972), pp. 62 and 63. The same quality of mind produced the judgment that John F. Kennedy's "wartime experience gave him a taste for military dispositions and solutions" (*ibid.*, p. 79); and that President Johnson "as a Southerner and a Texan . . . had a particular dread of seeming weak and was therefore temperamentally inclined to react violently to whatever struck him as an attempt to intimidate or humiliate him or his country" (*ibid.*, pp. 75-76). It may come as no surprise that the author of such nonsensical opinions is now both a lecturer on foreign policy at the Columbia University School of International Affairs and a syndicated newspaper columnist.

26. Charles E. Neu, "The Changing Interpretive Structure of American Foreign Policy," in *Twentieth Century American Foreign Policy*, John Braeman, Robert H. Bremner, and David Brody, eds. (Columbus, Ohio, 1971), p. 43.

27. See, for instance, the volumes of Bailey and Morison and Commager, cited above, note 25.

28. The intellectual history of American isolationism in the 1930's is still to be written. Meanwhile we have the valuable studies of Manfred Jonas, *Isolationism in America 1935-1941* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1966); and Warren I. Cohen, *The American Revisionists—The Lessons of Intervention in World War I* (Chicago, 1967).

29. Morison and Commager, p. 643.

30. Samuel I. Rosenman, ed., *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, vol. VI, 1937—*The Constitution Prevails* (New York, 1941), p. 424; hereafter cited as *PPR*.

31. Morison, Commager, and Leuchtenburg, p. 533.

32. William E. Dodd, Jr., and Martha Dodd, eds., *Ambassador Dodd's Diary, 1933-1938* (New York, 1941); hereafter cited as *Dodd*.

33. See below, pp. 19-20, 59.

34. *Dodd*, p. xvi.

35. See below, p. 26.

36. *Dodd*, p. 358. See also Edgar B. Nixon, ed., *Franklin D. Roosevelt and Foreign Affairs 1933-1937* (Cambridge, Mass., 1969), vol. III, pp. 434 and 456; hereafter cited as *RFA*.

37. *Ibid.*, III, 393; *Dodd*, p. 71. In August 1934 Dodd entered in his diary: "An American housing expert, studying conditions in Europe called . . . without having made any study of Germany, he had become an enthusiastic sympathizer. . . . His complete acceptance of Hitler revealed his mentality. I did not try to correct him. I merely asked him: What do you think of a 'statesman' who murders his opponents? The question puzzled him a little but it did not seep into his mentality." *Dodd*, p. 146. In January 1935 John Foster Dulles, then a prominent New York attorney, visited Berlin. He told Dodd: "'My sister [Eleanor Lansing Dulles] lives here. She is an enthusiastic Hitlerite, and anxious to show me the German attitude for peace.' . . . Dulles said he could not understand his sister's attitude." *Ibid.*, p. 304.

38. *Ibid.*, pp. 336-337; and *Dodd* to Cordell Hull, October 4, 1933 (*Dodd Papers*, Library of Congress): "My understanding of the President's conversation before I accepted and after, of which I have record, was that my best service was apt to be in the form of occasional lectures in German before university groups. My conviction is now stronger than when I talked with



him. They asked for the very kind of lectures which German intellectuals need these days of stern ordeal. This does not mean that I would put in a sentence of propoganda but simply describe the ideas and practices that made the American revolutionists what they were."

39. Dodd, p. 427.

40. *Ibid.*

41. "A Wilsonian in Hitler's Realm," *Yale Review*, XXX (March 1941), 627 and 628.

42. Julius W. Pratt, *A History of United States Foreign Policy* (New York, 1955), p. 594.

43. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1935*, vol. II (Washington, 1952), pp. 320-321; hereafter cited as FR.

44. Quoted in Robert Dallek, *Democrat and Diplomat—The Life of William E. Dodd* (New York, 1968), p. 310. On Dallek's biography, see Francis L. Loewenheim, "A Great American Historian," *Virginia Quarterly Review*, XLV (Spring 1969), 353-356.

45. Dodd, pp. xiv-xv.

46. *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull* (New York, 1948), vol. I, p. 572; hereafter cited as Hull.

47. "Since last spring," Dodd recorded in late November 1937, "Welles has had a controlling influence inside the Department of State. It is well known to me that he is violently opposed to my policies in regard to public service." Dodd, p. 434.

48. *RFA*, III, 530. See also Bullitt, pp. 233-234.

49. *FR, 1937* (Washington, 1954), vol. II, p. 377ff.; and *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, Series D, Vol. I, *From Neurath to Ribbentrop* (Washington, 1949), nos. 406, 409, and 427; hereafter cited as *GD*.

50. Quoted in Dallek, p.324.

51. Dodd, pp. 421-422.

52. *PPR*, vol. V, *The People Approve—1936* (New York, 1938), p. 43.

53. Dodd, p. 210.

54. *Ibid.*, p. 211.

55. *Ibid.*, p. 213.

56. *Ibid.*, p. 211.

57. Henry L. Stimson and McGeorge Bundy, *On Active Service in Peace and War* (New York, 1948), p. 306.

58. *Ibid.*, p. 308.

59. *Ibid.*, pp. 307-308.

60. *The New York Times*, October 6, 1937.

61. Stimson and Bundy, pp. 310-311.

62. *Ibid.*, p. 311.

63. *Ibid.*, p. 312.

64. *The New York Times*, October 7, 1937.

65. Travis Jacobs, "Roosevelt's 'Quarantine Speech,'" *The Historian*, XXIV (1962).

Opposition to Roosevelt's position came simultaneously from two rather disparate sources. On the one hand five leading "peace organizations"—including the National Council for the Prevention of War, World Peaceways, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Emergency Peace Campaign, and Committee on Militarism in Education—immediately denounced Roosevelt's address for "rousing a war spirit." In his Chicago speech, these organizations charged, "the President points the American people down the road that led to the World War. He offers the same reasons for advancing down that road now that were offered in 1917. He would have the people believe that at the end of the road they will find peace and prosperity and justice. That is what they were told in 1917. They found instead war, fascism, communism, and debt." In Berlin, the semi-official *Diplomatische Korrespondenz* joined the attack, suggesting that "if the President of the United States seriously wants to assume the responsibility and initiative for bettering conditions, then he must take into consideration the shipwreck suffered

by his predecessor [President Wilson]. . . . When the President of the United States raises his voice today to influence, not to say intervene, in world affairs, including Europe's, then we are justified in assuming that he will pick up the threads where Wilson abandoned them." *The New York Times*, October 7, 1937. Although it is unmentioned by his biographer (Fred L. Israel, *Nevada's Key Pittman* [Lincoln, 1963]), on October 6, that is, the day after Roosevelt's "Quarantine Address," Senator Key Pittman of Nevada, the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, issued a statement recommending an "economic quarantine of Japan," saying that it "would be successful in itself in stopping the Japanese invasion of China in thirty days. . . . Let the civilized governments," Pittman's statement declared, "which are backed by 90 per cent of the people ostracize Japan. Let them refuse to have any dealings with the country. Let them refuse to continue any commercial or credit relations with Japan and there need not be a single shot fired. Such action is more powerful than the army and navy of the United States." Pittman noted that under the decision of the Supreme Court, of December 21, 1936, in the arms embargo case (*U.S. vs. Curtiss-Wright Export Corporation et al*), "the President of the United States has the incidental constitutional power as Executive and Commander in Chief of the army and navy to stop commercial and financial intercourse with Japan." *The New York Times*, October 7, 1937. Although the Roosevelt administration usually paid close attention to Pittman's views and suggestions, this appears not to have been true in this case. Nothing further was heard of or done about this particular proposal, although it is interesting to speculate what might have happened if Pittman's proposal had been seriously considered or actually put into effect.

66. *PPR*, VI, pp. 422-423; Burns, pp. 318-319; Leuchtenburg, pp. 226-227. This was also the considered opinion of the German ambassador in Washington, who advised his government on October 15 that "thus far there are no indications that the United States intends to intervene actively in the Far Eastern conflict, let alone in European conflicts." *GD*, Series D., vol I, no. 415. See also *ibid.*, no. 412.

67. Stimson and Bundy, p. 313.

68. *The New York Times*, December 21, 1937.

69. See, for instance, "An Amendment against War," *The New Republic*, December 29, 1937, pp. 212-213. "We cannot," *The New Republic* asserted, "play the role of a world power, with a finger in every pie that interests us, so long as it is known that we probably will not fight except in literal self-defense."

70. As *The New Republic* pointed out, "among those who favored the resolution were not only the majority of progressive Republicans and Democrats, but the entire delegation of eight Progressives from Wisconsin and the five Farmer-Laborites. It can safely be said that the masses of people throughout the country who favor Mr. Roosevelt's social program are opposed to participation in any war on foreign soil." "The Country Wants Peace," January 19, 1938, p. 294.

71. *PPR*, vol. VII, 1938—*The Continuing Struggle for Liberalism* (New York, 1941), pp. 36-37. See also *The New Republic*, January 26, 1938, p. 337.

72. *Congressional Record*, 75th Congress, 3rd Session, LXXX, January 10, 1938, p. 283. See also Richard D. Burns and W. Addams, "Foreign Policy and the 'Democratic Myth': The Debate on the Ludlow Amendment," *Mid-America*, XLVII (October 1965). Of the Ludlow referendum's supporters who sought re-election in 1938, 31% were defeated, while only 22% of its opponents were defeated.

73. Elting E. Morison, *Turmoil and Tradition—A Study of the Life and Times of Henry L. Stimson* (Boston, 1960).

74. New York, 1944.

75. *Ibid.*, pp. 64ff.

76. Winston S. Churchill, *The Gathering Storm* (Boston, 1948), pp. 251ff.

77. See, for instance, Anthony Eden, *Facing the Dictators 1923-1938* (Boston, 1962), pp. 621ff.; Harold Macmillan, *Winds of Change 1914-1939* (New York, 1966), pp. 532ff.; Selig Adler, *The Uncertain Giant 1921-1941—American Foreign Policy Between the Wars* (New York, 1965), pp.

191-192; Arthur S. Link, with the collaboration of William B. Catton, *American Epoch—A History of the United States Since the 1890's*, third edition (New York, 1967), pp. 476-477; and C. E. Black and E. C. Helmreich, *Twentieth Century Europe*, fourth edition (New York, 1972), pp. 519-520. Robert A. Divine, *The Reluctant Belligerent—American Entry into World War II* (New York, 1965), points out correctly that “it is difficult to see how Welles’ plan would have altered the course of events . . . Germany, Italy, and Japan were dreaming of world conquest, and nothing short of sweeping American military and political commitment was likely to deter them” (pp. 47-48).

78. Francis L. Loewenheim, “An Illusion that Shaped History—New Light on the History and Historiography of American Peace Efforts before Munich,” in Daniel R. Beaver, ed., *Some Pathways in Twentieth Century History—Essays in Honor of Reginald Charles McGrane* (Detroit, 1969), pp. 177-220, 286-295.

79. Welles, p. 35.

80. *Ibid.*, p. 55.

81. *Ibid.*, p. 61.

82. *Ibid.*

83. F. Jay Taylor, *The United States and the Spanish Civil War* (New York, 1956), p. 46.

84. Welles, p. 70.

85. See below, p. 48.

86. Welles, p. 70.

87. *FR*, 1938, vol. I (Washington, 1955), pp. 704-705. It was almost certainly the British who were responsible for Mussolini’s proposal to Hitler. *Ibid.*, pp. 693-694. Keith Middlemas, *The British Government and Germany 1937-1939* (Chicago, 1972), states that Roosevelt’s message did not reach Mussolini until 4 p.m., but adds, without evidence, that “its details” were known to him in the morning, and that “according to Phillips, the State Department had deliberately used a simple code, so that the Italians should break it” (p. 398).

88. See below, note 190.

89. Monica Curtis, ed., *Documents on International Affairs 1938* (London, 1943), vol. II, p. 306.

90. Welles, p. 72.

91. Hull, I, 235.

92. *Ibid.*, I, 243.

93. *GD*, Series C, vol. III (Washington, 1959), no. 545. Roosevelt made a similarly weak and ineffective response at his press conference of March 20. Asked if he would “care to comment” on the German arms situation, Roosevelt replied: “No, I think not. I think we can only properly maintain the general principles of the good neighbor and hope that that American principle will be extended to Europe and will become more and more effectual and contribute to the peaceful solution of the problems and, incidentally with it, as a very necessary component part, the reduction of armaments. I don’t think anything more than that can be properly said at this time.” *RFA*, II, 447-448.

94. Keith Feiling, *The Life of Neville Chamberlain* (London, 1946), p. 325.

95. Hull, I, 245. For the text of Dodd’s telegram, see *FR*, 1935, vol. I (Washington, 1952), p. 311; although it should be noted that Dodd concluded his message by saying, “I have observed no evidence of German-Japanese entente.”

96. Hull, I, p. 245.

97. *Ibid.*, p. 397.

98. *Ibid.*, p. 399.

99. *Ibid.*, p. 404.

100. *Ibid.*, p. 402. As printed in *FR*, 1935, I, 318-321, the memorandum was dated March 14, and the particular passage read: “you hope that . . . the Committee avoid in any public hearing the agitation of any question which would offend the governments of the Powers associated with us in the War, thus making it more difficult for this Government to deal with those Governments.”

Ibid., p. 321.

101. Hull, I, 402.

102. For a more favorable assessment of the Nye Committee, see Wayne S. Cole, *Senator Gerald P. Nye and American Foreign Relations* (Minneapolis, 1962), ch. vi, and John E. Wiltz, *In Search of Peace—The Senate Munitions Inquiry 1934-1936* (Baton Rouge, 1963).

103. Hull, I, 481.

104. Ibid.

105. *RFA*, III, 327-329.

106. Hull, I, 486.

107. Ibid. No evidence of such remonstrances if to be found in *RFA*, vol. III, but Hull was understandably all the more unhappy since he had sent Roosevelt a copy of the State Department draft on June 17. Ibid., p. 336.

108. See below, p. 61.

109. Churchill, p. 207.

110. Hull, I, 554.

111. Ibid., p. 571.

112. See above, pp. 24-25.

113. Hull, I, 563.

114. See Burns, pp. 293ff., and Leuchtenburg, pp. 232ff.

115. *GD*, Series D, vol. I (Washington, 1949), no. 19.

116. Martin Gilbert, *The Roots of Appeasement* (New York, 1966). For the development of British appeasement from Hitler's assumption of power to the Rhineland crisis of 1936, see the important new volume of Oswald Hauser, *England und das Dritte Reich—Eine dokumentierte geschichte der englisch-deutschen Beziehungen 1933 bis 1939 auf grund unveröffentlichten Akten aus dem britischen Staatsarchiv*, vol. I, 1933-1936 (Stuttgart, 1972).

117. *FR*, 1938, I, 391ff.

118. Hull, I, 576.

119. Ibid., pp. 576-577.

120. Ibid., p. 577.

121. Ibid., pp. 546-548.

122. Langer and Gleason, pp. 31-32.

123. Hull, I, 586-587.

124. Ibid., p. 588; *FR*, 1938, I, 531.

125. Ibid., pp. 483ff.

126. Hull, I, 589-590.

127. Even at the height of the Munich crisis, as is now known, Roosevelt did not escape the temptation to act alone and without consulting the Department of State. As Arnold Offner has pointed out (p. 261), on the night of September 20 Roosevelt asked the British ambassador, Lord Lindsay, to a secret meeting at the White House. Roosevelt, Lindsay cabled Foreign Secretary Halifax, "emphasized the necessity of absolute secrecy. Nobody must know I had seen him and he himself would tell nobody of the interview. I gathered not even the State Department." In the course of this interview Roosevelt told the British ambassador that "he would be afraid to express disapproval of German aggression lest it might encourage Czechoslovakia to vain resistance." Roosevelt spoke, Lindsay reported, "in a most friendly and appreciative manner of the Prime Minister's policy and efforts for peace. . . . He would like to do or say something to help it but was at a loss to know what." Lindsay noted also that "several times in the conversation he showed himself quite alive to the possibility that somehow or other in indefinable circumstances the United States might again find themselves involved in an European war. In that case he regarded it as almost inconceivable that it would be possible for him to send any American troops across the Atlantic even if his prestige were as high as it had been just after the 1936 elections." *Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1939*, Third Series, vol. VII (London, 1954), Appendix IV, p. v.

128. Hull, I, 590; *FR*, 1938, I, 642. It appears from the recently published correspondence of Roosevelt and Bullitt that the latter had advanced such a proposal as early as May 20. Bullitt, p. 262. See also Bullitt's letter to Roosevelt, June 13, 1938. *Ibid.*, p. 271.

129. Hull, I, 590-591; *FR*, 1938, I, 649-650.

130. Hull, I, 591.

131. *Ibid.*, p. 593.

132. See above, p. 28, note 94.

133. Hull, I, 592. For the text of Roosevelt's message, see *FR*, 1938, I, 684-685.

134. Hull, I, 595.

135. See below, p. 48.

136. See below, p. 66 and note 269.

137. Hull, I, 596.

138. See above, p. 27.

139. Hull, I, 596.

140. "We Must Construct a New Foreign Policy," *The New York Times*, October 5, 1938. "This government," Krock observed, "through Mr. Roosevelt's direct appeals to Hitler and Mussolini, inferentially cancelled a long series of attacks on the dictators by asking and receiving from them consideration of our plea to accept the fruits of aggression instead of rudely plucking them."

141. Francis L. Loewenheim, "The Terms Amount to Surrender," *The New York Times*, December 1, 1972.

142. Hull, I, 594.

143. Martin Gilbert and Richard Gott, *The Appeasers* (Boston, 1963), ch. 11; and Bernd Jürgen Wendt, *Economic Appeasement—Handel und Finanz in der britischen Deutschland-Politik 1933-1939* (Düsseldorf, 1971), pp. 481ff.

144. See William L. Langer, *Our Vichy Gamble* (New York, 1947), and Louis Gottschalk, "Our Vichy Fumble," *Journal of Modern History*, XX (1948).

145. See above, p. 16, note 25 and p. 38.

146. Hull, I, 469-470.

147. *Ibid.*, p. 404.

148. Both Presidents Truman and Johnson courageously challenged the liberal neo-isolationism of the immediate postwar and Vietnam eras in a way that would have been unthinkable for Roosevelt. It has recently been observed that one reason why Roosevelt was so slow in responding to the plight of European Jews was because of some concern on his part about being accused, or having his administration accused, of being excessively pro-Jewish. See Feingold, p. 303.

149. See below, pp. 38ff.

150. Langer and Gleason, chs. 1-2.

151. *Ibid.*, pp. 31-32. It should be noted that the publication in 1950, in two volumes, of *FDR—His Personal Letters 1928-1945*, edited by Elliott Roosevelt with the assistance of Joseph P. Lash, (hereafter cited as *RPL*) included a number of interesting and important Roosevelt letters on foreign affairs during the Munich era, but did not change substantially the prevailing image of Roosevelt as diplomat or world leader, or, on the other hand, provide the kind of ample documentary evidence to be found in Langer and Gleason, the *Foreign Relations* volumes, or those edited by Edgar B. Nixon.

152. It is perhaps symbolic that in the recent survey of twentieth century American diplomatic historiography cited above (see page 16, note 26), Langer and Gleason receive three lines while page after page are devoted to the writings of George F. Kennan and William Appleman Williams. See also Ernest R. May, "An American Tradition in Foreign Policy—The Role of Public Opinion," in *Theory and Practice in American Politics*, William H. Nelson with Francis L. Loewenheim, eds. (Chicago, 1964), pp. 119-120.



153. For a recent uncritical view of Roosevelt's prewar foreign policy, see ch. 28, the work of Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., in John M. Blum, Edmund Morgan, Willie Lee Rose, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., Kenneth M. Stampp, and C. Vann Woodward, *The National Experience*, third edition (New York, 1973). Also see his "Congress and the Making of American Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs*, LI (October, 1972), p. 92, and below note 191.

154. This position was not, of course, entirely new and unprecedented by any means. It had been anticipated, for instance, in Raymond Moley, *After Seven Years* (New York, 1939), especially pp. 376ff. See also Francis L. Loewenheim, ed., *The Historian and the Diplomat—The Role of History and Historians in American Foreign Policy* (New York, 1967), pp. 42ff.; and James T. Patterson, *Mr. Republican—A Biography of Robert A. Taft* (Boston, 1972), especially chs. xiii and xvi. "My whole idea of foreign policy," Taft wrote in early 1939, "is based largely on the position that America can successfully defend itself against the rest of the world." Quoted in Patterson, p. 201. "No one," Taft declared in a broadcast over the American Forum of the Air in January 1939 that was characteristic of his judgment and logic on international affairs, "has ever suggested before that a single nation should range over the world, like a knight errant, protecting democracy and ideals of good faith, and tilting, like Don Quixote, against the windmills of Fascism. . . . Of course, such a policy is not only vain, but almost inevitably leads to war. . . . There is a general illusion that we see in Germany and Italy forces which threaten to overwhelm England and France, and march on to attack the United States. But this is surely an imaginary fear at the present time. There is no reason to believe that Germany and Italy could defeat England and France in any protracted war." Robert A. Taft, "Let Us Stay Out of War—That's the Main Issue Today," *Vital Speeches*, V (February 1, 1939), p. 255. A recent echo of Taft's short-sighted position—inspired by opposition to the Vietnam war—is to be found in Bruce M. Russett, *No Clear and Present Danger—A Skeptical View of the United States Entry into World War II* (New York, 1972).

155. Burns, p. 262.

156. See below, p. 48, note 191.

157. John Gunther, *Roosevelt in Retrospect—A Profile in History* (New York, 1950), pp. 299-302.

158. *Ibid.*, p. 303.

159. As regards, for instance, Bullitt's separation of evidence and conclusions, see Gordon Wright, "Ambassador Bullitt and the Fall of France," *World Politics* X (1957), and his recently published correspondence with Roosevelt, cited above, p. 13, note 9.

160. See Bowers's letter to Bullitt of August 6, 1936 (n. 244), and n. 186.

161. See below, p. 50.

162. Herbert Feis, *1933—Characters in Crisis* (Boston, 1966), pp. 341-342.

163. *FR*, 1934, vol. I (Washington, 1951), p. 81.

164. *FR*, 1936, vol. I (Washington, 1953), p. 217.

165. *Ibid.*, p. 217.

166. *Ibid.*, p. 228.

167. *FR*, 1936, I, 219-222, 224, and 226-227.

168. Quoted in Gerhard L. Weinberg, *The Foreign Policy of Hitler's Germany*, vol. I, *Diplomatic Revolution in Europe 1933-1936* (Chicago, 1970), pp. 156-157.

169. Cf. José M. Sánchez, *Reform and Reaction—The Politico-Religious Background of the Spanish Civil War* (Chapel Hill, 1964); and Richard A. H. Robinson, *The Origins of Franco's Spain—The Right, the Republic and Revolution, 1931-1936* (Pittsburgh, 1970).

170. That misconceived policy was, no less incomprehensibly, still defended by Eden in his memoirs twenty-five years later. Eden, pp. 451ff.

171. See below, pp. 65-66.

172. See his memoirs, *My Mission to Spain—Watching the Rehearsal for World War II* (New York, 1954), which may be compared with the important recent study of Richard P. Traina, *American Diplomacy and the Spanish Civil War* (Bloomington, 1968).

173. On the other hand, as Dean Traina has suggested, and as recently published documents from the Roosevelt Library (see below, p. 60 and p. 61, note 244-245) have shown, Bowers also favored the United States keeping out of the war.

174. Burns, p. 355.

175. *Ibid.*, p. 356.

176. *GD*, Series C, vol. III (Washington, 1950) unfortunately includes only a few documents from the German embassy in Washington. But see nos. 178, 274, and 585; and Dante A. Puzzo, *Spain and the Great Powers 1936-1941* (New York, 1962).

177. *FR*, 1922, vol. I (Washington, 1938), p. 280.

178. *FR*, 1937, IV, 99, 138-141, and 145-147.

179. *Ibid.*, p. 85.

180. Even before the Brussels fiasco, the American position had become of increasing concern to Chiang Kai-shek, among others. "Early in [our] conversation," Nelson T. Johnson, the American ambassador to China, reported on September 1, 1937, "Generalissimo expressed himself as puzzled over American policy in the present Far Eastern situation, particularly as regards our willingness to associate ourselves with Great Britain in attempting to restrain Japan. . . . I came away with a feeling that the Generalissimo is most disappointed at what he believes to be the failure of the United States in not more publicly condemning Japanese aggression on Chinese soil in utter defiance of the Kellogg Pact, the Nine Power Treaty and international justice." *FR*, 1937, vol. III (Washington, 1954), p. 504.

181. *GD*, Series D, vol. I, no. 653.

182. See above, p. 28, note 92.

183. In June 1935, shortly after the signing of the Anglo-German naval agreement, Ambassador Luther had reported from Washington that "with the exception of those who are entirely hostile, people today regard our course as a just one, whilst not always approving our methods. And ultimately, the restoration of Germany's military power is viewed with respect, being regarded as a fact about which the other nations could, in effect, do nothing." *GD*, Series C, vol. IV (Washington, 1962), no. 155. There was nothing in this message, which was almost certainly grounded in fact, to discourage Hitler and his associates from their chosen course.

184. Eden, p. 371.

185. "By and large," concludes a recent survey of American policy toward Germany from 1933 to 1938, "Roosevelt had convinced himself that Munich opened the way to a new and better world . . . and when [Chamberlain] agreed to go to Munich Roosevelt told him sincerely that he was a "good man." Moreover, "there is nothing in diplomatic records to indicate that the President's aides disapproved the Munich settlement—the evidence, in fact, indicates the opposite." Offner, pp. 268-269.

186. Bullitt, pp. 279-280. It is interesting to note that on May 12, Bullitt had written Roosevelt that he had told French Air Minister Guy La Chambre "that in case of war between France and Germany, public opinion in America would be overwhelmingly in favor of application of the Neutrality Act and that you would have no choice but to apply it and prevent the delivery of planes and munitions" (*ibid.*, p. 257), to which Roosevelt replied "You did well to try to set La Chambre right on the question of the Neutrality Act. I hope that you cleared up any misconception which he may have had. As long as that act remains in effect, it would have to be applied to any major European war, and we could not conceivably connive at violations of the embargo provisions in favor of any particular power" (*ibid.*, p. 260). On August 31 Bullitt wrote Roosevelt: "If war should begin, the result would be such a devastation of Europe that it would make small difference which side should emerge the ostensible victor. I am more convinced than ever that we should attempt to stay out and be ready to reconstruct whatever pieces may be left of

European civilization" (*ibid.*, p. 283) and as late as September 20, Bullitt told the President "the prospects for peace are so foul that the further we keep out of the mess the better" (*ibid.*, p. 287); but by the day before the Munich conference Bullitt wrote Roosevelt in the strictest secrecy that "I realize how carefully it is necessary to tread in this matter, but my personal feeling is that if war should break out this week, we should at the earliest possible moment permit the French and British to purchase for cash in our ports as many planes, munitions, and guns as they have money to pay for" (*ibid.*, p. 300).

187. *FR*, 1938, I, 650.

188. *Ibid.*, p. 658.

189. Francis L. Loewenheim, "An Illusion that Shaped History," p. 195, note 56. The theory of "peaceful change" has recently made a respectable comeback, as for instance in the Shanghai communique issued at the close of President Nixon's visit to Communist China.

190. *FR*, 1938, I, 684-685.

191. *Ibid.*, p. 688. As late as the third edition of *The National Experience*, published in early 1973, Professor Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., repeated his assertion (p. 665), made in the first edition of that widely used volume, that "when it seemed as if Chamberlain was standing firm against Hitler," Roosevelt had sent him "an encouraging message," whereas both Langer and Gleason's *The Challenge to Isolation*, published in 1952, and the pertinent *Foreign Relations* volume, published in 1955, showed clearly that Roosevelt sent this message after learning of Chamberlain's announcement to Parliament that he was going to Munich the following day—a serious error noted four years ago in Loewenheim, "An Illusion that Shaped History," p. 196, note 59.

192. The editors of the *Foreign Relations* documents on Munich omitted the texts of these congratulatory messages, which are to be found in the Department of State's files in the National Archives.

193. *FR*, 1938, I, 704-707.

194. *Ibid.*, p. 704.

195. See below, p. 60, note 242.

196. See the letter of twenty concerned historians to *The New York Times Sunday Book Review*, September 7, 1969, together with a reply from the Archivist of the United States, the Final Report of the *Ad Hoc* Committee to Investigate the Charges Against the Roosevelt Library, and replies by interested parties, December 1970 (available from the American Historical Association, Washington, D.C.).

197. Bullitt, pp. xiv-xv.

198. See Francis L. Loewenheim, Harold D. Langley, and Manfred Jonas, eds., *Roosevelt and Churchill—Their Secret Correspondence during the Second World War* (New York, 1974).

199. Cf. Elting E. Morison, et al, eds., *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, 8 vols. (Cambridge, Mass., 1951-1954).

200. See below, pp. 63ff.

201. Carroll Kilpatrick, ed., *Roosevelt and Daniels—A Friendship in Politics* (Chapel Hill, 1952).

202. See below, p. 55.

203. *RFA*, I, 536.

204. *Ibid.*, pp. 553-554.

205. *Ibid.*, III, 217.

206. *Ibid.*, p. 213.

207. *Ibid.*, p. 262.

208. *RPL*, I, 383.

209. *RFA*, II, 42.

210. *Ibid.*, p. 80.

211. *Ibid.*, p. 167.

212. *Ibid.*, pp. 54-71.

213. *Ibid.*, pp. 316-317.

214. The Italo-Ethiopian war appears not to have occupied much of Roosevelt's time and energy, and if he was aware of its larger international implications, there is no published evidence of it, although it should be noted that at the outset of the conflict, on August 20, 1935, he sent Hull a memorandum for use in subsequent discussions with Mussolini. He said, among other things, that "it is never too late to avoid an armed conflict . . . we could well point out that after all [of Mussolini's] preparations, Italian prestige would be enhanced and not harmed if Italy could take the magnificent position that rather than resort to war, she would cancel the military preparations and submit the whole question to peaceful settlement by arbitration." *Ibid.*, p. 614. The United States appears not, however, to have pressed Roosevelt's last suggestion, and it is difficult to follow Professor Leuchtenburg's assertion that "while Roosevelt cleverly kept his actions divorced from those of Geneva, he moved in the direction of collective security." *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal, 1932-1940*, p. 220. See also Harrison Braddock, "A New Look at American Policy during the Italo-Ethiopian Crisis 1935-1936," *Journal of Modern History*, XXXIV (1962), and Brice Harris, Jr., *The United States and the Italo-Ethiopian Crisis* (Stanford, 1964).

215. Burns, pp. 251-252 and 263; Leuchtenburg, pp. 215-217.

216. *RFA*, II, 423.

217. See for instance Engert's reports in *FR*, 1935, I, 657ff. On September 29, 1935, Engert cabled Hull: "If the Paris Pact becomes a dead letter the world will relapse into international anarchy rendered infinitely more serious by the prospect of prolonged embittered relations between the white and colored races not only in Africa but also on other continents. Although exasperated almost beyond endurance by Italy's insincerity and policy of provocation, Ethiopia has consistently refrained from taking up the challenge of Italian mobilization trusting that the principles of the Covenant and Paris Pact which had been almost universally accepted in theory would also be respected in practice. . . I fear. . . that we are on the eve of a grave calamity fraught with all the elements of another World War. . . Most nations of the world have to look hopefully to the United States and Great Britain for leadership where moral issues are concerned." *Ibid.*, pp. 768-769. To which Hull responded, on October 1: "I fully appreciate your point of view and I assure you that we shall continue to exert our best efforts toward a peaceful solution." *Ibid.*, p. 769.

218. *RFA*, II, 401.

219. *Ibid.*, p. 403.

220. *RPL*, I, 437-438.

221. For Dodd's reports on, and assessment of, these moves, see *FR*, 1935, vol. II (Washington, 1952), pp. 294ff.

222. *RFA*, II, 453-454.

223. *Ibid.*, p. 463.

224. Beatrice Farnsworth, *William C. Bullitt and the Soviet Union* (Bloomington, 1967), chs. ii-iii; and Bullitt, ch. i.

225. *RFA*, II, 493-495.

226. *Ibid.*, pp. 553-554.

227. Eden, pp. 257ff.

228. For Ambassador Bingham's report on, and interpretation of, the Anglo-German naval agreement, see *FR*, 1935, I, 163-164. "This Embassy," Bingham advised Washington on June 7, "views this preliminary Anglo-German accord as a constructive contribution. . . ." In his response, on June 11, expressing general satisfaction at the agreement, Hull made no mention of the fact that it constituted a serious breach in the naval provisions of the treaty of Versailles. *Ibid.*, pp. 164-165. See also Donald C. Watt, "The Anglo-German Naval Agreement of 1935—An Interim Judgment," *Journal of Modern History*, XXVIII (1956); and Weinberg, pp. 210ff., especially 215-216.

229. For a useful account of the struggle over neutrality legislation, see Robert A. Divine, *The*

*Illusion of Neutrality* (Chicago, 1962).

230. See above, p. 29.

231. Even Franklin Roosevelt, who viewed the Nye investigation with disfavor, seems to have been impressed by some of its reasoning. In October 1934, he wrote Josephus Daniels: "Would that W. J. B. [William Jennings Bryan] had stayed on as Secretary of State—the country would have been better off." Quoted in Leuchtenburg, p. 218, note 5.

232. *RFA*, II, 623.

233. *RFA*, III, 221-222.

234. *Ibid.*, p. 332.

235. For a trenchant critique of American embargo policy during the Italo-Ethiopian war, see Herbert Feis, *Seen from E. A.—Three International Episodes* (New York, 1947), pp. 218ff. and 254ff.

236. See above, pp. 40ff.

237. *RFA*, III, 267.

238. *Ibid.*, pp. 278-279.

239. *RPL*, I, 577.

240. The fullest treatment of the subject remains Hugh Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War* (New York, 1961), which, however, devotes little attention to the role of the United States.

241. See above, pp. 43ff., 60ff.

242. A number of important Bowers letters included in the Nixon volumes had not been made available to Richard P. Traina, who had wished to use them for his important study, *American Diplomacy and the Spanish Civil War*.

243. *RFA*, III, 395-398.

244. *Ibid.*, p. 428.

245. *Ibid.*, pp. 435, 436, and 439.

246. *Ibid.*, p. 466.

247. In his memoirs of his Spanish embassy, *My Mission to Spain*, Bowers recalled that when he returned to Washington in March 1939, Roosevelt told him: "We have made a mistake: you have been right all along" (p. 418). Such Rooseveltian confessions of error were rare indeed.

248. *RFA*, III, 380. Since Roosevelt's address, as delivered, differed at a number of points from the prepared version published in *PPR*, IV, 285-292, the reader should consult the former version printed in *RFA*, pp. 377-383.

249. *Ibid.*, III, 205 and 206.

250. *Ibid.*, p. 501.

251. See, however, Robert H. Ferrell, "The Peace Movement," in Alexander DeConde, ed., *Isolation and Security—Ideas and Interests in Twentieth-Century American Foreign Policy* (Durham, N.C., 1957).

252. *RPL*, I, 506-507.

253. *RFA*, III, 238.

254. *Ibid.*, p. 376.

255. *Ibid.*, p. 121.

256. Oswald Garrison Villard, *Fighting Years—Memoirs of a Liberal Editor* (New York, 1939), chs. xvii-xxviii; and Michael Wreszin, *Oswald Garrison Villard—Pacifist at War* (Bloomington, 1965), chs. xiv-xv.

257. See the important new volume of Robert J. Maddox cited above, p. 14, note 13.

258. *RFA*, III, 389-390.

259. The best—and perhaps definitive—account of that subject from the American point of view is now Arthur S. Link, *Wilson—Campaigns for Progressivism and Peace 1916-1917* (Princeton, 1965); but Ernest R. May, *The World War and American Isolation 1914-1917* (Cambridge, Mass., 1959), an excellent book, remains important in its own right.

260. See above, pp. 62-63.



261. *RFA*, III, 395.

262. See above, p. 57, note 224.

263. *RFA*, III, 551.

264. *Ibid.*, p. 552.

265. *Ibid.*, pp. 572-573.

266. See above, p. 31, note 114.

267. *RFA*, III, 566.

268. *Ibid.*, p. 593.

269. *RPL*, I, 818. Nor can this be regarded, any more than Roosevelt's congratulatory telegram to Chamberlain sent September 29, as an isolated expression of presidential euphoria brought on by relief over a temporary avoidance of war. Thus on October 5, for instance, Roosevelt asked Ambassador Kennedy to deliver the following message orally to Prime Minister Chamberlain: "I fully share your hope and belief that there exists today the greatest opportunity in years for the establishment of a new order based on justice and on law. Now that you have established personal contact with Chancellor Hitler, I know that you will be taking up with him from time to time many of the problems which must be resolved in order to bring about that new and better order" (quoted in Langer and Gleason, p. 35). All of this undoubtedly justifies the conclusion of Langer and Gleason that "relatively unconcerned with the terms of appeasement so long as they did not touch American interests (like the proposed recognition of Italian conquests), [Roosevelt] hoped for British success and at the height of the Munich crisis used all his influence to ensure further negotiation. The settlement of disputes by peaceful methods was his dominant objective, so much so, in fact, that he persuaded himself that the Munich agreement opened vistas to a new and better order" (*ibid.*).