

## Electronic Journal of International History - Article 2

ISSN 1471-1443

[Introduction](#) | [Contents](#)

### Lord D'Abernon, Austen Chamberlain and the Origin of the Treaty of Locarno

(1)

by Gaynor Johnson  
Bolton Institute

I.

1. At the end of the Locarno conference in October 1925, the Foreign Secretary, Sir Austen Chamberlain, sent a letter of thanks to Lord D'Abernon, the British ambassador to Berlin. (2) He wrote:

I wish to record my high appreciation of the services which you have rendered not only to H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] but to the peace of Europe in your character as His Majesty's Ambassador to Berlin. I congratulate you on the success of an endeavour to which your influence and advice have so powerfully contributed. (3)

D'Abernon, flattered by the warmth of this tribute, returned the compliment, writing of the way in which Chamberlain had 'steered' the 'ship of negotiation' into the 'harbour of signature'. (4) These letters reflected the views of a wide circle of opinion. D'Abernon, it was believed, had a special rapport with the Germans. (5) Chamberlain too was widely praised for almost single-handedly saving Europe from the scourge of war forever in October 1925. (6) Both men were to view their part in the conclusion of the Treaty of Locarno as the high point of their careers. Historians have perpetuated this image of harmony and mutual admiration between Chamberlain and D'Abernon. (7) Not unreasonably, consideration of their relationship and its impact on British foreign policy has usually been of secondary importance to the wider analysis of British and European security policy in the mid 1920s. However, the Chamberlain-D'Abernon relationship in the eleven-month period leading up to the conclusion of the Treaty of Locarno in October 1925 should not be regarded as a mere footnote to history. It was important because by the time the security negotiations began, D'Abernon, having already been in post for four years, had much greater experience of the conduct of European diplomacy than Chamberlain. (8) He was also the British government's principal source of information on the country widely believed to be the most like to challenge the tenuous peace that had existed since 1918. What was more, and this will form a significant part of the discussion below, Chamberlain and D'Abernon held often opposing views on where the tensions in European security lay and how they could be addressed. Unlike Chamberlain, D'Abernon believed that it was France that posed the greatest threat to European security. This article will suggest therefore that the often-cited letters they wrote in October 1925 were very untypical of their attitude towards each other. It will argue that their relationship in the period leading up to the signature of the Treaty of Locarno was in fact tense and fraught with disagreements. What is more, the nature of these differences went to the heart of the debate about the extent to which Britain should become involved in European affairs.

2. The case for reappraising the Chamberlain-D'Abernon relationship in 1925 stems from their memoirs published some time after the signature of the Treaty of Locarno. (9) Both Chamberlain and D'Abernon placed themselves at the heart of the negotiation process but they had little to say about each other's involvement. (10) This article's contention that they had separate agendas conforms to recent historiography on the origins and consequences of the Treaty of Locarno. Before the Second World War, the treaty was praised as a major breakthrough in European diplomacy and was widely regarded as a second and a much more civilised peace treaty between Germany and the Allies than had been created in 1919. (11) After 1945, however, the failure of the Treaty of Locarno to contain Nazi foreign policy led historians to dismiss it as a superficial compromise between the security needs of Britain, France and Germany that simply papered over the differences between those who negotiated it. George Grün and Jon Jacobson were in the vanguard of those who sought to debunk the pre-war 'myth' about the importance of the Treaty of Locarno. (12) Their ideas have had a profound effect on historians' assessments of Chamberlain's period as Foreign Secretary. Reasons for the weakness of the treaty have been sought in Chamberlain's excessive preoccupation with French security interests. (13) A more recent analysis by Richard Grayson attempts to redress this balance by suggesting that Chamberlain was willing to include Germany in discussions about international security between 1924 and 1929. (14) However, this article will suggest that Grayson overstates Chamberlain's desire to embrace German involvement in the security negotiations in the period November 1924 to October 1925. It will demonstrate that a balanced assessment of Chamberlain's attitude towards international security in the first year of his period as Foreign Secretary should contain a discussion of both his policy towards France and towards Germany.

3. In comparison to Chamberlain, D'Abernon's reputation has remained untainted, primarily because hitherto historians have devoted most attention to his dealings with the German government. (15) Nothing has been written about his relationship with the British government at this time. This is an important oversight. As suggested above, D'Abernon was the principal source of information to the British government about German affairs. His relationship with Chamberlain was thus crucially important in persuading the British government to take a sympathetic view of the German position during the security negotiations. This article will suggest that he failed in this task. It will argue that D'Abernon did not persuade Chamberlain that the German position on security was sincere. If the Treaty of Locarno is to be viewed as little more than a token attempt to meet the security requirements of its signatories, responsibility for its lack of effectiveness must rest partly with D'Abernon as well as with Chamberlain.

4. D'Abernon's historical reputation stems from his involvement in the formulation of the note proposing a security agreement between Britain, France and Germany that the German government presented to the British government in January 1925. This note, which resulted from extensive dialogues between D'Abernon and Carl von Schubert, Staatssekretär at the Auswärtiges Amt, between November 1924 and January 1925, contained a reassessment of a number of earlier German proposals that D'Abernon had vainly persuaded the British government to adopt. The most significant was that by the German Chancellor, Cuno, in November 1922, that proposed that Britain, France, Germany and Italy would undertake not to wage war against each other for thirty years without the prior authorisation of a plebiscite. The desire to prevent future conflict and the need to pay for the devastation caused by the Great War were two of the principal challenges facing the peacemakers who met in Paris in 1919 to negotiate what became the Treaty of Versailles. Thus the issues of security and reparation payments became the central planks of European diplomacy in the early 1920s.

5. The resurrection of the Cuno proposals coincided with the beginning of a period of international stability that was greater than had existed since the war. What was more, the Dawes Plan, formulated in 1924, offered a means of resolving the endless debate about reparation payments through the introduction of American loans. The solution of this problem in turn appeared to offer a means of ending the Franco-Belgian occupation of the Ruhr- made more likely because in Aristide Briand, France had a Minister for Foreign Affairs who possessed a less uncompromising attitude towards Germany than his predecessors. A further important consideration for the Germans was developing closer relations with the Soviet Union. Since the signature of the Treaty of Rapallo in 1922, the German government had been seeking to negotiate a further mutual assistance agreement. Realising that such a policy would be controversial to the Allies, the Stresemann-Luther government wished to use the prospect of such an agreement as a diplomatic lever in London and in Paris. (16) F.G. Stambrook has argued that D'Abernon's role was of crucial importance to the development of the note. (17) However, subsequent research has demonstrated that the Stresemann-Luther government intended to conclude a security agreement with the Allies independently of D'Abernon's support or involvement. (18)

6. A further major topic of debate surrounding D'Abernon's involvement in the despatch of the security note is the extent to which he was acting without Foreign Office instructions. Erik Goldstein has claimed that D'Abernon did make his intentions known to James Headlam-Morley, the Historical Adviser to the Foreign Office. (19) This is an overstatement of the case. D'Abernon merely inquired about the historical precedents for the conclusion of security agreements with other countries and discussed his ideas on the subject. At no time did Chamberlain, or anyone acting on his instructions, tell D'Abernon to encourage the presentation of a German security proposal. It seems particularly unlikely that anyone within the Foreign Office would have sanctioned such a policy that could have had a damaging effect on Anglo-French relations, although it is accepted that in the early months of 1925, Headlam-Morley personally had little wish to help protect French diplomatic interests. (20) The effect on Britain's relations with France would have been the main British concern when the German security proposal was only despatched to London rather than to the British and French capitals simultaneously. D'Abernon's actions were, in fact, highly unusual. They suggest that he believed that he was in a better position to judge the future course of this vital area of Anglo-German relations than the Foreign Office with all its resources and expertise. It is also possible to argue that he may have been trying to undermine the British governments close but often tense relationship with France. D'Abernon's statements on French security needs, discussed below, make this a distinct possibility.

## II

7. British policy towards the innumerable crisis associated with reparation payments, disarmament and international security that took place in the early 1920s was always one of strictly limited involvement. (21) This was born out of consideration of two issues: the needs of the empire and the belief that the European diplomatic situation was so complex that a more flexible policy could result in Britain becoming embroiled in a wide range of problems that had little bearing on British interests. Increasing emphasis was placed on the work of the League of Nations and on reinforcing and improving Britain's relationship with France. (22) The diplomatic crisis of 1923, that had failed to produce British support for the Franco-Belgian invasion of the Ruhr, placed a severe strain on Anglo-French relations. It was for this reason that D'Abernon's earlier attempt in 1923 to resurrect the Cuno proposals as a basis for discussion for a security pact based on a French undertaking not to use the Rhineland for military purposes had been rejected by the then Prime Minister, Stanley Baldwin. (23) One of the most unpalatable aspects of both proposals was that they suggested that the greatest threat to European security came from France, and not from Germany. Such an admission was officially unthinkable in London, but was not without private support, most notably from Leo Amery, the Colonial Secretary in the second Baldwin administration and from the Cabinet Secretary, Sir Maurice Hankey. (24) When he came to office in November 1924, Chamberlain was anxious to improve relations with France by demonstrating a willingness to conclude a security agreement that would protect France's frontier with Germany. (25) Nevertheless, the timing and form of the security agreement would require careful consideration, along with decisions about which countries, if any, would be asked to participate in the negotiations. Faced with such a complex range of factors to take into account, the Baldwin government moved very slowly and cautiously on the matter of European security, favouring partial or limited agreements to a blanket commitment. If this assessment of the British position is accepted, it is difficult to understand why D'Abernon thought that a proposal for a wide-ranging pact, that would give the British government a central role in guaranteeing European security, would be well received in London. It was surely the tactic that was least likely to prompt a positive response.

8. Chamberlain, when appointed Foreign Secretary, soon proved to be similar to his predecessors in rejecting an absolute British commitment to European security. (26) If his initial statements on the subject are examined, it is tempting to suggest that he wished to steer a course between the security interests of Britain, France and Germany. During his early months in office, his natural inclination was to conclude an Anglo-French security agreement that could be extended to include Germany in the fullness of time. But too much can be made of these early statements and of the notion that Chamberlain reconciled the differences of opinion about where the greatest threat to European security lay. Grayson suggests that they were typical of Chamberlain's attitude towards German involvement in the negotiations and that he had a grand plan for the preservation of European peace that had a security agreement between Britain, France and Germany as its first stage. (27) Grayson places great emphasis on a memorandum written on 19 March 1925, in which Chamberlain claimed that 'we should bring back Germany into the concert of Europe'. (28) However, his analysis can be undermined. He glosses over the point that it was the Cabinet and Committee for Imperial Defence that forced Chamberlain to abandon the idea of a bilateral security agreement with France and to include Germany from outset of the negotiations. (29) It was not Chamberlain's instinct or wish to do so. His frustration at this can be seen in his correspondence with his sisters and with the British ambassador to Paris, the Marquess of Crewe. (30) In reality, Chamberlain saw France as Britain's only trustworthy ally. Germany, no matter how much the past was laid to rest, could never occupy a similar position. In his memoirs, he made the point quite bluntly, writing:

The deeper Englishmen and Frenchmen penetrate into each other's nature, the more they will find they have in common; the deeper Englishmen and Germans go, the greater the divergence of faith and spirit which will be revealed between them. (31)

These remarks should not be dismissed as the product of hindsight, because they were written in 1935 when Chamberlain was becoming increasingly suspicious about Nazi foreign policy. There were numerous occasions during 1925 when Chamberlain made the point that 'if the French showed a tenth part of [the Germans'] unreason, there would be no pact and no peace'. (32)

9. Grayson claims that Chamberlain's period as Foreign Secretary should be viewed as a whole rather than as two pre-Locarno post-Locarno halves if his diplomatic strategies are to be understood. If so done, he argues that a distinct theme of reconciliation towards Germany can be identified and he endeavours to demonstrate that between 1926 and 1929, Britain and Germany enjoyed a close and harmonious relationship. (33) Grayson, however, places too much emphasis on Chamberlain's role as a unifying force in British foreign policy. Between November 1924 and October 1925, Chamberlain actually exacerbated the divisions about where the emphasis in the security negotiations should lie, rather than reconciled them. Cabinet ministers and the records of the meetings of the Committee for Imperial Defence suggest that his contemporaries did not think that Chamberlain possessed any long-term objectives other than to protect French interests. (34)

10. Chamberlain was committed to the notion that peace could best be preserved through a system of alliances that was designed to neutralise any possible threat of war. His principal interest was always in western European security. Despite some initial statements on possible future German involvement in a security agreement, Chamberlain remained primarily committed to reinforcing Britain's relationship with France and to allaying French fears about further German invasions. (35) Grayson is right however to note the absence of any coherent policy towards eastern European security except for a few general statements on Poland. (36) In this respect, Chamberlain was different to Briand and markedly different to Stresemann. His French and German opposite numbers were politicians from continental European powers and it was therefore inevitable that they possessed a different view of the security question to

Chamberlain. The British Foreign Secretary was mindful that many of the crises in British policy towards Europe since the war had been caused by the struggle to remain detached from French squabbles without causing offence in Paris. He hoped that a security agreement with France would break this pattern and prevent a 'possible renewal of the nightmarish happenings of the past five years'. (37) He told D'Abernon that the best way to proceed was to 'remove the acute fears which distort French policy' and reinforce French confidence in Britain. (38)

11. As suggested earlier, D'Abernon remained unconvinced that it was the French whose security was in greatest need of protection. He had long believed that Germany's defeat in war and the French government's growing friendship with the new countries in eastern Europe had decisively swung the balance of power in favour of France. He thought that British support for Germany was a necessary counterweight against a growing and potentially excessive French influence in Europe. Those who failed to recognise the need for a balance of this kind, and he must have had Chamberlain foremost in his thoughts here, were guilty of a 'Rip van Winkle conception' of the international situation. (39) D'Abernon's opinions on Anglo-French relations swung from being highly critical of British policy, telling Chamberlain in February 1925 that if the French were uncertain about Britain's support, they might become more 'amenable to British influence and improve [their] relations with Germany' to an acceptance that French security needs would have to be addressed in part. (40) In November, he wrote:

Unless France was re-assured as to the safety of her frontiers there would always be anxiety and unrest. Unless, on the other hand Germany was guaranteed against the recurrence of episodes such as the Ruhr invasion, it would be impossible for the German people to settle down and pursue the policy of conciliation, which they declared to be their settled policy. (41)

Throughout the security negotiations of 1925, D'Abernon went to great lengths to try to convince Chamberlain of these general points that influenced his perspective on the negotiations that were to follow. His tactics were clear. He set out the main features of the German case for sympathetic treatment by Britain in a memorandum that he sent to Chamberlain two weeks before the German government despatched its more specific security proposal to London in January 1925. In it he outlined the military weaknesses of Germany and claimed that French domination of Europe was currently of a 'far more pronounced and indisputable character than that enjoyed by Germany in 1914'. (42) D'Abernon believed that French attitudes towards the security question forced Britain to decide between two policies. Britain could either support the French idea for a simple guarantee of French frontiers and continue to regard Germany as 'a permanent enemy', or Germany could be included in a security agreement, thus guaranteeing equality of treatment of French and German frontiers. Considering the first option, he did not think it wise for the British government to believe that an agreement would result in closer Anglo-French relations, because the major motivating factor in French foreign policy was 'apprehension of the strength of Germany'. But he anticipated that once the German 'threat' had been removed, Britain then risked 'losing an ally'. Undoubtedly with Chamberlain's views in his mind, he noted that if Britain did sign an agreement with France alone, it would be 'frankly absurd' to expect it to be extended to include Germany at a later date. He warned that 'once we are tied by such an obligation, we become satellitic- deprived of independence and authority'. (43) In D'Abernon's mind, a satisfactory relationship between the Allies and Germany could only be reached when the innate tensions surrounding the maintenance of Anglo-French relations were permanently reconciled. It is reasonable to suggest that, given the strength of D'Abernon's opinions, such a process of reconciliation would have been best achieved through a cooling in Anglo-French. Such a step, he felt, would have placed Britain in a totally independent position during any security agreement negotiations. (44)

12. Such independence of action, D'Abernon felt, would mean that the British government would then be free to ensure that Germany's future role in European affairs was developed. Permanent alienation from her former enemies could result in a German drift towards communism, made more likely through the conclusion of a possible second Russo-German alliance to reinforce the Treaty of Rapallo. (45) He believed that it was in the 'essential interest' of Britain to 'prevent the breaking up of Germany', and that 'as long as Germany [was] a coherent whole, there [was] more or less a balance of power in Europe'. (46) His fear of communism set him apart somewhat from Chamberlain, although again, his views were not without support within the Cabinet, most notably from Winston Churchill. (47) D'Abernon shared the belief of many members of the government that Anglo-French relations should be carefully regulated. (48) He was convinced that a British commitment made exclusively to France would be seen as a reaffirmation of the wartime alliance against Germany. Such an action would make the creation of a lasting peace less likely and destroy Britain's reputation as a more moderate force in European diplomacy. To him, the conclusion of an Anglo-French agreement would be tantamount to the British government condoning the occupation of the Ruhr, the Franco-German coal agreements (M.I.C.U.M.) and a whole range of other French tactics recently deployed to bully the Germans. (49) If the British government pursued such a policy, he thought it inevitable that 'England would become engaged in what would amount to an anti-German defensive league'. (50)

13. It is difficult to overstate the significance of these fundamental differences between D'Abernon and Chamberlain. And at times, they were very intense. D'Abernon's diary and private correspondence are littered with direct attacks on Chamberlain's Francophilia. D'Abernon was convinced that the main reason for the pro-French bias of British foreign policy at this time was Chamberlain himself. In a character sketch, he suggested that while Chamberlain was 'well placed to exercise decisive influence', he allowed his personal prejudices to cloud his professional judgement. D'Abernon condemned him for 'parading' his 'strong attachment' to France throughout the negotiations. He complained that Chamberlain's hostility to Germany had exercised a 'deterrent effect', and had made the task of persuading the German government to consider Allied security policies more difficult. (51) It is important to note, however, that similar criticisms of D'Abernon are much less evident in the Chamberlain correspondence. This suggests that the Foreign Secretary believed that the views that D'Abernon was expressing were not his own but simply those of the German government. It also provides a likely explanation for why D'Abernon has not been subjected to as much negative criticism by historians as Chamberlain. This lack of even-handedness cannot be justified simply because it was Chamberlain who was more responsible than D'Abernon for the conduct of British foreign policy. As far as Chamberlain was concerned, D'Abernon's role in the security negotiations was large and of paramount importance. D'Abernon's more favourable historical reputation was also ensured through an accident of timing and because of his relative obscurity after October 1926, when he resigned the embassy in Berlin. Unlike Chamberlain, he published his memoirs of the negotiations of the Locarno treaty when its terms and reputation were not under threat from Nazism. An Ambassador of Peace possesses nothing of the defensiveness of Chamberlain's accounts of Locarno diplomacy. What is more there is no record of D'Abernon's views on developments in European diplomacy in the 1930s for historians to draw parallels with. (52)

14. Yet the views that he had outlined to Chamberlain and the force with which he made his case suggest that he himself was as liable as the Foreign Secretary to inflexibility and partisanship. On one level, he was better placed than Chamberlain 'to exercise decisive influence' because he possessed direct and well-established lines of communication with both the British and the German government. This significance of this point is emphasised when it is noted that the Foreign Office had little faith in the reliability of the advice of D'Abernon's opposite number in London, Friedrich Sthamer. (53) Chamberlain often refused to see him, preferring to delegate the task to Sir Miles Lampson of the Central European Department. (54) Significantly, he dealt with French ambassadors and government ministers personally, often meeting the latter in Paris. Such an absence of personal contact with the German equivalents suggests the keeping of deliberate distance and also explains why some historians have thought D'Abernon had such influence with Chamberlain. (55)

15. Chamberlain's mistrust of German politicians and diplomats was evident throughout the autumn of 1924 and the whole of 1925. In January 1925, he had been caught off guard by the German note. He had not anticipated that the most significant initiative in the European security negotiations would come from Germany. What is more, an initiative from Berlin made German involvement in any ensuing discussions central and unavoidable. His response to the security note was swift and scathing, and he was especially critical of the German request that the contents of the note should not yet be revealed to the French. (56) In a private letter to the Marquess of Crewe, Chamberlain wrote:

What amazing people these same Germans are! First they hand a copy of their secret memorandum on a pact to D'Abernon and ask my advice about it, whilst attempting to enforce the condition that I shall say nothing to the French. I repudiated the condition...and one would have thought that they might have learned the lesson; but they next sent the same memorandum to Herriot with the addition that he must not communicate with me. Herriot very properly responds to my confidence by giving me his confidence. But what earthly object do they think that all this tortuous duplicity would serve? (57)

D'Abernon was sent a copy of this missive for reference and the resulting burst of correspondence between Chamberlain and himself set the tone of their public and private communications on the security negotiations as a whole. D'Abernon's reply to Chamberlain's complaints indicates the depth of his personal interest in the initiative. He warned that: 'To adopt the view that it is a dodge or trick of controversy is not only unjustified by the facts but would be extremely unwise even if it were justified'. (58) He urged a rapid, positive response that recognised the 'vast importance' of the note. This prompted Chamberlain to protest that 'any appearance of negotiations between Germany and this country behind the back of France would arouse suspicion and destroy any influence which Britain might have with the government of France'. (59)

16. Chamberlain's response cannot have surprised D'Abernon and it seems extraordinary that he did not appear to have anticipated it. If he wanted to persuade the British government of the merits of the security proposal, it is difficult to understand why he thought that a rider insisting that the British government should not discuss its contents with the French would be palatable to Chamberlain. It was equally unreasonable for D'Abernon to claim to be 'perturbed and annoyed' by Chamberlain's response given that he had not been kept informed by him of the diplomatic manoeuvres in Berlin. Chamberlain, it must also be remembered, was soon to discover that not only had he been kept in ignorance of the origins of the security note but that a senior member of the British Diplomatic Service appeared to be its principal architect. Yet throughout the spring of 1925, D'Abernon appears to have been genuinely at a loss to understand how Chamberlain had 'derived so false an impression' of German intentions. He was also worried about the effect that Chamberlain's reaction to the note would have in Berlin because he had assured a number of senior German politicians, including the Chancellor, Luther, of its popular reception in London. (60) In his diary he noted bitterly that Chamberlain's response had made his task and that of the German government in gaining Reichstag support to continue the security negotiations 'decidedly more difficult'. (61) Like Lloyd George, whose style of diplomacy he had much admired, D'Abernon found that his disregard for diplomatic conventions and procedures ultimately resulted in him being hoist by his own petard.

17. However, faced with such a situation, D'Abernon displayed an extraordinary level of disloyalty to the British government. In a series of despatches sent to Chamberlain himself, he recounted in great detail how he had criticised the Foreign Secretary's response to Stresemann and Luther. (62) In urging him not to respond impetuously, D'Abernon expressed his dismay that the British government could appear to be 'so prejudiced against Germany'. Chamberlain, he thought, was making a 'grave mistake' and had no conception of the importance of the German initiative and even claimed that, from Germany's point of view, it was 'clearly impossible to base any line of policy upon co-operation with London'. (63) He was convinced that an agreement including Germany was 'going to be cold-shouldered in favour of an Anglo-French and anti-German agreement' and that such a situation would be 'deplorable'. (64) He was admitting effectively that his dream of an Anglo-German dominated security agreement was unlikely to be realised and that a third party, inevitably France, would have to adopt a more prominent role in brokering a European security agreement. It is ironic that later it was Chamberlain who was to regard himself as the 'honest broker' of what became the Treaty of Locarno. (65) For D'Abernon, the role was fulfilled not by Chamberlain, but by Briand. For D'Abernon, as well as Chamberlain, therefore, the Treaty of Locarno when it was finally signed, was a step back, or at least an unpalatable compromise, from his preferred policy. It is difficult to envisage how any other scenario was possible. Some may wish to argue that it was better for such a position to have been adopted to ensure that the security negotiations remained on track and produced an agreement. It is difficult to relate this point satisfactorily to the Jacobson thesis on the Treaty of Locarno because we do not have D'Abernon's thoughts on Hitler's conduct of German foreign policy after 1935.

18. Further evidence of the different agendas of Chamberlain and D'Abernon can be found through examination of the latter's comments on the implications of Chamberlain's reaction to the German note to the future of the security negotiations. Here it is important to reflect on the motives behind any involvement that D'Abernon may have had in the production of the German security note. His official correspondence is full of noble statements about reintegrating Germany into the international community. Yet as a British diplomat without a special Foreign Office brief to offer advice in drawing up a German security proposal, he must have also been mindful of the advantages to Britain if such an agreement was concluded. This point has never been examined by historians, yet his official and private correspondence places a great deal of emphasis on this point. What is more, his comments suggest that not only was Chamberlain's reaction likely to cause disappointment in Berlin, but he was also failing to respond to Britain's security needs. Just as it had been appropriate to create a demilitarised zone- or what he termed an 'iron curtain'- in the Rhineland, so the British government should ensure that the English Channel served the same purpose. (66) Returning to his argument about the consequences of a dominant French presence on Britain's doorstep, he urged that Chamberlain 'should look facts fully in the face, and not shirk the consideration of disagreeable possibilities as the forces behind the continental bloc idea [were] very considerable'. (67) This extreme attitude towards balance of power diplomacy set him apart from Chamberlain, who believed that war would only be avoided if that balance was underpinned by objectives that were common to most nations, such as disarmament and the promotion of the work of the League of Nations. He found D'Abernon's vision of Europe as a series of armed camps teetering on the brink of war excessively pessimistic and one that was not likely to enhance the possibility of further discussions about European security. (68)

19. As the negotiations progressed, the tensions and differences of opinion between Chamberlain and D'Abernon increased. Indeed, the negotiations as a whole were often ill-tempered and fraught- a point that partly accounts for the fragile nature of the Treaty of Locarno and for why no further substantial agreements between the signatory countries followed. A copy of the security note sent to London in January 1925 was despatched to Paris a month later. The French government took four months to reply to it- a length of time that many in Berlin, including D'Abernon, thought excessive. D'Abernon reported that Stresemann was becoming convinced that the French were employing stalling tactics to try to gain a psychological advantage over Germany. (69) Chamberlain, however, angrily dismissed such comments as 'nonsense' and recommended that the Germans should be told that whatever its contents, the French reply should be regarded as 'a not unfriendly response to the German advance'. (70) D'Abernon, on the other hand, thought that Chamberlain had forgotten that the initial impetus in the security negotiations had come from Germany. He believed, in effect, that the onus was now on the French, rather than on the Germans, to prove that they 'genuinely desired' an 'improved relationship'. He also thought that Chamberlain had not treated the German note with sufficient seriousness and that he was spending too much time formulating ways of championing the French position. (71)

20. In June 1925, the next phase of the negotiations began when the French government published a reply to the German note. The flurry of correspondence between D'Abernon and Chamberlain that resulted suggests that the Foreign Secretary had reservations about D'Abernon's conduct in Berlin. He felt particularly concerned that D'Abernon, having acted once before without instructions, might do so again and perhaps be party to a diplomatic initiative that could permanently undermine Anglo-French relations. (72) It was thus of paramount importance to him that the German government be encouraged to give a positive response to the French reply. Chamberlain warned D'Abernon against trying to persuade the Germans to make an 'independent' statement to the French reply- a clear reference to the earlier 'independent' act in January. (73) If D'Abernon was to interfere again, such actions, he believed, would be open to 'misunderstanding' and might prove to be of little use as his suggestions would 'not be binding on the French'. There was also 'a risk of expressing a view with which the French subsequently found themselves unable to agree and of thus [being] open to a charge of disloyalty'. (74)

21. D'Abernon's diary entries at this time are interesting. Their tone suggest that he had heeded Chamberlain's warning about interfering in Franco-German relations at this sensitive moment in the negotiations. One entry in particular suggests that he believed that his mental energies could be channelled in

another direction- towards considering what British security requirements should be from the proposed pact. On 20 July, he wrote: 'It is worthy of note that so far no one has brought forward the idea of guaranteeing the inviolability of the English Channel'. (75) These are the words of a man who clearly was not ruling out taking the lead in the conduct of British foreign policy himself. It is not unreasonable to suggest that D'Abernon's concern about Chamberlain's view of the security negotiations extended to a fear that the Foreign Secretary was so obsessed with France that he was not taking adequate care of Britain's interests.

22. The tensions between them at this point in the security negotiations were clearly visible when a diplomatic row broke out over part of the note that apparently implied that France would only participate in the security negotiations if the German claim for a permanent seat on the League of Nations Security Council was abandoned. (76) The German government believed that this was unreasonable and indicated a lack of a French commitment to concluding a security agreement. (77) Chamberlain was horrified. Describing such objections as 'monstrous', he told D'Abernon that it was clear to all who read it that the French reply was an 'honest attempt' to further the negotiation process. (78) He was certain that 'the German proposals were only put forward with the hope of creating dissension in the councils of the allies'. (79) The Germans, he now thought, were trying to undermine the very process they had initiated. He complained to D'Abernon that:

Germany having opened to her a prospect which would have seemed impossible a few months ago now shows a disposition to delay and haggle which would justify every suspicion of her good faith and would not only deprive us of all power to help her but must make us feel that it is not only useless but dangerous to attempt it. (80)

Chamberlain was so convinced of German awkwardness that he believed that the only way that a satisfactory agreement could be concluded would be through direct personal negotiation rather than by prolonging the exchange of notes. In the summer of 1925, however, a setback to this plan occurred when the French expressed reservations about the contents of a second German security note that had been despatched to Paris on 20 July. (81) Chamberlain's anger was once again targeted at Berlin rather than at Paris. He told D'Abernon that the German government could have written a note that could have prompted the start of immediate talks but had despatched a reply that made this unlikely. (82) He reiterated his belief that the German government was not wholly committed to the security negotiations, occupying the role of 'somewhat unwilling participants, who acquiesce in a scheme merely in the hope that consent will enable him to drive a bargain in other directions'. (83) He instructed D'Abernon to inform the German government that if the Allies' desire for direct negotiation was rejected, the responsibility for the collapse of the security negotiations would rest solely with Berlin. (84) Chamberlain claimed that he was 'amazed at the blindness of the Germans to the inevitable consequences of [their] own action' while at the same time asking the Allies for 'patience, forbearance and statesmanship, not to say courage, in [the] face of public opinion in which in effect they avow themselves incapable'. (85) And once again, he blamed D'Abernon directly for the state of affairs. He accused him of neglecting his duties and of failing to understand the gravity of the situation himself. Chamberlain wrote:

I fear you do not realise what difficulties [the Germans] have quite gratuitously created for others as well as themselves. There is just a possibility that with Briand's help we may yet save them from the natural consequences of their folly but I dare not count on it. You ought not conceal from them the impression which their reply has made upon us. (86)

D'Abernon expressed his frustration at Chamberlain's attitude and by the attendant difficulties they created for him in his dealings with the German government by venting his spleen in a private conversation with Luther and Stresemann. (87) He told them that Chamberlain was 'too quick to take offence at German actions' and that he thought his attitude 'extraordinary'. To Chamberlain, he was more moderate, but told him that there was 'no reason to doubt the sincerity of the German Government in a desire to bring the Pact negotiations to a successful conclusion. Their political prestige depends in the main on this result'. (88)

23. Evidence to suggest that Chamberlain believed that D'Abernon was not adequately conveying his opinion about the German attitude towards the security negotiations took another form in the late summer of 1925. Crewe had sent Chamberlain a series of press cuttings outlining the 'official' attitude of Stresemann towards the security negotiations. The articles claimed that D'Abernon had told the Germans to insist on extra French assurances regarding the preservation of Germany's western frontier. There is no record of whether Chamberlain completely believed the accusation, but he thought the situation sufficiently grave to warn D'Abernon against the employment of 'destructive tactics' that he felt would result in the demise of the security pact as a whole. (89) In case the alleged suggestion had been made by Stresemann himself, D'Abernon was instructed to leave him in 'no doubt' that such additional conditions were unacceptable. (90) As the weeks leading up to the Locarno conference passed, Chamberlain took the opportunity to write 'brutally' to D'Abernon about his less than favourable impression of the Germans, describing their negotiating style as 'niggling, provocative and crooked'. (91) His letters constantly use the phrase 'your Germans' to begin his criticisms, implying that he believed that D'Abernon was responsible for their apparent attitude. D'Abernon continued to feel that Chamberlain's attitude towards the German government was too uncompromising. In particular, he thought that Chamberlain's belief that as soon as German 'overtures are accepted, they begin to whittle away their assurances and to introduce new conditions' was unfair and inaccurate. (92) Rather naively, he believed that as soon as the politicians began direct negotiations, all concerned would realise that because any resulting agreement would be of such momentous importance that it would automatically heal any rifts between them. (93)

24. In October 1925, the British, French and German delegations met in Locarno to finalise a series of security agreements that were formally ratified in London two months later. Chamberlain reinforced his friendship with Briand and developed a good working relationship with Stresemann, although it is doubtful whether he was entirely comfortable with the German presence. D'Abernon remained in the background. He did not attend the Locarno conference at any time, but was present for the ratification of the treaty in London. He created no further special initiatives and did not offer unusual amounts of advice to either the British or the German governments about how to conduct the meetings at Locarno. Nevertheless, the correspondence from this time should be discussed. As indicated earlier, it is primarily the comments made by Chamberlain to D'Abernon when the Treaty of Locarno was signed that are most often cited as evidence of his high regard for him. What their letters actually reveal is that Chamberlain was swept along by the euphoria of the moment to such an extent that the comments he made after October 1925 were at total variance with those he made earlier. Likewise, when the German delegation returned to Berlin, D'Abernon told Chamberlain privately that he believed that the credit for the success of the Locarno conference was solely due to British influence. (94) Given his earlier comments about Chamberlain, he was clearly referring to himself and not to the Foreign Secretary. Such a statement was in keeping with his generally exaggerated sense of his own importance throughout his embassy in Berlin. (95)

25. It is doubtful whether Chamberlain ever wholly embraced the idea of a security agreement that included Germany on equal terms with the Allies. In 1930, when the mystique of Locarno still remained intact, he told D'Abernon that the policy he had pursued after March 1925 'was not my policy, but...[one] which I believed could be worked, and I was prepared to attempt to work it'. (96) Grayson claims that this remark suggests that Chamberlain gladly embraced German involvement. (97) But Chamberlain's inceptive attitude towards German security policy is revealed in his correspondence with D'Abernon. As the negotiations progressed, Chamberlain's opinion of the German government became increasingly hostile. In September 1925, only weeks before the Locarno meetings, he told D'Abernon that 'at every stage the Germans sow distrust in my mind'. (98) He constantly referred in his despatches to German 'duplicity' both before and after the Treaty of Locarno had been signed. These comments were made more than a decade before his claims that Hitler's occupation of the Rhineland in 1936 vindicated his scepticism about the German commitment to a common European security policy. (99) In his memoirs, he issued several warnings about the German commitment to peace that proved to be prophetic. In this respect, Chamberlain deserves kinder

treatment than he has received by historians because it was he, and not D'Abernon, who was ultimately to be proved right. It is tempting to try to defend D'Abernon by claiming that the German governments he worked so closely with in the 1920s were significantly different in character to that which challenged the terms of the treaties of Versailles and Locarno after 1935. However, if many of the arguments are accepted that have been made about Stresemann, the German Minister for Foreign Affairs throughout the Locarno negotiations, D'Abernon should have realised that even in 1925, the German government had a clear set of foreign policy objectives that centred around the revisions of the Treaty of Versailles. (100) As it was, Chamberlain died two years before the outbreak of the Second World War. He defended his involvement in the Locarno negotiations by stating that he had little choice but to include Germany because the majority of his Cabinet colleagues insisted on it and because it was from Berlin that the security initiative came in the first place.

26. Those who seek to defend D'Abernon's historical reputation may accept that he may have had a limited effect in shaping Chamberlain's attitude towards German involvement in the conclusion of the Treaty of Locarno. But they may then argue that because the treaty was signed anyway and that all of the powers that D'Abernon wanted to sign it did so, that his differences with Chamberlain were of little ultimate consequence. This would be to miss the essential point. The disagreements between Chamberlain and D'Abernon were not just about differences of emphasis. They illustrated that there was a fundamental crisis in British foreign policy in the mid 1920s. They epitomised the two sides of the debate that had dominated and, arguably, undermined Anglo-Continental relations since the conclusion of the Treaty of Versailles- how to strike a balance between reinforcing relations with France and to aid the economic and political regeneration of Germany. Chamberlain and D'Abernon were equally passionate about their positions on diplomacy. In this respect, it is unremarkable that they failed to agree. Similarly, if the long-term consequences of the Treaty of Locarno to Britain are examined, it is clear that the agreement did not lead to a radical re-thinking of Foreign Office policy towards Germany. To D'Abernon, Britain and Germany were natural allies, but with Chamberlain at the Foreign Office, he believed that an agreement should be concluded that would prevent the Foreign Secretary from promoting an anti-German alliance with France. D'Abernon was only to remain in Berlin for another year, while Chamberlain was to remain Foreign Secretary for a further four years. Chamberlain was thus in a stronger position to influence the direction of Anglo-European diplomacy in the years that followed. His response to the controversy in 1926 concerning the German government's insistence on being given a permanent seat of the League of Nations Security Council on admission to the League illustrated that the signature of the Treaty of Locarno had had little effect on his attitude towards Germany. (101) Indeed, it has been suggested that D'Abernon resigned a month after Germany was finally admitted to the League in exasperation with Chamberlain's hostile attitude towards the increasing German involvement in international affairs. (102)

Bolton Institute.

[Introduction](#) | [Contents](#) | [back to the top](#)

## Notes for Article 2

1. There were, in fact, several treaties signed at the Locarno conference in 1925. The treaty referred to throughout this article is the principal agreement signed at this time, between Britain, France, Germany and Italy, which secured Germany's frontier with Belgium and France and reaffirmed the need for Rhineland to retain its demilitarised status as established under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. [Back](#)
2. Austen Chamberlain was Foreign Secretary from 1924 to 1929 in the second Baldwin administration. The elder son of Joseph Chamberlain, he had held the post of Chancellor of the Exchequer under Lloyd George and Balfour and had been widely regarded as a future Prime Minister until the events of the Carlton Club meeting in 1922. Lord D'Abernon was ambassador to Berlin from 1920 to 1926. He had held a number of posts in the world of international finance but had no previous diplomatic experience. Born in 1857, he was six years older than Chamberlain. [Back](#)
3. Chamberlain to D'Abernon, 20 Oct. 1925, AC 37/95, Austen Chamberlain Papers, University of Birmingham Library. [Back](#)
4. D'Abernon to Chamberlain, 22 Oct. 1925, AC 37/97, Austen Chamberlain Papers. [Back](#)
5. There are numerous examples of such statements. For an example from the period covered by this article, see Lampson to D'Abernon, 27 Jan. 1925, Public Record Office/Foreign Office (PRO/FO) 371/10720/C777/124/18. [Back](#)
6. See the correspondence in AC 37/1, Austen Chamberlain Papers. [Back](#)
7. There are innumerable passing references to it, but see, for example, D. Johnson: 'Austen Chamberlain and the Locarno Agreements', *University of Birmingham Historical Journal*, (VIII) 1961. [Back](#)
8. D'Abernon was appointed in June 1920. Chamberlain was appointed Foreign Secretary in November 1924. [Back](#)
9. A. Chamberlain: *Peace in Our Time; Addresses on Europe and the Empire*, (London, 1935); *Down the Years* (London 1935); the three volumes of D'Abernon's published diary, *An Ambassador of Peace*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1929-1931). [Back](#)
10. *Down the Years*, op. cit. and *An Ambassador of Peace*, especially volume 3. [Back](#)
11. There are numerous examples. See, for example, E. Stern-Rubarth: *Three Men Tried... Austen Chamberlain, Stresemann and Briand and their Fight for a New Europe*, (London: Duckworth, 1939). [Back](#)
12. G. Grün: Locarno: Idea and Reality, *International Affairs*, (31) 1955; J. Jacobson: *Locarno Diplomacy. Germany and the West 1925-1929*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972). [Back](#)
13. D. Dutton: *Austen Chamberlain: A Gentleman in Politics*, (Bolton: Ross Anderson, 1985); D. Carlton: 'Great Britain and the League Council Crisis', *Historical Journal*, (XI, 2) 1968; S.E. Crowe: 'Sir Eyre Crowe and the Locarno Pact', *English Historical Review*, (87) 1972; D. Johnson, op. cit. [Back](#)
14. R.S. Grayson: *Austen Chamberlain and the Commitment to Europe. British Foreign Policy, 1924-1929*, (London: Frank Cass, 1997). [Back](#)
15. F.G. Stambrook: "'Das Kind'- Lord D'Abernon and the Origins of the Locarno Pact', *Central European History*, (1) 1968; A. Kaiser: 'Lord D'Abernon und die Entstehungsgeschichte der Locarno-Verträge', *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, (33) 1986; *Lord D'Abernon und die englische Deutschlandpolitik, 1920-1926*, (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1989). [Back](#)
16. G. Johnson: "'Das Kind' Revisited: Lord D'Abernon and German Security Policy, 1922-1925', *Contemporary European History*, 9 (3) 2000. [Back](#)
17. Stambrook, op. cit. [Back](#)
18. Johnson, "'Das Kind' Revisited', op. cit. [Back](#)
19. E. Goldstein: 'The evolution of British diplomatic strategy for the Locarno Pact, 1924-1925', in M. Dockrill and B. McKercher (eds.): *Diplomacy and World*

- Power. *Studies in British Foreign Policy, 1890-1950*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 130-1. [Back](#)
20. Cf. A. Sharp: 'James Headlam-Morley: Creating International History', *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, 9 (3), 1998. [Back](#)
21. G.L. Johnson, *The Berlin Embassy of Lord D'Abernon, 1920-1926*, unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of Wales, Bangor, 1996, pp. 77-117. [Back](#)
22. A. Wolfers: *Britain and France between Two Wars. Conflicting Strategies of Peace since Versailles*, (London: Hamden, 1940), p. 207. [Back](#)
23. D'Abernon outlined its history in D'Abernon to MacDonald, 5 Feb. 1924, cited in Stambrook, op. cit., p. 241. This proposal went beyond Articles 42-44 of the Treaty of Versailles that stated that the Rhineland should be demilitarized for a fifteen year period. [Back](#)
24. Memorandum by Hankey, 23 Jan. 1925, in Hankey to Lampson, 26 Jan. 1925, PRO/ FO371/10727/C1218/459/18. [Back](#)
25. See Harold Nicolson's Memorandum, 'The Present Condition in Europe', 23 Jan. 1925, PRO/FO371/11065/9/98. [Back](#)
26. A. Chamberlain: *Down the Years*, (London: Cassell, 1935), pp. 165-6. [Back](#)
27. Grayson, op. cit., pp. 31-2. [Back](#)
28. Minute by Chamberlain, 19 Mar. 1925, PRO/FO371/10756/C3539/3539/18. Grayson, op. cit, p. 31; p. 45. [Back](#)
29. Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee for Imperial Defence, 4 Dec. 1924, PRO/CAB/2/4; Churchill to Chamberlain, 1 Dec. 1924, cited in D. Johnson, op. cit. [Back](#)
30. Chamberlain to Ida Chamberlain, 28 Dec. 1924, AC5/1/343; Chamberlain to Crewe, 6 Feb. 1925, AC 52/186, Austen Chamberlain Papers. [Back](#)
31. Chamberlain, op. cit., p. 229. [Back](#)
32. Chamberlain to Cecil, 28 Sept. 1925, AC 52/142, Austen Chamberlain Papers. [Back](#)
33. Grayson, op. cit., pp. 80-1. [Back](#)
34. See for example Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee for Imperial Defence 4 Dec. 1, PRO/CAB 2/4; Grayson op. cit., pp. 35-7. [Back](#)
35. Dutton, op. cit., p. 241. [Back](#)
36. Grayson, op. cit., pp. 60-1. [Back](#)
37. 'Memorandum on the Necessity of the Early Consideration of the Question of French Security', 4 Nov. 1924, cited in Stambrook, op. cit., p. 236. [Back](#)
38. Chamberlain to D'Abernon, 18 Mar. 1925, AC 52/264, Austen Chamberlain Papers. [Back](#)
39. D'Abernon to Curzon, 6 Dec. 1923, BL Add MSS 48927, D'Abernon Papers. [Back](#)
40. Memorandum by D'Abernon, 28 Feb. 1925, British Library Additional Manuscripts (BL Add MSS) 48928, D'Abernon Papers. [Back](#)
41. D'Abernon to the King, 15 Nov. 1925, BL Add MSS 48922, D'Abernon Papers. [Back](#)
42. 'Memorandum respecting the Balance of Power in Europe and its effect on the Problem of Security', communicated in D'Abernon to Chamberlain, 7 Jan. 1925, PRO/FO371/ 10726/C459/459/18. [Back](#)
43. *An Ambassador of Peace*, Vol. III, 2 May 1925, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1931), pp. 158-60. [Back](#)
44. *Ibid.* [Back](#)
45. D'Abernon's suspicion proved to be well founded. The Treaty of Berlin was signed between the Soviet Union and Germany in April 1926. [Back](#)
46. *An Ambassador of Peace*, Vol. III, 7 Feb. 1925, op. cit., pp. 238-9. [Back](#)
47. F.S. Northedge: *The Troubled Giant. Britain among the Great Powers, 1916-1939*, (London: Bell, 1966), p. 255. [Back](#)
48. D'Abernon to Chamberlain, 1 Mar. 1925, BL Add MSS 48928, D'Abernon Papers. [Back](#)
49. M.I.C.U.M. was the acronym of the *Mission Interalliée Contrôle des Usines et des Mines*, which was established to regulate coal reparations payments between Germany and France in 1922. The so-called M.I.C.U.M. laws through which the body exerted its authority were seen by German politicians as a French attempt to crush their country's economy. [Back](#)
50. *An Ambassador of Peace*, Vol. III, op. cit., p. 21. When this volume of diary was published, Chamberlain acknowledged that D'Abernon's assessment of British policy at this time had been correct. He wrote: 'I hoped eventually (but I must admit only eventually) to turn [it] into a reciprocal agreement with Germany'. Chamberlain to D'Abernon, 11 Sept. 1930, AC 39/2/35, Austen Chamberlain Papers. [Back](#)
51. *An Ambassador of Peace*, Vol. III, op. cit., p. 23. [Back](#)
52. In 1933, D'Abernon suffered a stroke that prevented him from writing for the remainder of his life. He died in 1941. [Back](#)
53. Kaiser, *Lord D'Abernon und die englische Deutschlandpolitik, 1920-1926*, op. cit., p. 371, 629. [Back](#)
54. 'Record of Conversation between the German Ambassador and Mr Lampson, 30 Jun. 1925', communicated in Chamberlain to D'Abernon, 30 Jun. 1925, PRO/FO371/10735/C8805/459/18. [Back](#)
55. Chamberlain to D'Abernon, 2 Apr. 1925, AC 52/266, Austen Chamberlain Papers. [Back](#)
56. Chamberlain to D'Abernon, 12 Jan. 1925, AC 52/253, Austen Chamberlain Papers. [Back](#)
57. Chamberlain to Crewe, 16 Feb. 1925, AC 52/189, Austen Chamberlain Papers. [Back](#)

58. D'Abernon to Chamberlain, *Jan. 1925, AC 52/2*Austen Chamberlain Papers. [Back](#)
59. Chamberlain to D'Abernon, 30 Jan. 1925, PRO/FO371/10727/C1454/459/18. [Back](#)
60. Memorandum by von Schubert, 14 Jan. 1925, German Foreign Ministry (GFM) Papers in the Foreign Office Library, London, 4509/E124805-9. [Back](#)
61. *An Ambassador of Peace*, Vol. III, 3 Feb. 1925, op. cit., pp. 135-6. [Back](#)
62. D'Abernon to Chamberlain, 29 Jan. 1925, PRO/FO371/10727/C1416/459/18. [Back](#)
63. *An Ambassador of Peace*, Vol. III, 3 Feb. 1925, op. cit., pp. 135-6. [Back](#)
64. *Ibid.*, pp. 136-7. [Back](#)
65. Chamberlain to Crewe, 2 Apr. 1925, PRO/FO800/257/483. [Back](#)
66. *An Ambassador of Peace*, Vol. III, 20 Jul. 1925, op. cit., pp. 177-8. Kaiser sees this as evidence of D'Abernon's pro-German sympathies, but overlooks his subsequent comments. Kaiser, *Lord D'Abernon und die englische Deutschlandpolitik, 1920-1926, op.cit.*, p. 322, 325, 331. Stambrook states that by the end of 1924, D'Abernon had been persuaded to abandon the idea because the French would fear that the 'curtain' could be used as a screen to hide a new German war machine for use against France op. cit., (p.125). D'Abernon's later diary entries and despatches suggest that he did not believe this to be so. [Back](#)
67. *An Ambassador of Peace*, Vol. III, 24 Jul. 1925, op. cit., pp. 178-9. [Back](#)
68. Chamberlain to Crewe, 16 Feb. 1925, PRO/FO371/10727/C2450/459/18; Chamberlain to Crowe, 7 Mar. 1925, PRO/FO371/10728/C3368/459/18. [Back](#)
69. D'Abernon to Chamberlain, 3 May 1925, AC 52/267, Austen Chamberlain Papers; D'Abernon to Chamberlain, 30 Jun. 1925, AC 52/281. [Back](#)
70. Chamberlain to D'Abernon, 2 Apr. 1925, PRO/FO800/127. [Back](#)
71. *An Ambassador of Peace*, Vol. III, 2 Apr. 1925, op. cit., pp. 157-8. [Back](#)
72. Chamberlain to Briand, 24 Jul. 1925, AC 52/109b, Austen Chamberlain Papers. [Back](#)
73. Chamberlain to D'Abernon, 17 Jul. 1925, PRO/FO371/10735/C9066/459/18. [Back](#)
74. *Ibid.* [Back](#)
75. *An Ambassador of Peace*, Vol. III, 20 Jul. 1925, op. cit., p. 177. [Back](#)
76. Chamberlain to D'Abernon, 26 Jun. 1925, AC 52/280, Austen Chamberlain Papers; D'Abernon to Chamberlain, 11 Jul. 1925, AC 52/283. From the outset of the negotiations, it had been established that when Germany signed the proposed security pact, the German government would make an automatic application to join the League of Nations. [Back](#)
77. D'Abernon to Chamberlain, 2 Jun. 1925, AC 52/275, Austen Chamberlain Papers. [Back](#)
78. Chamberlain to D'Abernon, 10 Jul. 1925, AC 52/282, Austen Chamberlain Papers. [Back](#)
79. Chamberlain to D'Abernon, 30 Jun. 1925, PRO/FO371/10735/C8770/459/18. [Back](#)
80. *Ibid.* [Back](#)
81. Cmd. 2468, 'Reply of the German Government to the note handed to Herr Stresemann by the French Ambassador at Berlin on June 16 1925, respecting the Proposals for a Pact of Security', (H.M.S.O., 1925). [Back](#)
82. Chamberlain to D'Abernon, 28 Jul. 1925, PRO/FO371/10737/C10034/459/18. [Back](#)
83. *Ibid.* [Back](#)
84. *Ibid.* [Back](#)
85. Chamberlain to D'Abernon, 30 Jul. 1925, PRO/FO371/10737/C9992/459/18. [Back](#)
86. *Ibid.* [Back](#)
87. *An Ambassador of Peace*, Vol. III, op.cit., pp. 179-180. [Back](#)
88. D'Abernon to Chamberlain, 7 Aug. 1925, AC 52/290, Austen Chamberlain Papers. [Back](#)
89. Chamberlain to D'Abernon, 22 Sept. 1925, cited in *Documents on British Foreign Policy*, First Series, Vol. XXVII, p. 784. [Back](#)
90. Chamberlain to D'Abernon, 24 Sept. 1925, PRO/FO371/10740/C12110/459/18. [Back](#)
91. Chamberlain to D'Abernon, 30 Sept. 1925, AC 52/297, Austen Chamberlain Papers.  
[Back](#)
92. *An Ambassador of Peace*, Vol. III, 25 Sept. 1925, op.cit., p. 189. [Back](#)
93. D'Abernon to Chamberlain, 26 Sept. 1925, AC 52/296, Austen Chamberlain Papers. [Back](#)
94. D'Abernon to Chamberlain, 19 Oct. 1925, AC 52/300, Austen Chamberlain Papers. [Back](#)
95. This is the general thesis of Johnson: *The Berlin Embassy of Lord D'Abernon, 1920-1926*, op. cit. [Back](#)
96. Chamberlain to D'Abernon, 11 Sept. 1930, AC 39/2/35, Austen Chamberlain Papers. [Back](#)
97. Grayson, op.cit., pp. 45-6. [Back](#)

98. Chamberlain to D'Abernon, 30 Sept. 1925, AC 52/297, Austen Chamberlain Papers. [Back](#)

99. Chamberlain, *Down the Years*, op.cit., pp. 152-3, 166. [Back](#)

100. See for example, W. Weidenfeld: *Die Englandpolitik Gustav Stresemanns: theoretische und praktische Aspekte der Aussenpolitik*, (Mainz, 1972); R. Grathwol: 'Gustav Stresemann: Reflections on his Foreign Policy', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 45,1 1973. [Back](#)

101. Carlton, op.cit. [Back](#)

102. G.L. Johnson, op.cit., [Back](#)

[Introduction](#) | [Contents](#) | [back to the top](#)

The Institute of Historical Research (IHR), Senate House, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HU  
The IHR is a member of the School of Advanced Study which is part of the University of London