



Documents

Relating to the
Nazi and Soviet
Occupation
of
Poland

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It Started in Poland

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IT STARTED IN POLAND

On September 1, 1939, the Germans began World War II by their attack on Poland.

Five long years separate us from these events. Some circumstances accompanying the outbreak of this war have already become dim in our memory.

On the other hand, however, in the perspective of time past these incidents acquire certain clarity. Today we all know that this war had nothing to do with the building of a highway linking Germany with East Prussia, nor with the German claims to the Polish province of Pomorze. Other factors were of far greater importance: German domination over the entire world - and her rule over free nations.

The documents reprinted from the files of the Polish, French and British Foreign Ministries show that Poland made every possible effort to prevent the outbreak of the world-wide conflict.

However, while trying to avert the war, Poland was far from the thought of meek submission to enemy's power. It is Poland's undeniable merit that she has become the first country to break away from the policy of endless concessions and was first who had the courage to say NO to Hitler.

For this honor of being the first country to fight Hitler Poland paid dearly with the blood of her soldiers during the September 1939 campaign, on all Allied fronts, and primarily, with the blood of her people in their occupied, but unconquered country.

The documents quoted hereafter show clearly that Poland in her international policy was faithful at all times not only to the letter, but also to the spirit of her treaties.

Faithful to her policy Poland did not allow herself to be led astray by the German proposal to take part in an attack on Soviet Russia. Despite numerous tempting proposals during the period between 1936 and 1939, Poland steadfastly refused to cooperate in any anti-Soviet plot abiding by her neutrality and striving for peace.

On August 25, 1939, Poland signed the agreement of mutual assistance with Great Britain. Like the Polish-French alliance, it became the nucleus of the pact concluded later between the United Nations against the Axis. Poland has remained faithful to all her international obligations resulting from these treaties since the outbreak of the war until this day.

Today, when the war is in its final phase, we should be mindful of the lesson we have learned from the conflict: European affairs are not distant matters and do not concern an alien territory only.

This war taught us that Danzig is not as distant from Pearl Harbor as it appears on the map. The world is small and peace is indivisible.

POLITICAL BACKGROUND OF WORLD WAR II

The main task of Poland's prewar policy was to maintain the peace so badly needed for the reconstruction of Poland's economic life destroyed by the long period of partitions and the First World War.

It was to this end that Poland cooperated with the League of Nations in the organization of a system of collective security and at the same time tried to insure her existence and peace by means of bilateral pacts.

In the East the foundation of Poland's policy was the non-aggression pact with the

Soviet Union signed on July 25, 1932 in Moscow for a period of three years and later prolonged until December 31, 1945.

In the West distrust of her German neighbor made Poland seek security in a military pact with France (signed in 1921). Having shared Poland's sad experience and harboring the same fears as to Germany's intentions, France was Poland's natural ally.

When Hitler came to power in 1933, Poland was the first nation to understand the danger which faced Europe and to draw full political conclusions from the new situation.

In May 1933, the Polish Government approached the French Government with a proposal for a joint military action against the new Reich regime. This proposal did not meet with a favorable response.

Poland found herself in a most precarious situation. She was too weak, both militarily and economically, to start a war alone deprived of all help from without.

On the other hand, the Western democracies had already begun to practice the policy of appeasement which they followed throughout subsequent years, and were ready for further concessions to the Nazis.

Therefore when towards the close of 1933 Hitler proposed to Poland an understanding on non-aggression for a Period of ten years, Poland accepted.

The form of this understanding clearly proved that Polish-German relations were not intended to develop into a friendship or a close political collaboration, to say nothing about a military alliance. Whereas Polish-Soviet relations were based on a pact of non-aggression-a full-fledged international agreement, the Polish-German understanding, concluded in the form of a declaration, was merely the expression of both states of their will not to attack each other and to respect the existing frontiers.

In view of this it is absolutely erroneous to compare the Polish German declaration with such agreements as the Polish-French alliance or the Polish-British mutual aid agreement. The first was a result of bitter necessity, the latter-an expression of true aims of Polish foreign policy, which, in harmony with desires and feelings of the Polish nation, always sought close cooperation and real friendship with Western democracies.

In this connection it will be appropriate to quote instructions sent on the day of signing of the Polish-German declaration by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs to all diplomatic missions abroad:

The declaration . . . "distinctly stresses the inviolability of earlier obligations. It refers exclusively to questions directly concerning both States. . . . The Allied States, France and Romania, were given preliminary notice of the negotiation being conducted with a view to concluding an agreement. Mr. Litvinov also received general information beforehand. The signing of the Declaration should prove advantageous in the sphere of international collaboration, for instance as regards disarmament . . . No aims or intentions other than those clearly stated in its text should be read into the agreement."

In this way - according to all human expectations- Poland had peacefully set her relations with her two powerful neighbors at least for a period of ten years.

Below are the texts of Polish-Soviet Pact of Non-Aggression of July 25, 1932, and of the Polish-German Declaration of January 26, 1934.

PACT OF NON-AGGRESSION BETWEEN POLAND AND THE USSR, MOSCOW, JULY 25, 1932.

The President of the Polish Republic, of the one part, and the Central Executive Committee of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, of the other part,

Desirous of maintaining the present state of peace between their countries, and convinced that the maintenance of peace between them constitutes an important factor in

the work of preserving universal peace;

Considering that the Treaty of Peace of March 18, 1921, constitutes, now as in the past, the basis of their reciprocal relations and undertakings;

Convinced that the peaceful settlement of international disputes and the exclusion of all that might be contrary to the normal condition of relations between States are the surest means of arriving at the goal desired;

Declaring that none of the obligations hitherto assumed by either of the Parties stands in the way of the peaceful development of their mutual relations or is incompatible with the present Pact;

Have decided to conclude the present Pact with the object of amplifying and completing the Pact for the renunciation of war signed in Paris on August 27, 1928, and put into force by the Protocol signed at Moscow on February 9, 1929, and for that purpose have designated as their Plenipotentiaries . . .

Who, after exchanging their full powers, found in good and due form, have agreed on the following provisions:

ARTICLE I

The two Contracting Parties, recording the fact that they have renounced war as an instrument of national policy in their mutual relations, reciprocally undertake to refrain from taking any aggressive action against or invading the territory of the other Party, either alone or in conjunction with other Powers.

Any act of violence attacking the integrity and inviolability of the territory of the political independence of the other Contracting Party shall be regarded contrary to the undertakings contained in the present Article, even if such acts are committed without declaration of war and avoid all possible warlike manifestations.

ARTICLE 2

Should one of the Contracting Parties be attacked by a third State or by a group of other States, the other Contracting Party undertakes not to give aid or assistance, either directly or indirectly, to the aggressor State during the whole period of the conflict.

If one of the Contracting Parties commits an act of aggression against a third State the other Contracting Party shall have the right to be released from the present Treaty without previous denunciation.

ARTICLE 3

Each of the Contracting Parties undertakes not to be a party to any agreement openly hostile to the other Party from the point of view of aggression.

ARTICLE 4

The undertakings provided for it, Articles 1 and 2 of the present Pact shall in no case limit or modify the international rights and obligations of each Contracting Party under agreements concluded by it before the coming into force of the present Pact, so far as the said agreements contain no aggressive elements.

ARTICLE 5

The two Contracting Parties, desirous of settling and solving, exclusively by peaceful means, any disputes and differences, of whatever nature or origin, which may arise between them, undertake to submit questions at issue, which it has not been possible to settle within

*a reasonable period by diplomatic channels, to a procedure of conciliation, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention for the application of the procedure of conciliation, which constitutes an integral part of the present Pact and shall be signed separately and ratified as soon as possible simultaneously with the Pact of Non-Aggression.**

**The Convention for Conciliation between the Republic of Poland and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was signed at Moscow, November 23, 1932.*

ARTICLE 6

The present Pact shall be ratified as soon as possible, and the instruments of ratification shall be exchanged at Warsaw within 30 days following the ratification by Poland and the USSR, after which the Pact shall come into force immediately.

ARTICLE 7

The Pact is concluded for three years. If it is not denounced by one of the Contracting Parties, after previous notice of not less than six months before the expiration of that period, it shall be automatically renewed for a further period of two years.

ARTICLE 8

The Present Pact is drawn up in Polish and Russian, both texts being authentic. In faith whereof the above-named Plenipotentiaries have signed the present Pact and have thereto affixed their seals.

Done at Moscow, in two copies, July 25, 1932.

POLISH-GERMAN DECLARATION, JANUARY 26, 1934.

The Polish Government and the German Government consider that the time has come to introduce a new phase in the political relations between Germany and Poland by a direct understanding between State and State. They have, therefore, decided in the present Declaration to lay down the principles for the future development of these relations.

The two Governments base their action on the fact that the maintenance and guarantee of a lasting peace between their countries is an essential pre-requisite for the general peace of Europe.

They have therefore decided to base their mutual relations on the principles laid down in the Pact of Paris of August 27, 1928, and propose to define more exactly the application of these principles in so far as the relations between Germany and Poland are concerned.

Each of the two Governments, therefore, lays it down that the international obligations undertaken by it towards a third party do not hinder the peaceful development of their mutual relations, do not conflict with the present Declaration, and are not affected by this Declaration. They establish, moreover, that this Declaration does not extend to those questions which under international law are to be regarded exclusively as the internal concern of either of the two States.

Both Governments announce their intention to settle directly all questions of whatever nature which concern their mutual relations.

Should any disputes arise between them and agreement thereon not be reached by direct negotiation, they will, in each particular case, on the basis of mutual agreement, seek a solution by other peaceful means, without prejudice to the possibility of applying, if necessary, those methods of procedure in which provision is made for such cases in other agreements in force between them. In no circumstances, however, will they proceed to the

application of force for the purpose of reaching a decision in such disputes.

The guarantee of peace created by these principles will facilitate the great task of both Governments of finding a solution for problems of political, economic and social kinds, based on a just and fair adjustment of the interests of both parties.

Both Governments are convinced that the relations between their countries will in this manner develop fruitfully, and will lead to the establishment of a neighborly relationship which will contribute to the well-being not only of both their countries, but of the other Peoples of Europe as well.

The present declaration shall be ratified, and the instruments of ratification shall be exchanged in Warsaw as soon as possible.

The declaration is valid for a period of ten years, reckoned from the day of the exchange of the instruments of ratification.

If the declaration is not denounced by one of the two Governments six months before the expiration of this period, it will continue in force, but can then be denounced by either Government at any time on notice of six months being given.

Made in duplicate in the German and Polish languages.

Berlin, January 26, 1934.

For the German Government;

FREIHERR VON NEURATH.

For the Polish Government:

JOZEF LIPSKI.

It is doubtful whether the Germans sought security only in the agreement. On the contrary, further developments show that the declaration about non-aggression was regarded by the Germans as the first step towards a rapprochement which in the future was to lead towards Poland's participation in the Reich's attack on Soviet Russia.

On many occasions outstanding Nazi leaders were pressing Poland to sign the anti-Komintern pact and to collaborate in a joint campaign against Russia.

It was Fieldmarshal Goering who was most insistent in this respect. As the Polish Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs relates in a note written on February 10, 1935, Goering "outlined far-reaching plans, almost suggesting an anti-Russian alliance and a joint attack on Russia. He gave it to be understood that the Ukraine would become a Polish sphere of influence and North-Western Russia would be Germany's."

This scheme of anti-Soviet action and sharing of booty with Poland can be traced in all German declarations. Two years later (on February 16, 1937) Fieldmarshall Goering declared that previous German Governments have made "many serious mistakes in relation to Russia. The dangerous policy of Rapallo had been followed and as the result Germany helped Russians in military matters, armed her, sent her instructors, and assisted her to build up her war industry. The old Reichwehr had had many advocates of rapprochement with Soviet Russia, but an end was put to this by the elimination of all such elements from the German Army. It is true that General Schleicher had said that he wanted to fight Communism internally, but externally he had sought contacts with the Soviets. These were serious mistakes which must never be repeated. Mr. Hitler had completely reversed the policy, and had laid down the principle, against which there was no appeal, that all contacts with Communism were prohibited.

Germany would never return to a pro-Russian policy. For it should always be remembered that there was one great danger coming through Russia from the East, and menacing both Germany and Poland alike. This danger existed not only in the form of a

Bolshevik and Communized Russia, but of Russia generally, in any form, be it Monarchist or Liberal. In this respect the interests of Poland and Germany were entirely one. In the German view, Poland could conduct a truly independent policy on a large scale only if she had to deal with a friendly disposed Reich, while Germany could develop in peace only if she did not have a hostile Poland beside her. In these circumstances Poland could count on the help of Germany, who saw far more advantage than disadvantage to herself in the pursuit of a policy of friendship with Poland."

All German attempts met with decided opposition of Polish official circles. Poland did not harbor any aggressive plans against Russia and refused to participate in any anti-Soviet adventure.

SPRING CRISIS

Up to 1938 the Germans did not show any desire to change their Eastern frontiers. On the contrary, each speech of Adolf Hitler and of minor Fuehrers of the Third Reich were full of high praise of the Polish-German non-aggression pact. In his speeches Hitler maintained that the Germans fully realize the necessity of assuring Poland an access to the sea.

Assurances of the integrity of Polish frontiers were also given in diplomatic conversations. Fieldmarshal Goering for instance announced on February 16, 1937 that on the German side there was no desire whatever to deprive Poland of any part of her territory. Germany was completely reconciled to her present territorial status. Germany would not attack Poland and had no intention of seizing the Polish "corridor."

"We do not want the 'Corridor'. I say that sincerely and categorically; we do not need the 'Corridor.'"

Only after Germany occupied Austria, Memel (Klaipeda) and Sudetenland and when it became obvious that Poland would reject any anti-Soviet collaboration, did the German Government's attitude begin to change rapidly.

Quite unexpectedly, after the Munich Congress, the German Government demanded that Danzig be annexed to the Reich and that a highway and a direct railway line be built through the Polish province of Pomorze. The said province, inhabited by 90% Polish population, was called "Corridor" by the German propoganda, thus hinting to the world that Poland's access to the sea was artificially created by cutting through German territory.

This demand was expressed for the first time during a conversation between the Polish Ambassador in Berlin, Mr. Lipski, and the German Minister for Foreign Affairs von Ribbentrop on October 25, 1938. In exchange, von Ribbentrop suggested the extension of the Polish-German declaration by twenty five years and a guarantee of Polish-German frontiers.

Ambassador Lipski warned the German Minister that he could see no possibility of an agreement involving the reunion of the Free City of Danzig with the Reich. He stressed the importance of Danzig as a port to Poland, and repeated the Polish Government's principle of non-interference in the internal life of the German population in the Free City, where complete self-government had been established.

From that moment on, all conversations of the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs and of the Polish Ambassador with representatives of the Reich concerned these questions.

The situation became even more acute after Germany's occupation of the remaining Czechoslovak territory. German demands to Poland became more and more pressing and led to the "Spring Crisis" in Europe.

In order to get a clear picture of the development of incidents, let us look at

diplomatic documents of that time.

MR. LIPSKI POLISH AMBASSADOR IN BERLIN TO MR. BECK POLISH MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

Berlin, March 21, 1939.

I saw M. von Ribbentrop today. He began by saying he had asked me to call on him in order to discuss Polish-German relations in their entirety.

He complained about our Press, and the Warsaw students' demonstrations during Count Ciano's visit. He said the Chancellor was convinced that the poster in Danzig had been the work of Polish students themselves. I reacted vigorously, asserting that this was a clear attempt to influence the Chancellor unfavorably to Poland.*

*[*Some days prior to the date of this conversation a poster had been put up in a cafe at Danzig, bearing the inscription "Entry forbidden to Poles and dogs." This had caused protest demonstrations by Polish students.]*

He mentioned the question of Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia, which had particularly troubled Polish opinion, and stated that this question had been settled in conformity with Poland's wishes. This was to be communicated to you by Ambassador von Moltke. He spoke of the experts' negotiations on the Minority questions, and dwelt on the fact of the failure to reach agreement as to a joint communique.

At this point I interrupted him to correct his inaccurate statement.

Further M. von Ribbentrop referred to the conversation at Berchtesgaden between you and the Chancellor, in which M. Hitler put forward the idea of guaranteeing Poland's frontiers in exchange for a motor road and the incorporation of Danzig in the Reich. He said that there had been further conversations between you and him in Warsaw on the subject, and that you had pointed out the great difficulties in the way of accepting these suggestions. He gave me to understand that all this had made an unfavorable impression on the Chancellor, since so far he had received no positive reaction whatever on our part to his suggestions. M. von Ribbentrop had had a talk with the Chancellor only yesterday. He stated that the Chancellor was still in favor of good relations with Poland, and had "pressed a desire to have a thorough conversation with you on the subject of our mutual relations. M. von Ribbentrop indicated that he was under the impression that difficulties arising between us were also due to some misunderstanding of the Reich's real aims. The problem needed to be considered on a higher plane. In his opinion our two States were dependent on each other. It must not be forgotten that, by defeating Russia in the World War, Germany had been a contributory factor in the emergence of the Polish State. Obviously they could not forget the shedding of Polish blood, which they held in high honor. Subsequently, thanks to Chancellor Hitler's policy, General Schleicher's plan of German-Soviet collaboration had been smashed. That plan, which would have led to the annihilation of the Polish State, was defeated. It must also be remembered that Danzig and Pomorze had belonged to the Second Reich, and that only through Germany's breakdown had Poland obtained these territories.

At this point I remarked that it was not to be forgotten that before the Partitions the territories had belonged to Poland.

M. von Ribbentrop replied that it was difficult to appeal to purely historical conceptions, and he stressed that the ethnic factor was today of prime importance.

I remarked that Pomorze certainly was Polish, and alluded to the fact that in regard to the annexation of Bohemia and Moravia the Germans had used historical arguments.

M. von Ribbentrop recalled that after all Danzig was a German city, but he realized that in regard to the Danzig question Poland also was activated by sentiment.

I corrected him by pointing out that in addition it was a vital necessity to Poland, to which M. von Ribbentrop remarked that that could be settled by way of a guarantee.

In connection with Danzig, the motor road and the guarantee, M. von Ribbentrop also mentioned the question of Slovakia, indicating that conversations would be possible on this subject. He emphasized that obviously an understanding between us would have to include explicit anti-Soviet tendencies. He affirmed that Germany could never collaborate with the Soviets, and that a Polish-Soviet understanding would inevitably lead to Bolshevism in Poland.

I stated that no Polish patriot would allow himself to be drawn towards Bolshevism. He said he realized that, but in this respect the Jewish element in Poland was a danger.

Replying generally to M. von Ribbentrop's arguments, I pointed out that so far as our Press was concerned its tone was now quieter than that of any other country.

M. von Ribbentrop retorted that he took no notice of the uproar in the British Press. That agitation was entirely without importance. He believed that the Fuehrer always followed the right policy.

Subsequently, I stressed the fact that since 1934 our public opinion had been put to considerable trials. Nevertheless it remained quiet . . .

I stated that now, during the settlement of the Czecho-Slovakian question, there was no understanding whatever between us. The Czech issue was already hard enough for the Polish public to swallow, for, despite our disputes with the Czechs, they were after all a Slav people. But in regard to Slovakia the position was far worse. I emphasized our community of race, language and religion, and mentioned the help we had given in their achievement of independence. I pointed out our long frontier with Slovakia. I indicated that the Polish man in the street could not understand why the Reich had assumed the protection of Slovakia, that protection being directed against Poland. I said emphatically that this question was a serious blow to our relations.

M. von Ribbentrop reflected a moment, and then answered that this could be discussed.

I promised to refer to you the suggestion of a conversation between you and the Chancellor. M. von Ribbentrop remarked that I might go to Warsaw during the next few days to talk over this matter. He advised that the talk should not be delayed, lest the Chancellor should come to the conclusion that Poland was rejecting all his offers.

Finally, I asked whether he could tell me anything about his conversation with the Foreign Minister of Lithuania.

M. von Ribbentrop answered vaguely that he had seen M. Urbszys on the latter's return from Rome, and they had discussed the Memel question, which called for a solution.

Arising out of the conversation, I am prompted to make the following remarks:

The fact that M. von Ribbentrop said nothing on his own initiative about Memel suggests that his conversation with me today, proposing a fundamental "change of view between you and the Chancellor, is perhaps aimed at securing our neutrality during the Memel crisis.

M. von Ribbentrop's suggestion of a conversation and his emphasis on its urgency are a proof that Germany has resolved to carry out her Eastern programme quickly, and so desires to have Poland's attitude clearly defined.

In these circumstances the conversation acquires very real importance, and must be carefully considered in all its aspects. I assume that you will be desiring to summon me to Warsaw in a day or two in regard to this matter.

Poland's reply to all principal German demands was as definite and as decidedly

negative as it could be expressed in diplomatic language. Below we give the text of Minister Beck's instructions to Ambassador Lipski.

MR. BECK'S INSTRUCTIONS TO MR. LIPSKI, WARSAW, MARCH 25, 1939.

With reference to the questions addressed to you on the 21st inst. by M. von Ribbentrop, relating to the complex of Polish-German relations, please communicate the following reply:

1. As in the past, so now, the Polish Government attach full importance to the maintenance of good neighborly relations to the utmost extent with the German Reich....

2. In regard to questions on which hitherto agreement has always been achieved, but concerning which the German Reich has recently put forward new proposals, namely on the question of transit between the Reich and East Prussia, and on the question of regulating the future of the Free City of Danzig, the Polish Government consider that:

(a) They have no interest in hindering the German Government's free communication with the Eastern Province of the Reich. For this reason also, despite many changes which have occurred of recent years, by comparison with the previous state of affairs (for instance, the payment transfers), the Polish Government not only has not placed any difficulties in the way of privileged rail transit, but has arranged the financial side of this transit in accordance with German interests. This being their attitude, the Polish Government is quite willing to study together with the German Government the possibility of further simplification and more facilities in rail and road transit between Germany and East Prussia, so that German citizens shall not encounter unnecessary difficulties while using these communications. To this end, technical experts could set to work to draw up plans which would by degrees render possible an improvement, also from the technical aspect of these communications. All facilities granted on Polish territory could, however, only exist within the limits of Polish sovereignty, and therefore extraterritorial status for ways of communication could not be considered. With this proviso the Polish Government's intentions are in the direction of the most liberal treatment of the German desiderata.

The solution of the problem, however, depends upon the attitude the German Government adopt in regard to my suggestions in the following point.

(b) So far as the status of the Free City of Danzig is concerned, the Polish Government recalls that they have, for a long time now, made references to the necessity for a settlement of this issue by way of an understanding between Warsaw and Berlin, this because it would correspond to the essence of the problem, and all the more because the League of Nations is losing the possibility of fulfilling the obligations it has undertaken in the matter.

From previous conversation it is clear that there is no difference of opinion to the basic approach to the problem, i.e., that the Polish Government in no way hinder the free national life of the Free City of Danzig, while the German Government have declared their respect for Polish rights and interests in the spheres of economy, communications, mercantile marine, and the Polish population on the territory of the Free City. As the entire problem is contained within these two points, the Polish Government consider it would be possible to find a solution based on a Joint Polish-German guarantee to the Free City of Danzig. Such a guarantee would need to meet the aspiration of the German population on the one hand, and to safeguard Polish interests on the other, which interests for that matter are synonymous with the interests of the population of the Free City, considering that the City's well-being has for centuries been based upon Polish maritime trade.

The problem of the motor road is primarily of a technical nature. In the opinion of the

Polish Government, it should be studied by technical experts. On the question of the Free City of Danzig, it would be advisable first to have a discussion of political principles between the Government of the German Reich and the Polish Government and to ensure that in this organism, in the Chancellor's words employed in February last year, the national conditions of the Free City on the one hand, and the rights and interests of Poland on the other, would be respected. To assume a stabilization of conditions in our part of Europe, the Polish Government considers it desirable to carry on conversations on all these questions as quickly as possible, so as to find a basis for a lasting consolidation of good neighborly relations between Poland and Germany.

I request you to add, orally, and with some emphasis, that Marshal Pilsudski implicitly stressed to me that the method of handling the Polish-Danzig problem would be a touchstone of Polish-German relations. I ask you to add that you would be grateful if this opinion were brought to the Chancellor's notice.

You can present your statement, in extenso or recapitulated in the force of a memorandum, to the Reich Foreign Minister. On the occasion please add that if it is a question of my eventual meeting with the Reich Chancellor, I always regard this contact as a factor of immeasurable importance, not only to relations between our countries, but to general European policy. Yet I would add that in the present difficult situation I think it indispensable that such conversations should be prepared for by a previous elucidation of the above-mentioned questions, at least in outline form. For, in the atmosphere existing today, personal contacts which yielded no positive results might prove to be a retrogressive step in relations between our States. That my Government would desire to avoid.

Please add at the same time that we must now devote great attention to our mutual relations. For, owing to Germany's latest steps in regard to both Slovakia and Lithuania, of which the Polish Government were not informed even at the last moment, although they concerned territories situated right on the frontiers of the Polish Republic, the general atmosphere demands clarification, and the methods of progress utilized by both Governments must be chosen with particular caution.

While attempting to liquidate all difficulties through direct negotiations, Poland could not agree to any unilateral decisions and was decided to oppose all threat contained in Ribbentrop's demands.

Here is the text of a declaration warning Germany that the change of the international statute of the City of Danzig will not be tolerated. The categorical Polish declaration was backed by certain shifting of troops towards the City of Danzig.

MINUTES OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN MR. BECK AND GERMAN AMBASSADOR IN WARSAW VON MOLTKE, WARSAW, MARCH 28, 1939.

M. Beck made the following declaration to the German Ambassador.

"In a conversation which has taken place in Berlin between the Polish Ambassador and M. von Ribbentrop, the latter has declared that Polish aggression against the Free City of Danzig would be regarded by the Reich Government as an aggression against Germany itself.

"Without considering the justification for this declaration from the point of view of international law, I must state in the name of my Government that any intervention by the German Government aimed at changing the status quo in Danzig will be regarded as an aggression against Poland."

"By way of commentary I add that any similar attempt on the part of the Senate of the

Free City would cause an immediate reaction on the part of the Polish Government."

"Nevertheless you have my authority for telling your Government that the Polish Government have no intention of committing any act of violence against the Free City, and are still of the opinion that the fate of that Organism should be settled by way of an agreement between the Polish and German Governments."

The Ambassador: "You want to negotiate at the point of the bayonet!"

M. Beck: "That is your own method."

In the meantime the Western democracies and primarily Great Britain, after the shock of German occupation of Prague, decided to take a firmer stand against German aggression.

On March 21, 1939, the very day on which German Minister von Ribbentrop threatened Poland with unilateral action, the British Ambassador Sir Howard Kennard submitted the following memorandum to the Polish Government:

MEMORANDUM PRESENTED TO THE MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS BY SIR HOWARD KENNARD.

March 21, 1939.

1. *Recent German absorption of Czechoslovakia shows clearly that the German Government are resolved to go beyond their hitherto avowed aim to consolidate the German race. They have now extended their conquest to another nation, and if this should prove subsequently part of a definite policy of domination, there is no State in Europe which is not directly or ultimately threatened.*

2. *In the circumstances thus created, it seems to His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom to be desirable to proceed without delay to the organization of mutual support on the part of all those who realize the necessity of protecting international society from further violation of the fundamental laws on which it rests.*

3. *As a first step they propose that the French, Soviet and Polish Governments should join with His Majesty's Government in signing and publishing a formal declaration, the terms of which they suggest should be on the lines of the following:*

"We, the undersigned, duty authorized to that effect, hereby declare that inasmuch as peace and security in Europe are matters of common interest and concern, and since European peace and security may be affected by any action which constitutes a threat to the political independence of any European State, our respective Governments hereby undertake immediately to consult together as to what steps should be taken to offer joint resistance to any such action.,,

4. *It appears to his Majesty's Government that such a declaration would in itself be a valuable contribution to the stability of Europe, and they would propose that the publication should be followed by an examination by the signatories of any specific situation which requires it, with a view to determining the nature of any action which might be taken.*

5. *His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom would be prepared to sign the declaration immediately the three other Governments indicated their readiness to do so.*

6. *They would propose to say nothing of this to other Governments concerned before the four Powers are agreed on the declaration.*

As the declaration was wide in scope, it had to be discussed. Such a loss of time was undesirable. That is why Poland - while not rejecting the plan of mutual declaration of the Polish, British, French and Soviet Governments suggested a temporary bilateral agreement between Poland and Great Britain.

With reference to the British proposal of Lord Halifax whether, in view of:

- 1. The unavoidable difficulties and complications, and consequent waste of time, involved in multilateral negotiations,*
- 2. On the other hand, because of the very rapid pace of events, which from one day to the next might create the necessity for friendly understanding to coordinate views and actions, the British Government would not be prepared to consider the possibility of concluding with us immediately a bilateral agreement in the spirit of the proposed declaration.*

In my understanding, such an agreement would not prejudice the fate of further general negotiations; nevertheless it would at once give us a basis for useful cooperation in various fields which today present certain dangers.

I have mentioned the idea of such an agreement to the British Ambassador here, adding that we have alliance with France dating from 1921, and the British, for their part, also have their understanding with the French, so that in the event of our two Governments reaching an agreement, we would not be acting in contradiction either to Polish or to British policy in relation to France. I also assume that the French Government would be confidentially informed of our eventual decisions.

The form and scope of such an arrangement, or possibly "Gentlemen's Agreement," could be quickly defined, if the British Government regarded the principle itself as possible of acceptance

As a result of the exchange of opinions the British Prime Minister submitted to the House of Commons in the name of His Majesty's Government and the French Government the following declaration:

STATEMENT BY MR. CHAMBERLAIN IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, MARCH 31, 1939.

"As I said this morning, His Majesty's Government have no official confirmation of the rumors of any projected attack on Poland and they must not, therefore, be taken as accepting them as true.

"I am glad to take this opportunity of stating again the general policy of His Majesty's Government. They have constantly advocated the adjustment, by way of free negotiation between the parties concerned, of any differences that may arise between them. They consider that this is the natural and proper course where differences exist. In their opinion there should be no question incapable of solution by peaceful means, and they would see no justification for the substitution of force or threats of force for the method of negotiation.

"As the House is aware, certain consultations are now proceeding with other Governments. In order to make perfectly clear the position of His Majesty's Government in the meantime before those consultations are concluded, I now have to inform the House that during that period, in the event of any action which clearly threatened Polish independence, and which the Polish Government accordingly considered it vital to resist with their national forces, His Majesty's Government would feel themselves bound at once to lend the Polish Government all support in their power. They have given the Polish Government an assurance to this effect.

I may add that the French Government has authorized me to make it plain that they stand in the same position in this matter as do His Majesty's Government."

Prime Minister Chamberlain's declaration bore the characteristics of unilateral guarantee. Poland was aiming at substituting this guarantee with a mutual assistance pact in which both countries would assure military assistance in case of enemy aggression. The Anglo-Polish communique of April 6, 1939, testified to the existence of these tendencies.

POLISH-ENGLISH COMMUNIQUE, APRIL 6, 1939.

The conversations with M. Beck have covered a wide field and shown that the two Governments are in complete agreement upon certain general principles.

It was agreed that the two countries were prepared to enter into an agreement of permanent and reciprocal character to replace the present temporary and unilateral assurance given by His Majesty's Government to the Polish Government. Pending the completion of the permanent agreement, M. Beck gave his Majesty's Government an assurance that the Polish Government would consider themselves under an obligation to render assistance to His Majesty's Government under the same conditions as those contained in the temporary assurance already given by His Majesty's Government to Poland.

Like the temporary assurance, the permanent agreement would not be directed against any other country, but would be designed to assure Great Britain and Poland of mutual assistance in the event of any threat, direct or indirect, to the independence of either. It was recognized that certain matters, including a more precise definition of the various ways in which the necessity for such assistance might arise, would require further examination before the permanent agreement could be completed.

It was understood that the arrangements above mentioned should not preclude either Government from making agreements with other countries in the general interest of the consolidation of peace.

In the meantime international gossipers and troublemakers began spreading rumors that Poland's attitude concerning Danzig underwent a change. These rumors were cut short when on April 20, 1939, Minister Beck sent the following message to the Polish diplomatic representatives:

MR. BECK TO ALL POLISH DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS ABROAD, WARSAW, APRIL 20, 1939.

In connection with a new wave of rumors, the Polish Government have to state that their attitude to the Danzig question is as follows:

(a) The Polish Government hold unswervingly to the position that the German population of the Free City of Danzig should be left in complete freedom of development of their internal political life.

(b) The Polish Government cannot resign their fundamental rights, or consent that the enjoyment of such rights should be under the control of a third Party.

(c) The Polish Government cannot accept any unilateral decisions in regard to the Danzig question.

The German Government are aware of this attitude, and at any moment it may be the subject of negotiation, but there is no sign of any haste on the part of Germany.

The reply to Poland's stand came from Hitler himself. In a speech delivered at the Sportpalast in Berlin Hitler rejected the pacifist proposals of President Roosevelt and took the following attitude toward Poland:

EXTRACT FROM CHANCELLOR HITTER'S SPEECH TO THE REICHSTAG, APRIL 28, 1939.

"I have had the following proposal submitted to the Polish Government:

"(1) Danzig returns as a Free State into the framework of the German Reich.

"(2) Germany receives a route through the Corridor and a railway line at her own disposal possessing the same extra-territorial status for Germany as the Corridor itself has for Poland.

"In return, Germany is prepared:

"(1) To recognize all Polish economic rights in Danzig.

"(2) To ensure for Poland a free harbor in Danzig of any size desired which would have completely free access to the sea.

"(3) To accept at the same time the present boundaries between Germany and Poland and to regard them as ultimate.

"(4) To conclude a twenty-five-year non-aggression treaty with Poland, a treaty therefore which would extend far beyond the duration of my own life.

"(5) To guarantee the independence of the Slovak State by Germany, Poland and Hungary jointly - which means in practice the renunciation of any unilateral German hegemony in this territory.

"The Polish Government have rejected my offer and have only declared that they are prepared (1) to negotiate concerning the question of a substitute for the Commissioner of the League of Nations and (2) to consider facilities for the transit traffic through the Corridor.

"I have regretted greatly this incomprehensible attitude of the Polish Government, but that alone is not the decisive fact; the worst is that now Poland, like Czechoslovakia a year ago, believes, under the pressure of a lying international campaign, that it must call up troops, although Germany on her part has not called up a single man and had not thought of proceeding in any way against Poland. As I have said, this is in itself very regrettable and posterity will one day decide whether it was really right to refuse this suggestion made this once by me. This - as I have said - was an endeavor on my part to solve a question which intimately affects the German people by a truly unique compromise, and to solve it to the advantage of both countries. According to my conviction Poland was not a giving party in this solution at all but only a receiving party, because it should be beyond all doubt that Danzig will never become Polish. The intention to attack on the part of Germany, which was merely invented by the international Press, led as you know to the so called guarantee offer and to an obligation on the part of the Polish Government for mutual assistance, which would also, under certain circumstances, compel Poland to take military action against Germany in the event of a conflict between Germany and any other Power and in which England, in her turn, would be involved. This obligation is contradictory to the agreement which I made with Marshal Pilsudski some time ago, seeing that in this agreement reference is made exclusively to existing obligations, that is at that time, namely, to the obligations of Poland towards France of which we were aware. To extend these obligations subsequently is contrary to the terms of the German-Polish non-aggression pact. Under these circumstances I should not have entered into this pact at that time, because what sense can a non-aggression pact have if one partner in practice leaves open an enormous number of exceptions.

"There is either collective security, that is collective insecurity and continuous danger of war, or clear agreements which, however, exclude fundamentally any use of arms between the contracting parties. I therefore look upon the agreement which Marshal Pilsudski and I at one time concluded as having been unilaterally infringed by Poland and

thereby no longer in existence!"

"I have sent a communication to this effect to the Polish Government. However, I can only repeat at this point that my decision does not constitute a modification of any attitude in principle with regard to the problems mentioned above. Should the Polish Government wish to come to fresh contractual arrangements governing its relations with Germany, I can but welcome such an idea, provided, of course, that these arrangements are based on an absolutely clear obligation binding both parties in equal measure. Germany is perfectly willing at any time to undertake such obligations and also to fulfill them."

At the very moment when Hitler was delivering his speech, the Polish Foreign Office in Warsaw was handed a diplomatic note by the Charge d'Affairs of the German Embassy. In a roundabout lengthy legal argumentation the note endeavored to expound Hitler's decision to break off the German-Polish non-aggression pact.

The truth remained nevertheless that the act was illegal, for there was no provision in the pact for its being terminated by any one party to it before 1944.

A week after Hitler's speech Jozef Beck, the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs, addressed the Polish Parliament.

MR. BECK'S SPEECH TO THE SEYM, MAY 5, 1939.

This session of Parliament provides me with an opportunity of filling in some gaps in my work of recent months. The course of international events might perhaps justify more statements by a Foreign Minister than my single expose in the Senate Commission for Foreign Affairs.

(2) On the other hand, it was precisely that swift development of events that prompted me to postpone a public declaration until such time as the principal problems of our foreign policy had taken on a more definite form.

(3) The consequences of the weakening of collective international institutions and of a complete change in the method of intercourse between nations, which I have reported on several occasions in both Houses, caused many new problems to arise in different parts of the world. That process and its results have in recent months reached the borders of Poland.

(4) A very general definition of these phenomena may be given by saying that relations between individual Powers have taken on a more individual character, with their own specific features. The general rules have been weakened. One nation simply speaks more and more directly to another.

(5) As far as we are concerned, very serious events have taken place. Our contact with some Powers has become easier and firmer, while in some cases serious difficulties have arisen. Looking at things chronologically, I refer, in the first place, to our agreement with the United Kingdom, with Great Britain. After repeated diplomatic contacts, designed to define the scope and objects of our future relations, we reached on the occasion of my visit to London a direct agreement based on the principle of mutual assistance in the event of a direct or indirect threat to the independence of one of our countries. The formula of the agreement is known to you from the declaration of Mr. Neville Chamberlain of April 6, the text of which was drafted by mutual agreement and should be regarded as a pact concluded between the two Governments. I consider it my duty to add that the form and character of the comprehensive conversations held in London give a particular value to the agreement. I should like Polish public opinion to be aware that I found on the part of British statesmen not only a profound knowledge of the general political problems of Europe, but also such an

attitude towards our country as permitted me to discuss all vital problems with frankness and confidence without any reservations or doubts.

(6) It was possible to establish rapidly the principles of Polish-British collaboration, first of all because we made it clear to each other that the intentions of both Governments coincide as regards fundamental European problems; certainly, neither Great Britain nor Poland has any aggressive intentions whatever, but they stand equally firmly in defense of certain basic principles of conduct in international life.

(7) The parallel declarations of French political leaders confirm that it is agreed between Paris and Warsaw that the efficiency of our defense pact not only cannot be adversely affected by changes in the international situation, but, on the contrary, that this agreement should constitute one of the most essential elements in the political structure of Europe. The Polish-British Agreement, however, has been employed by the Chancellor of the German Reich as the pretext for unilaterally declaring nonexistent the agreement which the Chancellor of the Reich concluded with us in 1934.

(8) Before passing to the present stage of this matter, allow me to sketch a brief historical outline.

(9) The fact that I had the honor actively to participate in the conclusion and execution of the Polish-German Pact imposes on me the duty of analyzing it. The pact of 1934 was a great event in 1934. It was an attempt to improve the course of history between two great nations, an attempt to escape from the unwholesome atmosphere of daily discord and wider hostile intentions, to rise above the animosity which had accumulated for centuries, and to create deep foundations of mutual respect. An endeavor to oppose evil is always the best form of political activity.

(10) The policy of Poland proved our respect for that principle in the most critical moments of recent times.

(11) From this point of view the breaking off of that pact is not an insignificant matter. However, every treaty is worth as much as the consequences which follow it. And if the policy and conduct of the other party diverges from the principle of the pact, we have no reason for mourning its weakening or dissolution. The Polish-German Pact of 1934 was a treaty of mutual respect and good neighborly relations, and as such it contributed a positive value to the life of our country, of Germany and of the whole of Europe. But since there has appeared a tendency to interpret it as limiting the freedom of our policy, or as a ground for demanding from us unilateral concessions contrary to our vital interests, it has lost its real character.

(12) Let us now pass to the present situation. The German Reich has taken the mere fact of the Polish-British understanding as a motive for the breaking off of the pact of 1934. Various legal objections were raised on the German side. I will take the liberty of referring jurists to the text of our reply to the German memorandum, which will be handed today to the German Government. I will not detain you any longer on the diplomatic form of this event, but one of its aspects has a special significance. The Reich Government, as appears from the text of the German memorandum, made its decision on the strength of Press reports, without consulting the views of either the British or the Polish Government as to the character of the agreement concluded. It would not have been difficult to do so, for immediately on my return from London I expressed my readiness to receive the German Ambassador, who has hitherto not availed himself of the opportunity.

(13) Why is this circumstance important? Even for the simplest understanding it is clear that neither the character nor the purpose and scope of the agreement influenced this decision, but merely the fact that such an agreement had been concluded. And this in turn

is important for an appreciation of the objects of German policy, since if, contrary to previous declarations, the Government of the Reich interpreted the Polish-German Declaration of non-aggression of 1934 as intended to isolate Poland and to prevent the normal friendly collaboration of our country with the Western Powers, we ourselves should always have rejected such an interpretation.

(14) To make a proper estimate of the situation, we should first of all ask the question, what is the real object of all this? Without that question and our reply, we cannot properly appreciate the real import of German statements with regard to matters of concern to Poland. I have already referred to our attitude towards the West. There remains the question of the German proposals as to the future of the Free City of Danzig, the communication of the Reich with East Prussia through our province of Pomorze, and the further subjects raised as of common interest to Poland and Germany.

(15) Let us therefore, investigate these problems in turn.

(16) As to Danzig, first some general remarks. The Free City of Danzig was not invented by the Treaty of Versailles. It has existed for many centuries as the result - to speak accurately, and rejecting the emotional factor - of the positive interplay of Polish and German interests. The German merchants of Danzig assured the development and prosperity of that city, thanks to the overseas trade of Poland. Not only the development, but the very *raison d'être* of the city was formerly due to the decisive fact of its situation at the mouth of our only great river, and today to its position on the main waterway and railway line connecting us with the Baltic. This is a truth which no new formula can change. The population of Danzig is today predominantly German, but its livelihood and prosperity depend on the economic potentialities of Poland.

(17) What conclusions have we drawn from this fact? We have stood and stand firmly on the ground of the rights and interests of our sea-borne trade and our maritime policy in Danzig. While seeking reasonable and conciliatory solutions, we have purposely not endeavored to exert any pressure on the free national, ideological and cultural development of the German majority in the Free City.

(18) I shall not prolong this speech by quoting examples. They are sufficiently well known to all who have been in any way concerned with the question. But when, after repeated statements by German statesmen, who had respected our standpoint and expressed the view that "This provincial town will not be the object of a conflict between Poland and Germany," I hear a demand for the annexation of Danzig to the Reich, when I receive no reply to our proposal of March 26 for a joint guarantee of the existence and rights of the Free City, and subsequently I learn that this has been regarded as a rejection of negotiations, I have to ask myself, what is the real object of all this?

(19) Is it the freedom of the German population of Danzig (which is not threatened), or a matter of prestige, or is it a matter of barring Poland from the Baltic, from which Poland will not allow herself to be barred?

(20) The same considerations apply to communication across our province of Pomorze. I insist on the term "province of Pomorze." The word "corridor" is an artificial invention, for this is an ancient Polish territory with an insignificant percentage of German colonists.

(21) We have given the German Reich all railway facilities, we have allowed its citizens to travel without customs or passport formalities from the Reich to East Prussia. We have suggested the extension of similar facilities to road traffic.

(22) And here again the question arises - what is the real object of it all?

(23) We have no interest in obstructing German citizens in their communication with

their eastern province. But we have, on the other hand, no reason whatever to restrict our sovereignty on our own territory.

(24) On the first and second points, i.e., the question of the future of Danzig and of communication across Pomorze, it is still a matter of unilateral concessions which the Government of the Reich appear to be demanding from us.

A self-respecting nation does not make unilateral concessions. Where, then, is the reciprocity? It appears somewhat vague in the German proposals. The Chancellor of the Reich mentioned in his speech a triple condominium in Slovakia. I am obliged to state that I heard this proposal for the first time in the Chancellor's speech of April 28. In certain previous conversation only allusions were made to the effect that in the event of a general agreement the question of Slovakia could be discussed. We did not attempt to go further with such conversations, since it is not our custom to bargain with the interest of others. Similarly, the proposal for a prolongation of the pact of non-aggression for twenty-five years was not advanced in any concrete form in any of the recent conversations. Here also unofficial hints were made, emanating, it is true, from prominent representatives of the Reich Government. But in such conversations various other hints were made which extended much further than the subjects under discussion. I reserve the right to return to this matter if necessary.

(25) In his speech the Chancellor of the Reich proposes, as a concession on his part, the recognition and definite acceptance of the present frontier between Poland and Germany. I must point out that this would only have been a question of recognizing what is de jure and de facto our indisputable property. Consequently, this proposal likewise cannot affect my contention that the German desiderata regarding Danzig and a motor road constitute unilateral demands.

(26) In the light of these explanations, the House will rightly expect from me an answer to the last passage of the German memorandum which says: "If the Polish Government attach importance to a new settlement of Polish-German relations by means of a treaty, the German Government are prepared to do this." It appears to me that I have already made clear our attitude, but for the sake of order I will make a resume.

(27) The motive for concluding such an agreement would be the word "peace," which the Chancellor emphasized in his speech.

(28) Peace is certainly the object of the difficult and intensive work of Polish diplomacy. Two conditions are necessary for this word to be of real value: (1) peaceful intentions, (2) peaceful methods of procedure. If the Government of the Reich are really guided by those two pre-conditions in relation to this country, then all conversations, provided, of course, that they respect the principle I have already enumerated, are possible.

(29) If such conventions take place, the Polish Government will, according to their custom, approach the problem objectively, having regard to the experience of recent times, but without withholding their utmost good will.

(30) Peace is a valuable and desirable thing. Our generation, which has shed its blood in several wars, surely deserves a period of peace. But peace, like almost everything in this world, has its price, high but definable. We in Poland do not recognize the conception of "peace at any price." There is only one thing in the life of men, nations and States which is without price, and that is honor.

OUTBREAK OF THE WAR

After this aggravation of the situation in the spring of 1939, there followed a period of

calm on the diplomatic front. The summer witnessed a psychological war of nerves carried on rather by the German press and Nazi organizations than by diplomatic elements.

It was only at the end of August that two important international events took place. The first was the signing of the German-Soviet non-aggression pact in Moscow on August 23, 1939. The circumstances surrounding the signing of that pact and the empty-handed dismissal of the French-British military mission from the Kremlin are still vivid in the mind of the world.

NON-AGGRESSION PACT BETWEEN GERMANY AND UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS.

The Government of the German Reich and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, guided by the desire to strengthen the cause of peace between Germany and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and taking as a basis the fundamental regulations of the Neutrality Agreement concluded in April, 1936, between Germany and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, have reached the following agreements:

Article 1. The two Contracting Parties bind themselves to refrain from any act of force, any aggressive action and any attack on one another, both singly and also jointly with other Powers.

Article 2. In the event of one of the Contracting Parties becoming the object of warlike action on the part of a third Power, the other Contracting Party shall in no manner support this third Power.

Article 3. The Government of the two Contracting Parties shall in future remain continuously in touch with one another, by way of consultation, in order to inform one another on questions touching their joint interests.

Article 4. Neither of the two Contracting Parties shall participate in any grouping of Powers which is directed directly or indirectly against the other Party.

Article 5. In the event of disputes or disagreements arising between the Contracting Parties on questions of this or that kind, both Parties would clarify these disputes or disagreements exclusively by means of friendly exchange of opinion, or, if necessary, by arbitration committees.

Article 6. The present Agreement shall be concluded for a period of ten years on the understanding that, in so far as one of the Contracting Parties does not give notice of termination one year before the end of this period, the period of validity of this Agreement shall automatically be regarded as prolonged for a further period of five years.

Article 7. The present Agreement shall be ratified within the shortest possible time. The instruments of ratification shall be exchanged in Berlin, the Agreement takes effect immediately after it has been signed.

For the German Reich Government:

RIBBENTROP

For the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics:

MOLOTOV

Moscow, August 23, 1939.

The Ribbentrop-Molotov pact assured Germany a free hand in her attack on Poland. Secret clauses of the pact provided for Russia's neutrality in the impending German-Polish

conflict and for an even division of spoils.

Two days later the Anglo-Polish negotiations, which had been going on in London, were speedily concluded. The pact of mutual assistance signed August 25, 1939, was the nucleus of the later pact of the United Nations to fight the Axis.

ANGLO-POLISH AGREEMENT OF MUTUAL ASSISTANCE, LONDON, AUGUST 25, 1939.

The Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Polish Government,

Desiring to place on a permanent basis the collaboration between their respective countries resulting from the assurances of mutual Resistance of a defensive character which they have already exchanged;

Have resolved to conclude an Agreement for that purpose and have appointed as their Plenipotentiaries:

The Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland: The Rt. Hon. Viscount Halifax, K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs;

The Polish Government:

His Excellency Count Edward Raczynski, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Polish Republic in London;

Who, having exchanged their Full Powers, found in good and due form, have agreed on the following provisions:

ARTICLE 1

Should one of the Contracting Parties become engaged in hostilities with a European Power in consequence of aggression by the latter against that Contracting Party, the other Contracting Party will at once give the Contracting Party engaged in hostilities all the support and assistance in its power.

ARTICLE 2

(1) The provisions of Article 1 will also apply in the event of any action by a European Power which clearly threatened, directly or indirectly, the independence of one of the Contracting Parties, and was of such a nature that the Party in question considered it vital to resist it with its armed forces.

(2) Should one of the Contracting Parties become engaged in hostilities with a European Power in consequence of action by that Power which threatened the independence or neutrality of another European State in such a way as to constitute a clear menace to the security of that contracting party, the provisions of Article 1 will apply, without prejudice, however, to the rights of the other European State concerned.

ARTICLE 3

Should a European Power attempt to undermine the independence of one of the Contracting Parties by processes of economic penetration or in any other way, the Contracting Parties will support each other in resistance to such attempts. Should the European Power concerned thereupon embark on hostilities against one of the Contracting Parties, the provisions of Article 1 will apply.

ARTICLE 4

The methods of applying the undertakings of mutual assistance provided for by the present Agreement are established between the competent naval, military and air authorities of the Contracting Parties.

ARTICLE 5

Without prejudice to the foregoing undertakings of the Contracting Parties to give each other mutual support and assistance immediately on the outbreak of hostilities, they will exchange complete and speedy information concerning any development which might threaten their independence and, in particular, concerning any development which threatened to call the said undertakings into operation.

ARTICLE 6

(1) The contracting Parties will communicate to each other the terms of any undertakings of assistance against aggression which they have already given or may in future give to other States.

(2) Should either of the Contracting Parties intend to give such an undertaking after the coming into force of the present Agreement, the other Contracting Party shall, in order to ensure the proper functioning of the Agreement, be informed thereof.

(3) Any new undertaking which the Contracting Parties may enter into in future shall neither limit their obligations under the present Agreement nor indirectly create new obligations between the Contracting Party not participating in these undertakings and the third State concerned.

ARTICLE 7

Should the Contracting Parties be engaged in hostilities in consequence of the application of the present Agreement, they will not conclude an armistice or treaty of peace except by mutual agreement.

ARTICLE 8

(1) The present Agreement shall remain in force for a period of five years.

(2) Unless denounced six months before the expiry of this period it shall continue in force, each Contracting Party having thereafter the right to denounce it at any time by giving six months' notice to that effect.

(3) The present Agreement shall come into force on signature.

In faith whereof the above-named Plenipotentiaries have signed the present Agreement and have affixed thereto their seals.

Done in English in duplicate, at London, the 25th August, 1939. A Polish text shall subsequently be agreed upon between the Contracting Parties and both texts will then be authentic.

(L.S.) HALIFAX

(L.S.) EDWARD RACZYNSKI

The signing of the German-Soviet and the English-Polish pacts could forebode but one thing: the crisis was reopening.

In his efforts to prevent the war the President of the United States thus appealed to the President of the Republic of Poland and to Adolph Hitler:

[*APPEAL ADDRESSED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, MR. ROOSEVELT, TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND, MR. MOSCICKI, AUGUST 24, 1939.*](#)

The manifest gravity of the existing crisis imposes the urgent obligation upon all to examine every possible means which might prevent the outbreak of a general war. With this in mind I feel justified in suggesting that certain possible avenues of solution be considered.

The controversy between the Polish and German Governments would be the subject

of direct discussion between the two Governments. If that were impossible or unachievable, a second method would be to submit these questions to arbitration.

The third method would be conciliation through the intermediary of a third disinterested party, in which case it would seem legitimate for the parties to accept the services of one of the traditionally neutral states, or that of a disinterested Republic of the American Continent, far removed from the scene and the object of the actual crisis.

Should you determine to attempt a solution by any of these methods you are assured of the earnest and complete sympathy of the United States and of their people. During exploration of the avenues I appeal to you, as I have likewise appealed to the Government of the German Reich, to agree to refrain from any positive act of hostility.

It is, I think, well known to you that, speaking on behalf of the United States, I have exerted, and will continue to exert every influence on behalf of peace. The rank and file of the population of every nation - large and small - want peace. They do not seek military conquest. They recognize that disputes, claims and counterclaims will always arise from time to time between nations, but that all such controversy, without exception, can be solved by a peaceful procedure, if the will on both sides exists so to do.

I am addressing a communication in the same sense to the Chancellor of the German Reich.

REPLY OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND, MR. MOSCICKI, TO THE APPEAL OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, MR. ROOSEVELT, AUGUST 25, 1939.

I appreciate the noble message which your Excellency has been kind enough to send me. I should like to emphasize that the Polish Government have ever considered direct talks between Governments to be the most suitable method of resolving difficulties which may arise between States. We consider that this method is all the more suitable where neighboring States are concerned. On the basis of these principles Poland concluded Non-Aggression Pacts with Germany and the U.S.S.R. We consider also that the method of conciliation through the intermediary of a disinterested and impartial third party is a just method of resolving differences which have been created between nations.

Although I clearly wish to avoid even the appearance of desiring to profit by this occasion to raise points of litigation, I deem it my duty, nevertheless, to make it clear that in the present crisis it is not Poland which is formulating demands and demanding concessions of any other State. It is, therefore, perfectly natural that Poland should hold aloof from any action of this kind, direct or indirect. I would like to close by expressing my ardent wish that your message of peace may contribute to the general appeasement which is so necessary to enable the nations once more to regain the blessed path of progress and civilization.

The end of August became the scene of the German press' intensified campaign against Poland. Frontal attacks on Danzig and the Polish Pomerania gave way to alarm raised in the defense of the German minority in Poland.

Using faked names, figures and incidents the German press tried to convince the world that the German minority in Poland was being ill-treated. This pack of falsehoods was intended to cover the fact that the Polish minority in Germany which was double the size of the German minority in Poland had never been given a chance for economic and cultural development.

But the Sudeten campaign against Czecho-Slovakia of 1938 was still fresh in the world's memory and these new outbursts were regarded with skepticism.

STATEMENTS OF THE EUROPEAN DIPLOMATS STATIONED IN WARSAW ABOUT THE CAMPAIGN OF LIES.

**Sir Howard Kennard, British Ambassador in Warsaw, to Viscount Halifax, British Foreign Secretary, (Telegraphic)
Warsaw, August 27, 1939.**

So far as I can judge, German allegations of mass ill-treatment of German minority by Polish authorities are gross exaggerations, if not complete falsifications.

2. There is no sign of any loss of control of situation by Polish civil authorities. Warsaw (and so far as I can ascertain the rest of Poland) is still completely calm.

3. Such allegations are reminiscent of Nazi propaganda methods regarding Czechoslovakia last year.

4. In any case it is purely and simply deliberate German provocation in accordance with fixed policy that has since March exacerbated feeling between the two nationalities. I suppose this has been done with object of (a) creating war spirit in Germany, (b) impressing public opinion abroad, (c) provoking either defeatism or apparent aggression in Poland.

5. It has signally failed to achieve either of the two latter objects.

6. It is noteworthy that Danzig was hardly mentioned by Herr Hitler.

7. German treatment of Czech Jews and Polish minority is apparently negligible factor compared with alleged sufferings of Germans in Poland, where, be it noted, they do not amount to more than 10 per cent of population in any commune.

8. In face of these facts, it can hardly be doubted that, if Herr Hitler decides on war, it is for the sole purpose of destroying Polish independence.

9. I shall lose no opportunity of impressing on Minister for Foreign Affairs necessity of doing everything possible to prove that Herr Hitler's allegations regarding German minority are false.

Mr. Leon Noel, French Ambassador in Warsaw, to Mr. Georges Bonnet, French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Warsaw, August 28, 1939, 6.05 p.m. (received at 9.05 P.M.)

The acts of ill-treatment, murder, etc., of which the Poles are accused by Chancellor Hitler, are pure calumnies. Official denials of the national authorities cannot be questioned. It is impossible that the Germans were shot in the vicinity of Danzig or at Bielsko without the knowledge of French people who live there. It should be also stressed that the Germans have not cited a single precise act, name or date.

The German Ambassador has not presented any protests to the Polish Minister for two years.

LEON NOEL

Mr. Leon Noel, Ambassador of France in Warsaw, to Mr. Georges Bonnet, French Minister for Foreign Affairs, Warsaw, August 28, 1939. 8.15 p.m.

Among other things the press published the following particulars, supplied by the Polish Telegraph Agency PAT:

1. Mr. Malhomme, the vice-voievode of Silesia, accused by the German radio to have ordered ill-treatment of women and children, has been gravely ill for the past month

and remains under medical care in Warsaw.

2. "The pillages of the uprising bandes" in Silesia are entirely unfounded. Captain Blacha who was supposed to have led them, has been dead for the last two years.

LEON NOEL

Polish Official Communique, Warsaw, August 28. 1939.

For some time the German Press has been conducting a campaign of calumnies, accusing Poland of maltreating German minorities and adducing evidence not only erroneous but entirely invented. So long as this campaign was limited to a campaign of propaganda, even though by a Press entirely subordinated to its Government, the Polish side was content to issue denials or to give information to all who require it for honest purposes.

However, for some days past these pure inventions and false reports have found their way into the statements of high governing circles in Germany, who are manifestly and tendentiously misinformed.

It appears that the German Government desire to use them as a weapon in the diplomatic game. With this fact in mind, the Polish Government are obliged solemnly to protest against methods having as their object the misleading of international public opinion, and foreign governments. Without entering for the moment into details, it is worth mentioning such false accusations as that of the assassination of 24 Germans near Lodz, and of 8 Germans near Bielsko, the cases of castration executed by decisions of courts, the concentration camp for the German minority, etc.

Such information must be branded as pure invention. Not one of the so-called facts mentioned above corresponds with the truth.

The tension grew every day. In Germany, secret mobilization by way of individual summons had taken place. Large numbers of troops were amassed in East Prussia, Pomerania, Brandenburg, Bohemia and Slovakia. Their reaching the Polish border was a matter of minutes.

The order of the Polish Commander-in-Chief was proof of the discernment and deep sense of responsibility of the Polish Government for the world's peace.

Mr. Leon Noel, French Ambassador in Warsaw, to Mr. Georges Bonnet, French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Warsaw, August 28, 1939, 12 noon, (received 1.35 p.m.)

Polish troops have received Marshal Rydz Smigly's orders not to respond to any German provocation. They have to limit themselves to pushing back incursions into Polish territory and to strictly avoid crossing the frontier.

Diplomatic chancelleries the whole world over worked feverishly to maintain peace. Their chief aim was not to admit an interruption in the direct Polish-German talks and thus to destroy the last chance for a settlement. But all efforts were to no avail, for Wilhelmstrasse had plainly geared its steer toward war.

Telegram from Viscount Halifax to Sir Howard Kennard, (was communicated by Sir Howard to Mr. Beck on August 28), August 28, 1939.

Our proposed reply to M. Hitler draws a clear distinction between the method of reaching agreement on German-Polish differences and the nature of the solution to be

arrived at. As to the method, we wish to express our clear view that direct discussion on equal terms between the parties is the proper means.

(2) Polish Government enjoy protection of Anglo-Polish Treaty.

(3) His Majesty's Government have already made it plain and are repeating in their reply to M. Hitler today that any settlement of German-Polish differences must safeguard Poland's essential interests and must be secured by international guarantee.

(4) We have, of course, seen reports of M. Hitler's reply to M. Daladier, but we should not consider intimation by Polish Government of their readiness to hold direct discussions as in any way implying acceptance of M. Hitler's demands, which would, as made plain above, have to be examined in light of principles we have stated.

(5) As Polish Government appear in their reply to President Roosevelt to accept ideas of direct negotiations, His Majesty's Government earnestly hope that in the light of the considerations set forth in foregoing paragraphs Polish Government will authorize them to inform German Government that Poland is ready to enter at once into direct discussion with Germany.

(6) Please endeavor to see M. Beck at once and telephone reply.

Mr. Beck to Mr. Raczynski and Mr. Lukasiewicz, Warsaw, August 28, 1939.

The British ambassador has consulted me on the question of an answer to M. Hitler. I agreed to inform the German Government that Poland was ready to negotiate, and asked him to define what the British Government understood by the conception "international guarantee." Please treat the entire question of the consultation as strictly confidential.

The Embassies of Great Britain and France in Berlin at this time exerted superhuman efforts to maintain peace and prevent the outbreak of the war. On the other hand, both diplomats assured Chancellor Hitler that in case of German aggression both nations would fulfill their treaty obligations in giving military aid to Poland. In this way they forestalled any possibility of misunderstanding that attack on Poland would automatically mean a European war and perhaps even a world conflict.

The following is a document that characterizes the eleventh-hour conversations of late August, 1939. It is an excellent example of the tone used by the diplomats of Western democracies and the leaders of the Third Reich.

**Sir N. Henderson, British Ambassador in Berlin, to Viscount Halifax
Berlin, August 28, 1939 (telegram received in London 2.35 a.m., August 29, 1939.)**

I saw the Chancellor at 10.30 this evening. He asked me to come at 10 p.m., but I sent word that I could not have the translation ready before the later hour. Herr von Ribbentrop was present, also Dr. Schmidt. Interview lasted one and a quarter hours.

2. Herr Hitler began by reading the German translation. When he had finished, I said that I wished to make certain observations from notes which I had made in the conversations with the Prime Minister and His Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. In the first place I wished to say that we in England regarded it as absurd that Britain should be supposed by the German Government to consider the crushing of Germany as a settled policy. We held it to be no less astonishing that anyone in Germany should doubt for a moment that we would not fight for Poland if her independence or vital interests were menaced.

3. *Our word was our word, and we had never and would never break it. In the old days Germany's word had the same value, and I quoted a passage from a German book (which Herr Hitler had read) about Marshal Blucher's exhortation to his troops when hurrying to the support of Wellington at Waterloo: "Forward, my children, I have given my word to my brother Wellington, and you cannot wish me to break it."*

4. *Herr Hitler at once intervened to observe that things were different 125 years ago. I said not as far as England was concerned. He wanted, I said, Britain's friendship. What value would he place on our friendship if we began it by disloyalty to a friend? Whatever some people might say, the British people sincerely desired an understanding with Germany, and no one more so than the Prime Minister. Herr von Ribbentrop remarked that Mr. Chamberlain had once said to him that it was his dearest wish. Today the whole British public was behind the Prime Minister. The recent vote in the House of Commons was an unmistakable proof of that fact. The Prime Minister could carry through his policy of an understanding if, but only if, Herr Hitler were prepared to cooperate. There was absolutely no truth in the idea sometimes held in Germany that the British Cabinet was disunited or that the country was not unanimous. It was now or never, and it rested with Herr Hitler. If he was prepared to sacrifice that understanding in order to make war or immoderate demands on Poland, the responsibility was his. We offered friendship but only on the basis of a peaceful and freely negotiated solution of the Polish question.*

5. *Herr Hitler replied that he would be willing to negotiate if there was a Polish Government which was prepared to be reasonable and which really controlled the country. He expatiated on misdoings of the Poles, referred to his generous offer of March last, said that it could not be repeated and asserted that nothing else than the return of Danzig and the whole of the Corridor would satisfy him, together with a rectification in Silesia, where 90 per cent of the population had voted for Germany at the post-war plebiscite but where, as a result of Haller-Korfanty coup, what the Plebiscite Commission had allotted had nevertheless been grabbed by Poland.*

6. *I told Herr Hitler that he must choose between England and Poland. If he put forward immoderate demands there was no hope of a peaceful solution. Corridor was inhabited almost entirely by Poles. Herr Hitler interrupted me hereby observing that this was only true because a million Germans had been driven out of that district since the war. I again said the choice lay with him. He had offered a Corridor over the Corridor in March, and I must honestly tell him that anything more than that, if that, would have no hope of acceptance. I begged him very earnestly to reflect before raising his price. He said his original offer had been contemptuously refused and he would not make it again. I observed that it had been made in the form of a dictate and therein lay the whole difference.*

7. *Herr Hitler continued to argue that Poland could never be reasonable: she had England and France behind her, and imagined that even if she were beaten she would later recover, thanks to their help, more than she might lose. He spoke of annihilating Poland. I said that reminded me of similar talk last year of annihilation of the Czechs. He retorted that we were incapable of inducing Poland to be reasonable. I said that it was just because we remembered the experience of Czecho-Slovakia last year that we hesitated to press Poland too far today. Nevertheless, we reserved to ourselves the right to form our own judgment as to what was or what was not reasonable so far as Poland or Germany were concerned. We kept our hands free in that respect.*

8. *Generally speaking, Herr Hitler kept harping on Poland, and I kept on just as consistently telling Herr Hitler that he had to choose between friendship with England which we offered him and excessive demands on Poland which would put an end to all hope of*

British friendship. If we were to come to an understanding it would entail sacrifices on our part. If he was not prepared to make sacrifices on his part there was nothing to be done. Herr Hitler said that he had to satisfy the demands of his people, his army was ready and eager for battle, his people were united behind him, and he could not tolerate further ill-treatment of Germans in Poland, etc.

9. It is unnecessary to recall the details of a long and earnest conversation in the course of which the only occasion in which Herr Hitler became at all excited was when I observed that it was not a question of Danzig and the Corridor, but one of our determination to resist force by force. This evoked a tirade about the Rhineland, Austria and Sudeten and their peaceful reacquisition by Germany. He also resented my references to 15th March.

10. In the end, I asked him two straight questions. Was he willing to negotiate directly with the Poles and was he ready to discuss the question of an exchange of populations? He replied in the affirmative as regards the latter (though I have no doubt that he was thinking at the same time of a rectification of frontiers). As regards the first, he said that he could not give me an answer until after he had given reply to His Majesty's Government, the careful consideration which such a document deserved. In this connection he turned to Herr von Ribbentrop and said: "We must summon Field-Marshal Goering to discuss it with him."

11. I finally repeated to him very solemnly the main note of the whole conversation so far as I was concerned, namely, that it lay with him as to whether he preferred a unilateral solution which would mean war as regards Poland, or British friendship. If he were prepared to pay the price of the latter by a generous gesture as regards Poland, he could at a stroke change in his favor the whole of public opinion not only in England but in the world. I left no doubt in his mind as to what the alternative would be, nor did he dispute the point.

12. At the end Herr von Ribbentrop asked me whether I could guarantee that the Prime Minister could carry the country with him in a policy of friendship with Germany. I said there was no possible doubt whatever that he could and would, provided Germany cooperated with him. Herr Hitler asked me whether England would be willing to accept an alliance with Germany. I said, speaking personally, I did not exclude such a possibility provided the developments of events justified it.

13. Conversation was conducted in quite a friendly atmosphere, in spite of absolute firmness on both sides. Herr Hitler's general attitude was that he could give me no real reply until he had carefully studied the answer of his Majesty's Government. He said that he would give me a written reply tomorrow, Tuesday. I told him that I would await it, but was quite prepared to wait. Herr Hitler's answer was that there was no time to wait.

14. I did not refer to the question of a truce. I shall raise that point tomorrow if his answer affords any real ground for hope that he is prepared to abandon war for the sake of British understanding.

Realizing the futility of all attempts to maintain peace, the Polish Government decided to strengthen its military preparedness by ordering general mobilization on August 29th.

This order was delayed one day at the request of the British and French Ambassadors. This concession was but one more proof of Poland's good will and desire for peace. The cost to Poland was great; on the day war broke it was possible to mobilize only 50 per cent of the nation's armed forces.

Minutes of Polish Vice-Minister Mr. Szembek's conversation with Sir Howard Kennard and Mr. Noel, Warsaw, August 29, 1939, 4 p.m.

On M. Beck's instruction I saw the British and French Ambassadors together, and made the following statement:

"In face of the German troop concentrations on our frontier, their entry into Slovakia, the incessant frontier incidents, and the aggressive moves within the territory of Danzig, there is no doubt of the Third Reich's aggressive intentions in regard to Poland. In these circumstances, and taking into account the warnings received from most reliable sources, including that of the British Ambassador yesterday, that Germany intends to make a surprise attack on Poland, the President of the Republic, on the Government's advice, has decreed a general mobilization. This step, however, only completes the military measures already taken. It is not anticipated that there will be proclamation of a state of war, and measure concomitant with normal mobilization will be reduced to a minimum. Polish policy will undergo no change."

The British Ambassador observed that the word "mobilization" would create the impression all over the world that we were embarking on war. At the present moment British-German conversations were still in progress, London was awaiting Berlin's answer, it would be highly desirable for the public announcement of mobilization to be delayed until this answer was received. The French Ambassador supported his British colleague's attitude, adding, however, that he had no objections whatever to make to the actual fact of mobilization.

Both Ambassadors asked whether an official communique would be issued on the question of mobilization. I acquainted them with the relevant text.

I told the Ambassadors that I would inform M. Beck of their attitude, and I asked them whether they wished to take down my statement in writing. They said this was not necessary. The most important thing was the actual fact of mobilization, of which they would inform their Governments. They only asked that M. Beck should be informed of their point of view as quickly as possible.

Polish Official Communique, Warsaw, August 30, 1939.

For several months past Germany has been pursuing an aggressive policy towards Poland. The Press campaign, threatening statements by leading German statesmen, systematic provocation by means of frontier incidents, and the ever-increasing concentration of German mobilized military forces on the frontiers of Poland, are a manifest proof of this.

The recent activity within the territory of the Free City of Danzig directed against the irrefutable rights and interests of Poland, also Germany's manifest territorial designs upon the Polish State, leave no doubt of the fact that Poland is threatened.

All attempts at conciliation, either by highly placed personages making efforts to maintain the peace, or by the Governments of Poland's Allies, who are animated by the same spirit, have always received the full approval of the Polish Government, but so far have met with no response from the Government of Germany.

Taking these facts into consideration, and above all that of the entry of German troops into a neighboring State, that of Slovakia, the Polish Government, having taken certain internal measures, are to-day obliged to add to their security by taking the defensive military measures demanded by the situation.

The policy of the Polish Government, which neither has been nor is animated by any

aggressive designs against any State whatsoever, remains unchanged. The desire for loyal collaboration with all States, a desire which lately found expression in the reply made by the President of the United States, is the best testimony to the tendencies of Polish policy.

The neutral countries decided on their part to intervene with the Polish and German Governments offering their good offices. The Queen of the Netherlands and the King of the Belgians made on August 29 a last attempt to save the peace.

This proposal was gratefully accepted by Poland, as had been the previous one made by President Roosevelt, but was rejected by the Germans.

Nevertheless, anxious to keep up the appearance of good will before the world, Hitler, at the insistence of Great Britain and France, agreed to direct negotiations with Poland.

The Polish Government's attitude was clear: it was ready to conduct normal diplomatic conversations, yet it definitely refused to negotiate in the way the Nazis tried out on the Austrian Premier Schuschnigg and on the Czechoslovak President Hacha.

Poland's stand was clearly reflected in the telegrams exchanged between the Ambassadors of Great Britain in Warsaw and Berlin and the British Foreign Secretary Viscount Halifax.

H. Kennard to Viscount Halifax, (Telegraphic) received in London 10 a.m. Warsaw, August 30, 1939.

I feel sure that it would be impossible to induce the Polish Government to send M. Beck or any other representative immediately to Berlin to discuss a settlement on basis proposed by Herr Hitler. They would certainly sooner fight and perish rather than submit to such humiliation, especially after examples of Czecho-Slovakia, Lithuania and Austria.

2. I would suggest that if negotiations are to be between equals it is essential that they should take place in some neutral country or even possibly Italy, and that the basis for any negotiations should be some compromise between the clearly defined limit of March proposals on the German side and status quo on the Polish side.

3. Considering that the Polish Government, standing alone and when they were largely unprepared for war, refused the March terms it would surely be impossible for them to agree to proposals which appear to go beyond the March terms now that they have Great Britain as their ally, France has confirmed her support and world public opinion is clearly in favor of direct negotiations on equal terms and is behind Poland's resistance to a dictated settlement.

4. I am, of course, expressing no views to the Polish Government, nor am I communicating to them Herr Hitter's reply till I receive instructions which I trust will be without delay.

Viscount Halifax to Sir N. Henderson, Berlin, (Telegraphic) Foreign Office, August 30, 1939, 6.50 p.m.

We understand that German Government are insisting that a Polish representative with full powers must come to Berlin to receive German proposals.

2. We cannot advise Polish Government to comply with this procedure, which is wholly unreasonable.

3. Could you not suggest to German Government that they adopt the normal procedure, when their proposals are ready, of inviting Polish Ambassador to call and

handing proposals to him for transmission to Warsaw and inviting suggestions as to conduct of negotiations.

4. German Government have been good enough to promise they will communicate proposals also to His Majesty's Government. If latter think they offer reasonable basis they can be counted on to do their best in Warsaw to facilitate negotiations.

Poland's immediate reaction and her willingness to undertake all effort in order to avoid the outbreak of the war is seen in the following documents:

Statement in writing handed by Mr. Beck to Sir Howard Kennard, Warsaw, August 31, 1939, 12 noon.

In reply to the question addressed by His Majesty's Government to the Polish Government last night, regarding our attitude towards the possibility of negotiations with the German Government, I have the honor to communicate the following:

(1) Polish Government confirm their readiness, as has previously been expressed, for a direct exchange of views with the German Government on the basis proposed by British Government and communicated by Lord Halifax's telegram of August 28 addressed to the British Ambassador at Warsaw.

(2) Polish Government are also prepared on a reciprocal basis to give a formal guarantee that in the event of negotiations taking place Polish troops will not violate the frontiers of the German Reich provided a corresponding guarantee is given regarding non-violation of frontiers of Poland by troops of the German Reich.

(3) In the present situation it is also essential to create a simple provisional modus vivendi in the Free City of Danzig.

(4) As regards the suggestions communicated to Polish Government on August 28 through the intermediary of the British Ambassador at Warsaw, an explanation of what the British Government understands by international guarantee would be required in regard to relations between Poland and the German Reich. In default of an answer to this fundamental question the Polish Government are obliged completely to reserve their attitude towards this matter until such time as full explanations are received.

(5) Polish Government express hope that in the event of conversation with the German Reich being initiated, they will continue to be able to take advantage of good offices of His Majesty's Government.

Mr. Beck to Mr. Lipski (Berlin), Warsaw, August 31, 1939, 12.40 p.m.

With reference to your reports, please request the Minister for Foreign Affairs, or the Secretary of State, for an interview and inform him as follows: Last night the Polish Government were informed by the British Government of an exchange of views with the Reich Government as to a possibility of direct negotiations between the Polish and the German Governments.

The Polish Government are favorably considering the British Government's suggestion, and will make them a formal reply on the subject during the next few hours at the latest.

On the previous day the British Ambassador Kennard went to see Ribbentrop. It can be clearly seen from their conversation that Germany had decided to attack Poland and did not even attempt to conceal it.

Sir N. Henderson, British Ambassador in Berlin, to Viscount Halifax, (Telegraphic, received in London 9.30 a.m., August 31) Berlin, August 30, 1939.

I told Herr von Ribbentrop this evening that His Majesty's Government found it difficult to advise Polish Government to accept procedure adumbrated in German reply, and suggested that he should adopt normal contact, i.e., that when German proposals were ready to invite Polish Ambassador to call and to hand him proposals for transmission to his Government with a view to immediate opening of negotiations. I added that if basis afforded prospect of settlement His Majesty's Government could be counted upon to do their best in Warsaw to temporize negotiations.

2. Herr von Ribbentrop's reply was to produce a lengthy document which he read out in German aloud at top speed. Imagining that he would eventually hand it to me I did not attempt to follow too closely the sixteen or more articles which it contained. Though I cannot therefore guarantee accuracy the main points were: restoration of Danzig to Germany; southern boundary of Corridor to be line Marienwerder, Graudenz, Bromberg, Schoenlanke; plebiscite to be held in the Corridor on basis of population on 1st January, 1919, absolute majority to decide; international commission of British, French, Italian and Russian members to police the Corridor and guarantee reciprocal communications with Danzig and Gdynia pending result of the plebiscite; Gdynia to be reserved to Poland; Danzig to be purely commercial city and demilitarized.

3. When I asked Herr von Ribbentrop for text of these proposals in accordance with understanding in the German reply of yesterday, he asserted that it was now too late as Polish representative had not arrived in Berlin by midnight.

4. I observed that to treat matter in this way meant that request for Polish representative to arrive in Berlin on 30th August constituted, in fact, an ultimatum in spite of what he and Herr Hitler had assured me yesterday. This he denied, saying that idea of an ultimatum was figment of my imagination. Why then, I asked, could he not adopt normal procedure and give me copy of proposals and ask Polish Ambassador to call on him, just as Herr Hitler had summoned me a few days ago and hand them to him for communication to Polish Government? In the most violent terms Herr von Ribbentrop said that he would never ask the Ambassador to visit him. He hinted that if Polish Ambassador asked him for interview it might be different. I said that I would naturally inform my Government so at once. Whereupon he said while those were his personal views he would bring all that I had said to Herr Hitler's notice. It was for Chancellor to decide.

5. We parted on that note, but I must tell you that Herr von Ribbentrop's whole demeanor during an unpleasant interview was aping Herr Hitler at his worst. He inveighed incidentally against Polish mobilization, but I retorted that it was hardly surprising since Germany had also mobilized as Herr Hitler himself had admitted to me yesterday.

At the eleventh hour the Polish Ambassador in Berlin was still trying to save peace. He offered to negotiate but refused to obey German orders.

The Polish Embassy in Berlin to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, August 31, 1939, 3.15 p.m.

In accordance with instructions received, M. Lipski asked, at 1 p.m., for an interview with the Minister for Foreign Affairs. At 3 p.m. the Under Secretary of State, M. von Weizsacker rang up the Ambassador personally, asking him whether he wanted to see the Minister for Foreign Affairs as a special plenipotentiary or in some other capacity.

M. Lipski replied that he was asking for an interview in his capacity of Ambassador to remit a communication from his Government.

M. von Weizsacker took note of the information and said he would pass it on to M. von Ribbentrop.

Mr. Lipski to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Berlin, August 31, 1939, Received at 10.30 p.m.

I was received by M. von Ribbentrop at 6.30 p.m. I carried out my instructions. M. von Ribbentrop asked if I had special plenipotentiary powers to undertake negotiations. I said no. He then asked whether I had been informed that on London's suggestion the German Government had expressed their readiness to negotiate directly with a delegate of the Polish Government, furnished with the requisite full powers, who was to have arrived on the preceding day, August 30. I replied that I had no direct information on the subject. In conclusion M. von Ribbentrop repeated that he had thought I would be empowered to negotiate. He would communicate my demarche to the Chancellor.

This was the end of diplomatic discussions.

While His Holiness the Pope was writing his dramatic appeal for peace, the German bombs were already falling on Polish towns and villages.

Mr. Zawadowski, Polish Vice-Commissioner General in Danzig, to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Danzig, August 31, 1939, 10.30 p.m.

We have received information from an authoritative source that detachments of German troops from East Prussia have crossed the German-Danzig frontier.

Major Sucharski, Commander of Polish Munitions Base at Westerplatte (Danzig), to Naval Headquarters at Gdynia, Westerplatte, September 1, 1939, 4:50 a.m.

At 4.45 a.m. the battleship Schleswig-Holstein began an intensive shelling of Westerplatte. The bombardment continues.

Communique No. I issued by Polish Commander-in-Chief's Staff Headquarters, September 1, 1939.

On September 1, 1939, in the early morning, Germany invaded our territory, by a surprise attack from the air and on land, without a declaration of war.

Activities of the German Air Force in the early hours of September 1:

The German Air Force carried out a series of raids on many points over the whole of Polish territory. German airmen bombed Augustow, Nowy Dwor, Ostrow Mazowiecki, Tczew, Puck, Zambrow, Radomsko, Torun, Kutno, Tunel, Krakow, Grodno, Trzebinia, Gdynia, Jaslo, Tomaszow Mazowiecki, and Katowice. In the towns bombed from the air there are killed and wounded among the civilian population.

Near Kutno an evacuation train was machine-gunned and bombed from the air. _At Grodno the Catholic Church was damaged, at Biala Podlaska an Orthodox Church. Reports of further bombing are coming in.

In the Danzig area a strong air attack on Gdynia is developing. The town has been exposed to bombing all day today.

Enemy losses: Altogether 16 German aircraft have been brought down today.

Our own losses: Two aircraft.

Land Operations: Simultaneously with the air attacks the German land forces opened operations, invading our territory at various points.

The frontier battles are continuing. The fiercest struggle is going on in Silesia. So far we have destroyed by artillery fire an enemy armored train, capturing the tender with its crew. Several tanks have been put out of action. In various places we have taken prisoners. At Danzig three attacks on Westerplatte have been repulsed.

Mr. Beck to Mr. Raczynski (London) and Mr. Lukasiewicz (Paris), Warsaw, September 1, 1939.

(1) *Please inform the Government to which you are accredited that despite Poland's collaboration in the British initiative, which collaboration is known to the Allied Governments, German forces attacked Polish territory at dawn; simultaneously a number of localities were bombed from the air.*

(2) *The Polish Government, resolved to defend the independence and honor of Poland to the end, expresses its conviction that in accordance with the existing treaties of alliance, in this struggle it will receive immediate help from its Allies.*

Proclamation by the President of the Republic to the Polish Nation

Citizens!

During the course of last night our age-old enemy commenced offensive operations against the Polish State. I affirm this before God and History.

At this historic moment, I appeal to all citizens of the country in the profound conviction that the entire nation will rally around its Commander-in-Chief and armed forces to defend its liberty, independence and honor, and to give the aggressor a worthy answer, as has happened already more than once in the history of Polish-German relations.

The entire nation, blessed by God in its struggle for a just and sacred cause, and united with its army, will march in serried ranks to the struggle and the final victory.

IGNACE MOSCICKI

Warsaw, September 1, 1939.

Five years have elapsed from that day; five years not of waiting, but of incessant struggle. Many countries joined in the fight against Nazi supremacy and oppression but we should not forget that Poland began that struggle and that for the past five years she never laid down her arms.