APPEASEMENT RECONSIDERED: INVESTIGATING THE MYTHOLOGY OF THE 1930s

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FOREWORD

The appeasement of Nazi Germany by the western democracies during the 1930s and the subsequent outbreak of World War II have been a major referent experience for U.S. foreign policymakers since 1945. From Harry Truman's response to the outbreak of the Korean War to George W. Bush's decision to overthrow Saddam Hussein, American presidents have repeatedly affirmed the "lesson" of Munich and invoked it to justify actual or threatened uses of force. However, the conclusion that the democracies could easily have stopped Hitler before he plunged the world into war and holocaust, but lacked the will to do so, does not survive serious scrutiny. Appeasement proved to be a horribly misguided policy against Hitler, but this conclusion is clear only in hindsight—i.e., through the lens of subsequent events.

Dr. Jeffrey Record takes a fresh look at appeasement within the context of the political and military environments in which British and French leaders operated during the 1930s. He examines the nature of appeasement, the factors underlying Anglo-French policies toward Hitler from 1933 to 1939, and the reasons for the failure of those policies. He finds that Anglo-French security choices were neither simple nor obvious, that hindsight has distorted judgments on those choices, that Hitler remains without equal as a state threat, and that invocations of the Munich analogy should always be closely examined.

The Strategic Studies Institute is pleased to offer this monograph as a contribution to the national security debate over the use of force to advance the objectives of U.S. foreign policy.



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JEFFREY RECORD is a professor in the Department of Strategy and International Security at the U.S. Air Force's Air War College in Montgomery, Alabama. He has served as a pacification advisor in the Mekong Delta during the Vietnam War, Rockefeller Younger Scholar on the Brookings Institution's Defense Analysis Staff, and Senior Fellow at the Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, the Hudson Institute, and the BDM International Corporation. He also has extensive Capitol Hill experience, serving as Legislative Assistant for National Security Affairs to Senators Sam Nunn and Lloyd Bentsen, and later as a Professional Staff Member of the Senate Armed Services Committee. Dr. Record is the author of six books and a dozen monographs, including: *Dark Victory: America's Second War Against Iraq*; *Making War, Thinking History: Munich, Vietnam, and Presidential Uses of Force from Korea to Kosovo*; *Hollow Victory, A Contrary View of the Gulf War*; *The Wrong War, Why We Lost in Vietnam*; and *Bounding the Global War on Terrorism*. He received his doctorate at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies.

SUMMARY

No historical event has exerted more influence on post-World War II U.S. use-of-force decisions than the Anglo-French appeasement of Nazi Germany that led to the outbreak of the Second World War. Presidents have repeatedly cited the great lesson of the 1930s—namely, that force should be used early and decisively against rising security threats—to justify decisions for war and military intervention; some presidents have compared enemy leaders to Hitler. The underlying assumption of the so-called Munich analogy is that the democracies could and should have stopped Hitler (thereby avoiding World War II and the Holocaust) by moving against him militarily before 1939. This assumption, however, is easy to make only in hindsight and ignores the political, military, economic, and psychological contexts of Anglo-French security choices during the 1930s. Among the myriad factors constraining those choices were memories of the horrors of World War I, failure to grasp the nature of the Nazi regime and Hitler's strategic ambitions, France's military inflexibility, Britain's strategic overstretch, France's strategic dependence on Britain, guilt over the Versailles Treaty of 1919, dread of strategic bombing and misjudgment of the Nazi air threat, American isolationism, and distrust of the Soviet Union and fear of Communism.

Appeasement failed because Hitler was unappeasable. He sought not to adjust the European balance of power in Germany's favor, but rather to overthrow it. He wanted a German-ruled Europe that would have eliminated France and Britain as European powers. But Hitler was also undeterrable; he embraced war because he knew he could not get what he wanted without it. There was thus little that the democracies could do to deter Hitler from war, though Hitler expected war later than 1939. There was going to be war as long as Hitler remained in power.

A reassessment of the history of appeasement in the 1930s yields the following conclusions: first, Hitler remains unequaled as a state threat. No post-1945 threat to the United States bears genuine comparison to the Nazi dictatorship. Second, Anglo-French security choices in the 1930s were neither simple nor obvious; they

were shaped and constrained by factors ignored or misunderstood by those who retrospectively have boiled them down to a simple choice between good and evil. Third, hindsight is not 20/20 vision; it distorts. We view past events through the prism of what followed. Had Hitler dropped dead before 1939, there would have been no World War II or Holocaust, and therefore no transformation of the very term "appeasement" into a pejorative. Finally, invocations of the Munich analogy to justify the use of force are almost invariably misleading because security threats to the United States genuinely Hitlerian in scope and nature have not been replicated since 1945.

APPEASEMENT RECONSIDERED: INVESTIGATING THE MYTHOLOGY OF THE 1930s

> There was never a war in all history easier to prevent by timely action than the one which has just desolated great areas of the globe. It could have been prevented without the firing of a single shot, but no one would listen.
>
> —Winston Churchill, 1946[1]

> Appeasement in itself may be good or bad according to the circumstances. Appeasement from weakness and fear is alike futile and fatal. Appeasement from strength is magnanimous and noble, and might be the surest and only path to world peace.
>
> —Winston Churchill, 1950[2]

INTRODUCTION

No historical event has exerted more influence on post-World War II U.S. presidential use-of-force decisions than the Anglo-French appeasement of Nazi Germany that led to the outbreak of that war. The great lesson drawn from appeasement—namely, that capitulating to the demands of territorially aggressive dictatorships simply makes inevitable a later and larger war on less favorable terms—has informed virtually every major U.S. use of force since the surrender of Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan in 1945.[3] From the Harry S Truman administration's 1950 decision to fight in Korea to the George W. Bush administration's 2003 decision to invade Iraq, presidents repeatedly have relied on the Munich analogy to inform themselves on what to do in a perceived security crisis; they have also employed that analogy as a tool for mobilizing public opinion for military action. Indeed, presidents who most often invoked the Munich analogy to describe a security threat believed the analogy to be valid and understood its power as an opinion swayer.

As the United States approached its second war with Iraq, neo-conservatives and other war proponents cited the consequences of the democracies' appeasement of the burgeoning Nazi menace during

the 1930s and asserted that war was necessary to remove Saddam Hussein before he acquired nuclear weapons, with which he would threaten and even attack the United States. Munich's great lesson, they argued, was to move early and decisively against rising security threats. World War II could have been avoided had the democracies been prepared to stop Hitler's remilitarization of the Rhineland in 1936 or to fight for Czechoslovakia in 1938; instead, they did nothing when three German army battalions crossed into the Rhineland's left bank, and they handed over vital chunks of Czech territory. With each act of appeasement, Hitler's appetite grew. Thus military action against a prenuclear Saddam Hussein in 2003 would be much easier and less risky than war with a nuclear Saddam later on. War with Saddam was inevitable, as it was with Hitler, so it was better to have it earlier on more favorable terms rather than later on less favorable ones.

Neo-conservative Richard Perle, the influential chairman of the Defense Policy Board, argued in an August 2002 interview with the *London Daily Telegraph*:

> [An] action to remove Saddam could precipitate the very thing we are most anxious to prevent: his use of chemical and biological weapons. But the danger that springs from his capabilities will only grow as he expands his arsenal. A preemptive strike against Hitler at the time of Munich would have meant an immediate war, as opposed to the one that came later. Later was much worse.[4]

In that same month, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, in a television interview in which arose the issue of evidence of Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction, opined, "Think of all the countries that said, 'Well, we don't have enough evidence.' *Mein Kampf* had been written. Hitler had indicated what he intended to do. Maybe he won't attack us. . . . Well, there are millions of dead because of those miscalculations." Later, he added, "Maybe Winston Churchill was right. Maybe that lone voice expressing concerns about what was happening was right." As early as January 2002, President George W. Bush was talking the talk of preventive war as a means of dealing with a rising enemy bent on domination. "Time is not on our side," he said in his State of the Union Address. "I

will not wait on events while dangers gather. I will not stand by as peril draws closer and closer. The United States will not permit the world's most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world's most dangerous weapons."[5]

For neo-conservatives who have provided the intellectual foundation of U.S. foreign policy since September 11, 2001 (9/11) (enshrined in President Bush's September 2002 *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*), the failure of the democracies to stop Hitler in the 1930s remains the primary instruction on both international politics and America's role in the world. In his trenchant assessment of the propositions that comprise the essence of neo-conservative thinking on foreign policy, Andrew J. Bacevich correctly identifies "the first and most fundamental proposition" to be "a theory of history" based on "two large truths" originating from the decade of the 1930s—namely, that "evil is real," and that "for evil to prevail requires only one thing: for those confronted by it to flinch from duty."[6] From this proposition flows the imperative of possessing irresistible military power and a willingness to use it; the identification of the United States as the only power capable of standing up to evil; and the necessary dedication of the United States to the mission of removing evil from the world. As President Bush declared just 3 days after the 9/11 attacks, "our responsibility to history is already clear: To answer these attacks and rid the world of evil."[7]

Presidential invocation of the Munich analogy as an argument for use of force began with the outbreak of the Korean War. For Truman, the analogy dictated U.S. intervention: "Communism was acting in Korea just as Hitler and the Japanese had acted 10, 15, 20 years earlier."[8] A year after the Korean War ended, Dwight D. Eisenhower, citing the "domino effects" of a Communist victory in Indochina on the rest of Southeast Asia, invoked Munich in an appeal for Anglo-American military action: "We failed to halt Hirohito, Mussolini, and Hitler by not acting in unity and in time. . . . May it not be that [we] have learned something from that lesson?"[9] John F. Kennedy cited the Munich analogy during the Cuban Missile Crisis, warning that the "1930s taught us a clear lesson: aggressive conduct, if allowed to go unchecked, ultimately leads to war."[10]

The analogy indisputably propelled the United States into Vietnam. Lyndon Johnson told his Secretary of Defense, Robert McNamara, that if the United States pulled out of Vietnam, "The dominoes would fall and a part of the world would go communist."[11] Johnson later told historian Doris Kearns, "Everything I knew about history told me that if I got out of Vietnam and let Ho Chi Minh run through the streets of Saigon, then I'd be doing exactly what Chamberlain did . . . I'd be giving a fat reward to aggression."[12] Richard Nixon also believed Munich applied to Vietnam. In his memoirs, he approvingly quoted Churchill's condemnation of the 1938 Munich Agreement and then went on to conclude that "what had been true of the betrayal of Czechoslovakia to Hitler in 1938 was no less true of the betrayal of South Vietnam to the communists advocated by many in 1965."[13]

Ronald Reagan saw in the Soviet Union a replay of the challenges the democracies faced in the 1930s and invoked the Munich analogy to justify a major U.S. military buildup as well as U.S. intervention in Grenada and Nicaragua. "One of the great tragedies of this century," he remarked in a 1983 speech, "was that it was only after the balance of power was allowed to erode and a ruthless adversary, Adolph Hitler, deliberately weighed the risks and decided to strike that the importance of a strong defense was realized."[14] Shortly after Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait, President George H. W. Bush, the last occupant of the White House to perform military service in World War II, declared: "If history teaches anything, it is that we must resist aggression or it will destroy our freedoms. Appeasement does not work. As was the case in the 1930s, we see in Saddam Hussein an aggressive dictator threatening his neighbors."[15]

The influence of the Munich analogy has persisted beyond the generation of decisionmakers who served in World War II. President William J. Clinton, the first president born after World War II, did not hesitate to invoke the Munich analogy against Serbian dictator Slobodan Milosevic. "What if someone had listened to Winston Churchill and stood up to Adolph Hitler earlier?" he asked shortly before going to war over Kosovo. "How many people's lives might have been saved? And how many American lives might have been saved?"[16] George W. Bush, like his father before him, painted

Saddam Hussein as an Arab Hitler bent on acquiring unstoppable power (nuclear weapons) and pursuing an agenda of aggression (domination of the Persian Gulf). On the eve of launching Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, he observed that in "the 20th century, some chose to appease murderous dictators, whose threats were allowed to grow into genocide and global war."[17]

Though presidents can and have, knowingly and unwittingly, misused the Munich analogy to describe security threats and the consequences of failing to act against them,[18] there is no gainsaying the power of that analogy to mobilize public opinion. This is so because of the catastrophic failure of the security policies Britain and France pursued vis-à-vis Germany in the 1930s. In retrospect, Anglo-French appeasement, driven by perceived military weakness and fear of war, did nothing but whet Hitler's insatiable territorial appetite (and his contempt for British and French political leadership), while simultaneously undermining the democracies' security. The result was the most destructive war in history and an enduring pejorative image of appeasement whose casting includes Nazi ideology as a self-evident blueprint of Germany's territorial aims; Neville Chamberlain as a coward and fool bent on peace at any price; Britain and France as betrayers of brave little Czechoslovakia; and Hitler as the great winner at the Munich Conference of September 1938.

This is the image of appeasement that presidents have employed to justify selection of military action over inaction in response to perceived security threats. The great strategic lesson of the 1930s, however, was drawn against a rising security threat that arguably has had no analog since the destruction of Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan. Security threats truly Hitlerian in scope are rare. What aggressor state since 1945 has possessed the combination of such territorial ambitions, military power, and willingness to gamble strategically as did Nazi Germany in Europe in 1939? Certainly not North Vietnam or Saddam Hussein's Iraq, both targets of U.S. presidential invocation of the Munich analogy. To be sure, the Soviet Union had great military power and imperial ambitions. But Stalin and his successors (Khrushchev in 1961-1962 excepted) were far more patient and cautious men than Hitler, and Soviet use of force was, in any event, checked by America's nuclear deterrent

and NATO's containment on the ground in Europe to a degree that Hitler never was in peacetime. China may turn out to be America's next great strategic rival, but the extent of her imperial ambitions in East Asia (beyond Taiwan) remains unclear. China, moreover, greatly depends on access to the American market for her economic progress and increasingly depends on oil from a Persian Gulf where U.S. military hegemony remains unchallenged.

This is not to argue that threats need be Nazi Germanic in magnitude to justify military action. Saddam Hussein's aggression against Kuwait in 1990 was unacceptable because it violated a cardinal international norm and because it challenged U.S. domination in a region of vital interest to the West. Similarly, Serbian aggression in the former Yugoslavia had to be stopped because it was genocidal and threatened NATO's integrity. The Taliban also had to be driven from power because they provided a sanctuary for the attackers of 9/11. And the United States could not stand by idly if China chose to attack Taiwan.

The problem with the invocation of Munich is its suggestion that aggressor states are inherently insatiable and that failure to act against them automatically endangers U.S. security. In fact, most aggressor states have limited territorial objectives, and in some cases satisfaction of those objectives may be of little consequence to U.S. security. North Vietnam's objectives were confined to the former French Indochina, a place of little intrinsic strategic value to the United States. Yet the administration of Lyndon Johnson painted Ho Chi Minh as the spear point of a concerted Sino-Soviet imperialism and claimed that a Communist victory in South Vietnam would topple dominoes all over Southeast Asia. Saddam Hussein was certainly Hitlerian in his brutality, recklessness, and appetite for aggression, but the military threat he posed was never a match for the power the United States could—and did in 1990-91—mobilize against him; by 2003 the Iraqi threat had been broken by 12 years of war and sanctions, though Saddam continued to run a monstrous tyranny and to defy UN demands that he account for suspected prohibited weapons stocks. There was no counterpart in the Europe of the 1930s to the superpowerdom of the United States in the Gulf over the past 2 decades. Stephen Rock observes that "Not every state that makes

demands has unlimited ambitions."[19] Unfortunately, notes Robert Jervis, "Our memories of Hitler have tended to obscure the fact that most states are unwilling to pay an exorbitant price for a chance at expansion."[20] To contend that Saddam Hussein was not Hitler is not necessarily to argue against the U.S. decision to invade Iraq; there was always a powerful moral and legal case for Saddam Hussein's overthrow, and the future course of events in Iraq and the Middle East may well determine the final judgment on the wisdom of that decision.

If it is important to understand the rarity of genuinely Hitlerian threats, it is no less important to recognize that France and Britain faced security challenges and dilemmas in the 1930s that were too daunting and complex to be distilled into the simple choice between the "good" of stopping Hitler militarily and the "evil" of appeasing him politically. Though allies in the Great War, France and Britain still did not fully trust one another (much of Britain's social elite was Germanophile, and much of its political elite was Gallophobic[21]). Until the late 1930s, moreover, London and Paris differed profoundly on how to deal with Hitler, a function in part of differing vulnerabilities to German land power, and in part of differing views on the wisdom of the 1919 Treaty of Versailles. Though Britain was more geographically secure, she faced not only a perceived direct German air threat but also increasingly threatened imperial interests in the Mediterranean and East Asia. The defense of the British Isles competed with the defense of the Empire. With respect to Nazi Germany, Britain also had to wrestle with the question of whether it could limit its liability in a future European war to the provision of naval and air power (banking on sufficient continental allies to supply the ground forces).

For its part, France, plagued by governmental instability (between 1932 and 1940 there were no fewer than 16 coalition governments in Paris[22]) and acute internal political divisions that culminated in the defeatism and collaboration of 1940, sought to "contain" Germany through a system of alliances that would confront Berlin with the prospect of a two-front war. From 1936 on, however, France never displayed the will and military capacity necessary to convince potential Eastern allies (or even Belgium, for that matter) that, in the event of war, it was prepared to defend them by attacking Germany.

Additionally, France believed it could not act alone without Britain, but Britain would not act at all until Hitler had isolated London and Paris from the rest of Europe. Given these circumstances, together with a gross overestimation of the German strategic air threat, it is hardly surprising that senior British and French military leaders throughout the period 1933-39 unanimously counseled against risking war with Germany. Going to war against contrary professional military advice is a very risky business for any democratic politician unless he has the electorate behind him, which British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain did not in 1938 but did in 1939.

Harry Hearder, in his forward to the second edition of P. M. H. Bell's *The Origins of the Second World War in Europe*, perhaps the most objective assessment of the causes of World War II published to date, rightly concludes that "a blanket condemnation" of appeasement "is too imprecise to be tenable, and, indeed, explains nothing." He further deplores the continuing influence of the appeasement myth:

> The trouble is that vague, sweeping generalizations tend to be accepted by an ill-informed public, and build themselves up into powerful myths. Such generalizations may be accepted by the media and the public for several decades after they have been discarded by most professional historians. Most journalists seem to think that the policy of appeasement was, in each of the relevant crises, cowardly and mistaken. They do not distinguish between the factors that were operative in 1936 from those operative in 1938 or again in 1939.[23]

Indeed, appeasement was never about peace at any price; had it been, neither Britain nor France would have gone to war in September 1939 over a Poland neither was in a position to defend. Appeasement was about war avoidance consistent with preservation of vital national interests.

* * * * *

This monograph: (1) examines the nature of appeasement; (2) explores the reasons why Britain and France chose to appease Nazi Germany; (3) assesses the causes of appeasement's failure; and (4) offers a judgment on the utility of the Munich analogy as an informant on the use of force.

Before turning to the nature of appeasement, however, it is critical to recognize that though Anglo-French appeasement of Nazi Germany was a horrendous mistake, decisionmakers in London and Paris during the 1930s did not know they were making "pre-World War II" decisions. On the contrary, they were struggling mightily to avoid war. We must attempt to see the security choices they faced and the decisions they made as they saw them then, not as we see them today. With historical events, as with professional football games, it is far easier to be a Monday morning quarterback than an actual Sunday afternoon quarterback in the middle of a tough game. Nor does hindsight offer 20-20 vision; hindsight refracts past events through the lens of what followed. Thus we view Munich today through the prism of World War II and the Holocaust, a perspective not available in 1938. How differently would Munich now be seen had it not been followed by war? David Potter shrewdly observes that hindsight is "the historian's chief asset *and* his main liability."[24]

THE NATURE OF APPEASEMENT

Webster's New World Dictionary and Thesaurus defines the verb "appease" as "to pacify, quiet, or satisfy, especially by giving into the demands of," and lists the following synonyms for the noun "appeasement": "amends, settlement, reparation, conciliation, compromise."[25] These terms are consistent with what most historians and international relations theorists understand to be the phenomenon of appeasement: states seeking to adjust or settle their differences by measures short of war. Stephen Rock defines appeasement as simply "the policy of reducing tensions with one's adversary by removing the causes of conflict and disagreement,"[26] a definition echoed by Gordon Craig and Alexander George: "the reduction of tension between [two states] by the methodical removal of the principal causes of conflict and disagreement between them."[27] To be sure, Anglo-French behavior toward Nazi Germany gave appeasement such a bad name that the term is no longer usable except as a political pejorative. Before Munich, however, observes historian Paul Kennedy, "the policy of settling international . . . quarrels by admitting and satisfying grievances through rational negotiation and compromise, thereby avoiding the resort to an armed conflict

which would be expensive, bloody, and possibly very dangerous" was generally viewed as "constructive, positive, and honorable."[28] Even after World War II, Winston Churchill, the great anti-appeaser of Hitler, declared that appeasement could be (if driven from a position of strength as opposed to weakness) "magnanimous and noble," and perhaps "the surest and only path to world peace."

But the success or failure of appeasement depends on more than whether the appeasing state is dealing from a position of strength or weakness. Much depends on the nature and objectives of the state toward which appeasement is directed. A state bent on war or possessing territorial or ideological objectives that cannot be satisfied short of war is most unlikely to be appeasable (though it may be deterrable); conversely, a state seeking to avoid war and having limited objectives whose satisfaction does not threaten core security interests of the appeasing state is likely to be appeasable.

An oft-cited case of successful appeasement was Britain's appeasement of the United States from 1896 to 1903.[29] By the 1890s, the number and power of Britain's potential enemies were growing. Britain had no great power allies and faced rising imperial challenges from Germany and Russia, on top of continuing traditional tensions with France and the United States. Tensions with an industrially expanding Germany became especially acute when Berlin in 1898 decided to challenge British naval supremacy in European waters. Accordingly, Britain decided to reduce the potential demands on its military power by resolving its outstanding disputes with the United States—specifically by meeting American demands that Britain explicitly accept the Monroe Doctrine; submit British Guiana's border dispute with Venezuela to international arbitration; agree to U.S. construction, operation, and fortification of an inter-oceanic canal through Central America; and settle an Alaskan-Canadian border dispute in Washington's favor. None of these concessions involved vital British security interests, which in fact were advanced by transforming the world's greatest industrial power from a potential enemy into a friend (and later) indispensable ally. Accepting American dominance within the Western Hemisphere not only laid the foundation of U.S. entry on Britain's side in World War I; it also permitted a British naval evacuation of the Western Hemisphere for operations in the European waters.

But London's success with the Americans in the 1890s was not to be repeated with the Germans in the 1930s.

WHY APPEASEMENT?

Anglo-French appeasement of Nazi Germany in the 1930s arose from multiple, mutually reinforcing sources.

Memories of the Great War.

In 1914, the outbreak of war in Europe was greeted with great enthusiasm among the publics of the belligerents. The almost universal expectation was that the war would be short and decisive. War was still held to be a necessary and glorious enterprise—a relief from the "boredom" of peace and the "soulessness" of industrialization.[30] In 1939, the outbreak of World War II in Europe was nowhere greeted by the cheering crowds of 1914. Even in Germany there was no exaltation outside Nazi Party circles, only a sullen resignation. Across Europe the expectation was of a long and bloody war, perhaps even a repeat of the Great War. (In fact, World War II lasted 2 years longer and claimed perhaps 40 million more lives than World War I.)

It is virtually impossible to underestimate the influence of the slaughter of 1914-18 on official and public opinion in Europe during the 1920s and 1930s. "Every country was affected in some way by the First World War, and its legacy hung like a shadow over international relations during the inter-war period," observes Frank McDonough. "Over 60 million Europeans fought in the war, 7 million died, and 21 million were disabled or seriously wounded. Over 4 million women lost husbands, and 8 million children lost fathers."[31] The war had an especially profound impact on opinion in the primary appeasing power of the 1930s, Britain, where vivid memories of the lost comrades and loved ones and the special horrors of trench warfare bred an electorate of which significant segments were either pacifist or unwilling to contemplate the use of force outside the authority of the collective security framework of the League of Nations. In the case of Neville Chamberlain, who became prime minister in 1937

and whose name has become synonymous with appeasement, there was a simple inability to imagine that any European statesman, even Hitler, could or would wish to risk a repetition of the Great War. In the 1920s and 1930s, observes P. M. H. Bell,

> it appeared to most statesmen in Britain and France that war was highly unlikely to pay. They had come to regard the last war, of 1914-18, as a calamity, involving human, material, and financial losses which should not again be incurred short of the utmost necessity. They were satisfied powers anxious to preserve the status quo; but they also wanted peace and quiet. They would eventually fight in self-defense and to prevent the status quo from being completely overthrown; but their optimism about the outcome of war was at a low ebb, and their belief in war as an instrument of policy was weak.[32]

Failure to Grasp the Nature of the Nazi Regime and Hitler's Strategic Ambitions.

Among the sources of appeasement, misjudgment of Hitler's intentions was perhaps paramount. British leaders, most notably Chamberlain, were especially guilty on this count. Yet even after the war, the eminent British historian A. J. P. Taylor sought to prove that Hitler was a "normal" European leader practicing the opportunism of *realpolitik* on behalf of liberating Germany from the shackles of Versailles and restoring Germany to a political status commensurate with its population and industrial power. "Hitler was no more wicked and unscrupulous than many other contemporary statesmen." Hitler's professed ideology consisted of nothing but "day-dreams," and Hitler ended up in Russia because "his judgment was corrupted by easy victories," not because he really believed it was Germany's racial destiny to carve out massive *lebensraum* (living space) in the Slavic East.[33]

Taylor's thesis was never convincing and has been thoroughly discredited by subsequent analysis.[34] The thesis could never account for Nazi behavior in Russia or the Holocaust; more generally, it willfully ignored the power of ideas in international politics. Much of Hitler's foreign policy *was* rooted in the foreign policies of Imperial Germany and the Weimar Republic, but Hitler's racial

and territorial objectives in Europe, to say nothing of his profound craving for war, lay beyond the boundaries of pre-Nazi German foreign policy.[35] Hitler's ideology defined the scope of his territorial ambitions in Europe, especially in the East. To be sure, he was a supreme opportunist and sought to revise the Versailles Treaty in so far as it held Germany down militarily and "imprisoned" much of the German nation outside the German state. But revisionism was but an enabling precondition for action on a much larger agenda of racial conquest and enslavement. "Race, far from being a mere propagandistic slogan, was the very rock on which the Nazi Church was built," observes Norman Rich in his masterful assessment of Hitler's war aims.[36]

Hitler was hardly the first political leader to marry tactical opportunism and strategic vision, but strategic vision he manifestly possessed. Historian Gerhard Weinberg correctly believes that Hitler had "a clearly formulated set of ideas on major issues of foreign policy" and "was able to impress his ideas on events rather than allow events and realities to reshape his ideas."[37] Hitler was a racial Darwinist, and his ideas centered on Aryan (Nordic) racial superiority and the imperative of carving out additional agriculturally productive *lebensraum* for the Aryan community between the Vistula and the Urals. Racial survival depended on racial expansion and racial expansion depended on spacial expansion. But spacial expansion also meant inevitable war, since those inferior races occupying the vital living space could not be expected to voluntarily submit to the new racial order. And since war was inevitable, it necessarily became a preferred policy option rather than a measure of last resort.[38] Thus Hitler was not just another conservative German nationalist. Though many conservative nationalists supported Hitler, "Nazism went further," notes P. M. H. Bell.

> The restoration of the old German Empire, even at its furthest extent, was not enough; and conservative nationalists found that their country was launched on a war of racial conquest with unlimited objectives that was almost certain to end with disaster. At different times from 1937 onwards, and with varying degrees of commitment, numbers of German conservatives parted company with the Nazi regime; though they failed to check its growing momentum.[39]

But this is all clear in hindsight. At the time, most observers dismissed Hitler's ideological rantings on race and *lebensraum* as grist for domestic political consumption. The highly respected economist, Dr. Hjalmar Schacht, a traditional conservative who was sacked by Hitler as Reichsbank president in 1939 for opposing Germany's unbridled rearmament and who was arrested and jailed in the wake of the July 20, 1944, attempt on Hitler's life, told an interviewer after the war that, during the 1920s and early 1930s, "No one took [Hitler's] anti-Semitism seriously. We thought it was a political propaganda issue and would be forgotten once he got into power."[40] Taken at face value, Hitler's vision of an Aryan empire stretching to the Urals was nothing short of fantastic; it would require the conquest of Eastern Europe, destruction of the Soviet Union, and "ethnic cleansing on a grotesque scale," objectives beyond Germany's strengths and unacceptable to the European balance of power.[41]

Ravings aside, was not treaty revision Hitler's real objective? Until March 1939, when Hitler invaded the non-Germanic rump of Czechoslovakia, it was quite plausible to believe that Hitler's military ambitions were limited to rearmament and his territorial ambitions to Germanic Europe. Most British leaders were convinced that it had been a strategic mistake to have imposed the harsh Versailles Treaty on Germany, and that the treaty was in any event unenforceable; with few exceptions they "insisted on placing German aspirations within the traditional European continental balance of power, and within the system of national self-determination for all people established by [Woodrow] Wilson in 1918."[42] On this basis, Hitler *was* appeasable. Was it not ridiculous to think that Germany could be kept in a permanent state of disarmament (including the Rhineland's demilitarization) while the rest of Europe was armed? Did not Germany have a right to equality in this regard? Until 1939, Hitler's territorial demands (union with Austria and acquisition of Czechoslovakia's Sudetenland) suggested no appetite for further expansionism and its attendant risk of general war.

Indeed, Czechoslovakia itself was an affront to the principle of self-determination. Cobbled together in the name of self-determination from ashes of the Hapsburg Empire, it was less a national state than a collection of territorially based nationalities—3,250,000 Germans (concentrated in the western and northern Czech border

areas with Germany), 6,500,000 Czechs (in Bohemia and Moravia), about 3,000,000 Slovaks (mostly in the eastern half of the country), plus 700,000 Hungarians, 500,000 Ukrainians, and 60,000 Poles.[43] The Czechs, who dominated the country's political and military leadership, were a minority in their own country. Czechoslovakia proved to be as unsustainable as the former Yugoslavia: after the Cold War, both jerry-rigged Hapsburg successor states disintegrated, Czechoslovakia peacefully into the successor states of the Czech Republic and Slovakia (the Russians had expelled the Sudeten Germans in 1945), and Yugoslavia in an orgy of ethnic slaughter. No British government in September 1938 would have been prepared to go to war with Germany on the wrong side of the principle of self-determination and especially on behalf of a state to which Britain had no defense obligation.

Neville Chamberlain believed that Hitler could be sated by territorial concessions, that the dictator, like Bismark before him, understood the limits of German power, and that he could not possibly want to plunge his country and the rest of Europe into another general war. Chamberlain did not understand, as historian Paul Kennedy notes, "that Hitler was fundamentally *unappeasable* and determined upon a future territorial order which small-scale adjustments could never satisfy."[44] More profoundly he failed to understand, as did Winston Churchill, that the very nature of the Nazi regime barred any possibility of any long-term working strategic relationship with British democracy.[45]

That said, Chamberlain was a forceful leader who dominated his cabinet; indeed, his "dramatic offer to fly to Berchtesgaden [to meet Hitler] effectively removed from Hitler's hands the orchestration and control of the [Czech] crisis."[46] (The 69-year-old prime minister had never flown before.) He was not prepared to accept a German-dominated Europe; indeed, it had long been a cardinal principle of British statecraft to align against continental powers bent on continental domination. When Hitler betrayed his promise of no further territorial demands at Munich by invading the rest of Czechoslovakia in March 1939, Chamberlain and French Premier Edouard Daladier promptly extended defense guarantees to Poland, Hitler's obvious next target. The British guarantee was extraordinary

because Britain was in no position to provide even indirect military assistance to Poland. The guarantee was an attempt at deterrence via the threat of general war.

Unfortunately, by the summer of 1939, the credibility of such a threat had been vitiated by the record of Anglo-French inaction over the Rhineland's remilitarization, inaction over the Austrian *Anschluss*, and the sell-out of Czechoslovakia (which enjoyed a mutual defense treaty with France). Hitler did not believe the British and French would go to war over Poland. In response to expressed concerns that they might, Hitler told his assembled generals on the eve of the invasion of Poland, "Our enemies are worms. I saw them at Munich."[47] Additionally, Hitler simply could not accept the possibility that the British "wanted to fight for a country they could not save."[48]

Stephen Rock, in his path-breaking assessment, *Appeasement in International Politics*, concludes that appeasement is an appropriate policy only under two basic conditions:

> First, the adversary must not be unalterably committed to the behavior the appeasing state seeks to modify. The use of force, for example, if contemplated by the opponent, must be viewed as instrumental to the acquisition of a particular objective, not as an essential end in and of itself. Second, the adversary must be susceptible to inducements that is [sic] within the political and material capacity of the appeaser to make. If the adversary is motivated by opportunity/greed, this implies that there are limits to its demands; if motivated by insecurity, it implies that leaders are not impervious to the reassuring effects of an appeasement policy. The latter condition is most likely to be met when the adversary's insecurity is primarily a function of the appeaser's recent actions, rather than political leaders' ideology, worldview, or paranoid mentality.[49]

Against Hitler in the 1930s, neither of these conditions was satisfied—or satisfiable.

France's Military Inflexibility.

The French suffered fewer illusions about Hitler's intentions in Europe,[50] but they had, even before 1933, voluntarily stripped themselves of a critical hallmark of great power status: a willingness and capacity to attack other great powers. Indeed, next to mis-

judging Hitler's intentions in Europe, the second greatest source of appeasement was France's strategic self-paralysis. Determined to avoid the horrendous blood losses of 1914-18, alarmed by France's growing industrial and demographic inferiority to Germany, shackled by a 1-year term of service for conscripts, and convinced of the tactical and strategic superiority of the defense over the offense, the French General Staff embraced a rigid defensive military doctrine and a reserve mobilization-dependent army that precluded offensive military action into German territory.[51] The French would await a German attack behind the Maginot Line, a formidable line of fortifications that conserved French manpower, while mobilizing the full strength of their army. The peacetime French army was, in fact, little more than a skeleton on which the wartime force mobilized; it lacked a standing mobile strike force.

There was nothing inherently wrong with this force posture (except the inexplicable failure of the French to extend the Maginot Line along the Franco-Belgian border after the Belgians dissolved their mutual defense alliance with France). The problem was that a purely defensive military posture did not support France's diplomatic strategy; on the contrary, it completely undercut that strategy.

In seeking to deter a German attack by confronting Berlin with the prospect of a two-front war, France sought allies in the East—Russia, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, and Yugoslavia—that could tie down German forces that otherwise could be thrown at France. Yet for such Eastern allies, France's value as an ally depended on France's willingness and ability to attack Germany in the West, thereby tying down forces that would otherwise be available for Eastern employment. Observes Henry Kissinger: "None of the new states of Eastern Europe stood a chance of defending themselves against a revisionist Germany, either through their own efforts or in combination with each other. Their only hope was that France could deter German aggression by threatening to march into the Rhineland."[52] Yet as General Maurice Gamelin, the Chief of the French General Staff, confessed after Germany's military reoccupation of the Rhineland in 1936, "The idea of sending a French expeditionary corps into the Rhineland, even in a more or less symbolic form, is unrealistic. . . . our military system does not give us this possibility.

Our active army is only the nucleus of the mobilized national army. . . . None of our units are capable of being placed instantly on a complete war footing."[53]

In the Inter-War period France had created, in the words of Jean-Baptiste Duroselle, the great French historian of French diplomacy during the 1930s, "*two contradictory security systems*. . . . a [political]system of Eastern alliances and an alliance with Belgium . . . [and] a *defensive* [military] posture preparing a vast mobilization behind a fortified frontier."[54] Both deterrence and coercive diplomacy rest on credibly threatened force, and France lacked the political will and military capacity to make credible threats of force. French diplomacy called for a military hammer, but the French military provided only an anvil.

In this regard, Hitler's military reoccupation of the Rhineland in March 1936 was a much greater strategic disaster for the democracies than the sellout of Czechoslovakia in September 1938, but not because the Rhineland remilitarization blocked a French attack into Germany; France, as we have seen, had no intention of attacking Germany even through an undefended Rhineland. The disaster lay in the irreparable blow to French prestige. French failure to fire a single shot at token German military forces entering territory so vital to France's security advertised France to the rest of the Continent as a feckless security partner. French inaction reinforced Belgium's decision to drop its alliance with France in favor of neutrality,[55] exposing France to the very German attack that was delivered through Belgium 4 years later; it encouraged Mussolini, who in thwarting a Berlin-sponsored Nazi coup in Austria 2 years earlier had handed Hitler a major foreign policy defeat,[56] to move closer to the German dictator; it left Austria exposed to virtually certain German annexation, thereby compromising Czechoslovakia's defense; and it undermined the Eastern allies' confidence in France. The Rhineland debacle even prompted Pope Pius XI to tell the French ambassador that, "Had you ordered the immediate advance of 200,000 men into the zone the Germans had occupied, you would have done everyone a very great favor."[57]

But it was not just what France lost in the Rhineland; it was also what Hitler gained. Hitler later admitted that the first "48 hours after

the march into the Rhineland were the most nerve-racking of my life" because if French forces had entered the Rhineland in response, "we would have had to withdraw with our tails between our legs, for the military resources at our disposal would have been wholly inadequate for even a moderate resistance."[58] As it was, concluded William L. Shirer:

> Hitler's successful gamble in the Rhineland brought him a victory more staggering and more fatal in its immense consequences than could be comprehended at the time. At home it fortified his popularity and his power, raising them to heights which no German ruler of the past had ever enjoyed. . . . It taught [his generals] that in foreign affairs and even in military affairs his judgment was superior to theirs. They had feared that the French would fight; he knew better. And finally, and above all, the Rhineland occupation, small as it was as a military operation, opened the way, as only Hitler (and Churchill, alone, in England) seemed to realize, to vast new opportunities in a Europe which was not only shaken but whose strategic situation was irrevocably changed by the parading of three German battalions across the Rhine bridges.[59]

The foundation of French appeasement was military incapacity to act against Germany. This incapacity was inexcusable, given that France was, unlike Britain, directly menaced overland by Germany, suffered fewer illusions about Nazi ambitions in Europe, required allies in Eastern Europe, possessed the largest army in Europe (upon mobilization), and was far less strategically stressed than Britain by threatened imperial defense obligations.

That said, it is important to recognize that both French and international military opinion had considerable confidence that France could put up a stiff defense against a German invasion—that French defenses were sufficiently strong to force Germany into a protracted war which the German economy would be ill prepared to sustain. There was a general belief in Britain and France that another world war would be a long attritional contest in which Germany would be worn down to the point of exhaustion by superior Allied resources (which, in fact, proved to be the case, though not for France). Indeed, a war of attrition, it was believed, was the only strategy available to inflict a decisive military defeat on Germany. The stunning blitzkrieg of May-June 1940 was foreseen by no one,

including the Germans, who in the event were surprised by the speed and totality of the Allied collapse. Nor was it foreseen that Hitler would conquer sufficient resources in Europe to deny Britain and France any chance of victory through attrition. Even Churchill understood, after the fall of France in June 1940, that the British empire had no hope of defeating Hitler absent Soviet and American entry into the war (which Hitler promptly supplied in June and December 1941, respectively). Indeed, given Britain's strategic position after the fall of Dunkirk, cold-blooded realism would have dictated a settlement of the war with Germany (London's recognition of Germany's domination of the Continent in exchange for Berlin's guarantee of the British Empire). Interest in such a settlement was present within Churchill's cabinet in the wake of Dunkirk, and postwar historians who have sought to rehabilitate Chamberlain's reputation have argued that Churchill's decision to fight on was an egregious mistake because it doomed Britain to loss of empire and postwar strategic dependence on the United States.[60]

The twin convictions that the German economy could not sustain a war of attrition and that Britain and France in alliance had a good chance of imposing such a war on Germany in the event of hostilities account in large measure for the lack of enthusiasm of traditional German nationalists, including senior army leaders, for any threatened or actual military action that risked general war. The convictions also underpin the Anglo-French decision to go to war with Germany in September 1939; states are not in the habit of voluntarily entering wars they believe they will lose, and there was little reason for Britain and France to believe that Germany could defeat them outright. Neither London nor Paris wanted a war with Germany, but they were finally persuaded they had to fight one.

Britain's Strategic Overstretch.

If French military credibility was compromised by bad strategy, Britain's was undercut by a multiplicity of military obligations that far exceeded her capacity to act upon them. World War I had greatly weakened Britain's financial power though she inherited even greater imperial obligations as a result of the war's destruction

of the German and Turkish empires; during the 1930s, Britain still controlled a quarter of the world but with only 9-10 percent of its manufacturing strength and war production potential.[61] Yet as the 1930s progressed, Britain faced a rising German threat in Europe, a mounting Japanese threat in the Far East, and an expanding Italian threat in the Mediterranean—Britain's vital imperial line of communication to India and the Far East via Gibraltar, Malta, and the Suez Canal. Small wonder that in 1935 the Committee of Imperial Defense (CID) concluded:

> We consider it to be a cardinal requirement of our national and imperial security that our foreign policy should be so conducted as to avoid . . . a situation in which we might be confronted simultaneously with the hostility, open or veiled, of Japan in the Far East, Germany in the West, and any power on the main line of communication between the two. . . . [W]e cannot foresee the time when our defense forces will be strong enough to safeguard our territory, trade and vital interests against Germany, Italy and Japan simultaneously. We cannot, therefore, exaggerate the importance, from the point of view of Imperial defense, of any political or international action that can be taken to reduce the numbers of our potential enemies or to gain the support of potential allies.[62]

The call to reduce the numbers of Britain's potential enemies was a call to appease Germany or Italy or Japan in order to free up military resources to deal with those who remained unappeased; it was a call that was hardly unreasonable especially as the German and Japanese threats greatly worsened during the 3 years separating the CID assessment and the Czech crisis of September 1938.

Chamberlain had no global military running room by the time of Munich. He certainly had no means of defending Czechoslovakia or any other Eastern European state not readily accessible by sea. In March 1938 the British Chiefs of Staff had submitted an assessment on the implications of a German attack on Czechoslovakia that concluded:

> [N]o military pressure we can exact by sea, or land or in the air can prevent Germany either from invading and overrunning Bohemia or inflicting a decisive defeat on the Czechoslovakian army. If politically it is deemed necessary to restore Czechoslovakia's lost integrity, this aim will entail war with Germany, and her defeat may mean a prolonged struggle. In

> short, we can do nothing to prevent the dog getting the bone, and we have no means of making him give it up, except by killing him by a slow process of attrition and starvation.[63]

Britain was not in a position to project military power east of the Rhine; the Royal Navy was preoccupied with the Italian and Japanese threats; and the Royal Air Force was in the middle of rearming. Moreover, as Richard Overy points out, Chamberlain had been prime minister for only a year, and he was "understandably not prepared to crown that period by deliberately courting a war that all his military advisers warned him would destroy the Empire."[64]

Britain was not even in a position to contribute to the ground defense of France and the Low Countries. The British army had no defined strategic role in the 1930s outside of home and imperial defense, and it was not until after Munich that the Chamberlain government reintroduced conscription and concluded that a continental commitment for the British army was unavoidable. Until 1939, British political leaders and such influential strategic thinkers as B. H. Liddell Hart believed, or at least wanted to believe, that Britain could limit its liability in a future European war by restricting its role to the provision of naval and air power.[65] (During the Napoleonic era, noted Liddell Hart, Britain's main contribution to France's defeat had been sea power and the extension of financial credits to continental coalitions that provided the ground forces.) Determined to avoid a repetition of the trench warfare horrors of 1914-18, increasingly fearful of the German air threat (see discussion below), and persuaded that France and its Eastern allies, which from 1935 on included Czechoslovakia and nominally the Soviet Union,[66] would not require a major British ground force contribution in a war with Germany, British governments in the 1930s focused increasing defense expenditure on the Royal Air Force at the expense of the army.[67] Following Czechoslovakia's dismemberment, however, the Chamberlain cabinet moved quickly toward the view that a continental commitment could no longer be avoided; even so, it was not until February 1939 that Chamberlain finally authorized such a commitment in the form of two divisions within 21 days of the beginning of hostilities, with another two to follow within 65 days—drops in the bucket compared to a fully mobilized French army and

a rapidly expanding German army.[68] (When war came in September, the French put 84 divisions in the field; and the Germans, 103.[69])

There was, too, the problem of the Empire's self-governing dominions. Canada, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand had brought substantial resources to the British side in World War I, but their participation in another great European war could no longer be taken for granted. None of the dominions had any threatened interest in such a war unless Britain itself was attacked. They certainly had no interest in supporting a British fight over Czechoslovakia; they shared Chamberlain's view of Hitler's intentions in Europe and were greatly relieved that Chamberlain had avoided war at Munich. It was Japan, not Germany, that threatened Australia and New Zealand; and all the dominions had a shared interest in British defense spending that sustained the primacy of naval power, even at the expense of Britain's homeland air defenses. Predictably, Chamberlain did not hesitate to cite the dominions' European war-aversity to the French as a restraint on British freedom of military action.[70] But with good reason. "It would have been as preposterous as it was politically impossible for the dominions to have declared in 1938 that they would throw their armed forces into a European war," observes Michael Graham Fry.[71]

France's Strategic Dependence on Britain.

If Britain's acute strategic overstretch counseled appeasement, it also propelled France along the path of appeasement because the French believed they could not act against Hitler militarily without the British in tow. France could not hope to defeat Germany by itself. Dependence was a function of Germany's growing industrial and demographic superiority over France[72] and the capacity of the Nazi regime to mobilize German nationalism to a degree which the politically chaotic and decaying Third Republic never could rally French nationalism. It did not help that much of British political opinion was sympathetic to Germany's revisions of the Versailles Treaty's rearmament and territorial prohibitions. Yet, as Arthur H. Furnia points out, Versailles revisionism "permitted a rebellious Germany to augment her growing strength . . . [and] each increase

in German strength made France that much more dependent upon Britain and the whims of British foreign policy."[73]

A strategy of "waiting for Britain" effectively gave the British veto power over French policy toward Germany and failed to recognize London's lack of appreciation of the French need for security alliances in Eastern Europe, a region to which Britain was not prepared to extend security guarantees until after Munich. But the French understood that "the basic military equation in western Europe remained a France of 40 million confronted by 75 million Germans and 40 million Italians," an equation that dictated "cooperation in appeasement until the policy succeeded or until the British themselves woke up to its futility."[74]

This does not excuse France for participating in the diplomatic dismemberment of a state it was committed by treaty to defend. If France sacrificed its status as a great power by adopting a purely defensive military posture, it sacrificed its honor at Munich. Writing of the Munich Conference after the war, Winston Churchill observed that "For almost 20 years [Czech] President [Edward] Benes had been a faithful ally and almost vassal of France, always supporting French policies and French interests in the League of Nations and elsewhere. If ever there was a case of solemn obligation, it was here and now. . . . It was a portent of doom when a French government failed to keep the word of France."[75]

But for both Britain and France, more than French honor was at stake. Czechoslovakia may not have been sustainable as a national state over the long run, but in 1938 it was the only democracy in Central Europe and formed a significant strategic barrier to German expansion into Eastern and Southeastern Europe. Indeed, a major failure of British diplomacy during the run-up to Munich was its almost willful disregard of Czechoslovakia's formidable military capabilities.[76] During the Czech crisis of September 1938, the German Army fielded 37 divisions (5 of them facing France) to Czechoslovakia's 35 divisions (plus 5 fortress divisions).[77] Moreover, the Czechs enjoyed three strategic advantages: they were on the defensive, operated along interior lines of communication, and possessed formidable defensive terrain and fortifications along the German-Czech border. Czechoslovakia also had the largest

armaments production complex in Central Europe (the Nazi takeover of Czechoslovakia in 1939 boosted Germany's arms production by 15 percent, and the arms and equipment of the disbanded Czech army were sufficient to fit out 20 new German divisions[78]).

Though most historians believe that Germany could have beaten Czechoslovakia in 1938, there is little doubt that Czechoslovakia would have proved a much harder nut to crack in 1938 than was Poland a year later. In his assessment of the European military balance during the last 2 years before the war, Williamson Murray concludes that a German campaign against Czechoslovakia in September 1938 "would have involved significantly higher casualties than the campaign against Poland in 1939" because "of the nature of the terrain, the equipment of the Czech army, Czech fortifications, and the general state of unpreparedness of the German armored force."[79]

This was certainly the view of Germany's military leadership, which did not believe Germany was ready for war, had little confidence in a quick win over Czechoslovakia, and was fearful of leaving the weakly fortified Rhineland open to possible French attack.[80] There was even discussion of a coup against Hitler on the part of General Ludwig Beck, Chief of the Army General Staff; his successor, General Franz Halder; and Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, head of the Abwehr (the German military and counter-intelligence organization), should Hitler proceed to act on his announced decision to invade Czechoslovakia.[81] Indeed, in late August 1938 the German General Staff and Foreign Office secretly dispatched representatives to London to warn such known anti-Hitler hardliners as Robert Vansittart and Winston Churchill of Hitler's plan to invade Czechoslovakia in September.[82] "The prime objective," concludes German historian Klaus-Jurgen Muller,

> was to bring about a situation in which Hitler would be forced or frightened into dropping war from his agenda. For this to happen evidence must be produced that the Western powers would oppose with armed force any further German expansion; that if war came, Germany's allies would not rally to the side of the Reich; that the German economy was not prepared for war; and finally that the desired aim could be achieved without resort to armed force.[83]

One German representative declared that German Army leaders were all opposed to war "but they will not have the power to stop it unless they get encouragement and help from the outside."[84]

Ironically, Chamberlain provided that help. In September 1938 Hitler was bent on invading and conquering all of Czechoslovakia. At the height of the crisis, he declared to Sudeten leader Konrad Henlein: "Long live war—even if it lasts from 2 to 8 years!"[85] Hitler wanted war because he was innately bloody-minded, because he sought the entire Czech state (the Sudetenland issue was a pretext), because the Czechs had embarrassed him in May by mobilizing their forces against a falsely reported imminent German attack,[86] because in the wake of that embarrassment he had announced to his assembled generals his unalterable intention to smash Czechoslovakia, and—probably—because "Hitler was keen to demonstrate to his more timid generals that he was going to be an active supreme commander. The Czech crisis was an opportunity to challenge and test the officer elite, as well as the surviving conservatives in the government."[87] Hitler was well aware of the decided lack of enthusiasm among the military leadership, Foreign Office, and the German population at large. (Chamberlain was wildly cheered by German crowds in Munich as the real savior of peace in Europe.[88]) Mussolini was also opposed to war, as was Herman Goering.[89]

The key factor in Hitler's back-down from his threat to invade Czechoslovakia was the *possibility* that the British and French would fight if Germany attacked Czechoslovakia,[90] and the key event here may have been Hitler's meeting with Sir Horace Wilson, Chamberlain's personal emissary, on September 27.[91] Chamberlain's cabinet was divided over what amounted to a German ultimatum threatening the use of force unless Czechoslovakia accepted an immediate German takeover of the Sudetenland; opinion was hardening against Hitler, and it was decided to send Wilson to Berlin with a written plea for further negotiation, and failing that, a "special message" to be delivered orally. In "the clearest and strongest threat made by the British government during the month of the Munich crisis,"[92] that message stated: "If Germany attacked Czechoslovakia, France, as Daladier had informed us and as he had stated publicly, would fulfill her treaty obligations. If that meant that

the forces of France became actively engaged in hostilities against Germany, the British Government would feel obliged to support France."[93] Hitler rejected the written plea, and the "special message" was then delivered. Hitler clearly understood it to be a threat of war if he invaded Czechoslovakia, and "he clearly did not want war with the western powers."[94] According to one of Hitler's adjutants, Fritz Wiedemann, Hitler told Goering: "You see, Goering, at the last moment I thought the British fleet would shoot."[95]

The British historian Richard Overy has observed:

> It is easy to see why Chamberlain saw Munich as victory, and Hitler saw it as a defeat. From a position of military weakness and inferiority, with no firm allies, and an array of diplomatic imponderables, Chamberlain had almost single-handedly averted war between Germany and Czechoslovakia and compelled Hitler, for the last time, to work within the Western framework [of negotiation of territorial disputes.][96]

Hitler had sought to use the "persecution" of the Germany community in Czechoslovakia issue as a pretext for the conquest of all of Czechoslovakia; he had not foreseen Chamberlain's willingness to accept the Sudetenland's peaceful transfer to Germany. Chamberlain had wrecked his plans. "The most disappointed man of Munich was Adolph Hitler," contends J. W. Wheeler-Bennett, author of an early work on the Munich Conference. Chamberlain and Daladier "had made so wholesale a surrender of Czechoslovakia that even Adolph Hitler could not find an excuse to go to war."[97] On his return to Berlin from Munich, Hitler told Reichsbank President Hjalmar Schacht, "That fellow [Chamberlain] has spoiled my entry into Prague."[98]

Hitler regarded Munich as a defeat and came to regret allowing himself to be talked and coerced out of war, and during the Polish crisis of August 1939 was determined not to retreat from war as he had at Munich.[99] "All his actions during the Polish crisis can be seen as a response to the defeat he felt he had suffered personally in agreeing to pull back at the end of September 1938," concludes Hitler biographer Ian Kershaw.[100] In 1945 Hitler told Martin Bormann:

> September 1938, that was the most favorable moment, when an attack carried the lowest risk for us. . . . Great Britain and France, surprised by the speed of our attack, would have done nothing, all the more since we had world opinion on our side . . . we could have settled the remaining

> territorial questions in Eastern Europe and the Balkans without fearing intervention from the Anglo-French powers. . . . We ourselves would have won the necessary time for our own moral and material rearmament and a second world war, even if it was altogether unavoidable, would have been postponed for years.[101]

After the war, Paul O. Schmidt, who was Hitler's interpreter and was constantly at Hitler's side during the Nazi leader's discussions with Chamberlain, recounted Hitler's disgust at Chamberlain's popularity among ordinary Germans:

> Chamberlain was warmly welcomed at Munich. He was the hero of the German people on that occasion. It was definitely Chamberlain who was the idol of the German people in Munich—not Hitler. The German masses gave flowers to Chamberlain. One could see on their faces that they thanked Chamberlain for saving the peace of Europe despite Hitler.
>
> Hitler didn't like this show at all. He feared it would give the impression that the German people were pacifists, which, or course, would be unpardonable in the eyes of the Nazis. Therefore, the Nazis didn't like this Munich show at all.[102]

William L. Shirer was in Berlin during the crisis and noted Berliners' decided lack of enthusiasm for war. To stir up war fever among the populace, Hitler ordered a motorized division to parade through the capital, which turned into a fiasco. As Shirer recorded in his diary:

> I went out to the corner of the Linden where the column [of troops] was turning down the Wilhemstrasse, expecting to see a tremendous demonstration. I pictured the scenes I had read of in 1914 when the cheering throngs on this same street tossed flowers at the marching soldiers, and the girls ran up and kissed them. . . . But today they ducked into subways, refused to look on, and the handful that did stood at the curb in utter silence. . . . It has been the most striking demonstration against war I've ever seen.[103]

As for Chamberlain and Daladier, historian Gerhard L. Weinberg rightly stresses "the enormous significance of the circumstances in which military action is considered and the perceptions of such action at the time by both by those who have to make the decision

and by the segments of the public that will have to bear the burdens of any war." In this context, he concludes, "it is surprising that in the crisis over Czechoslovakia there was any serious consideration of going to war at all in Britain or France."[104]

A most intriguing if unanswerable question about Munich is: what if Czechoslovakia had decided to fight anyway? Anglo-French abandonment did not dictate Prague's renunciation of the inherent right of self-defense. The Czech military strongly favored resistance, and Churchill believed that a Czech decision to fight would have shamed France into war.[105] And who knows what might have happened then? At a minimum, Czech resistance would have bloodied Germany militarily and postponed Hitler's turn on Poland probably into the spring of 1940. Maybe his own generals would have moved against him. Moreover, as the Soviet Union was also a nominal treaty ally of Czechoslovakia though the two states shared no common border, a fighting Czechoslovakia, especially if joined by France, almost certainly would have delayed, if not altogether eliminated, the emergence of any incentive on Stalin's part to cut the kind of strategic deal he made with Hitler in August 1939. President Benes' decision not to order the defense of his own country for fear that a vengeful Hitler would slaughter the Czech nation may have been a more fateful one than the Anglo-French capitulation to Hitler on the Sudetenland issue.[106]

Guilt Over Versailles.

Czechoslovakia's Sudetenland was Hitler's last territorial acquisition that could be justified on the principle of self-determination. Between his assumption of power in January 1933 and the conclusion of the Munich Conference in September 1938, Hitler worked to rectify what he, all Germans, and many in Britain regarded as injustices imposed on the German state and nation by the vengeful victors of World War I. "Until 1938," observes British historian R. A. C. Parker, "British policy towards Germany was dictated by the belief among the majority of the British public that Germany had real grievances which should be rectified, grievances which derived, in large part, from the alleged follies of French foreign policy."[107]

The Treaty of Versailles was indisputably vindictive. The treaty assigned Germany blame for World War I; imposed crushing reparations on Germany; stripped Germany of its colonies and all but token military power; demilitarized the Rhineland; prohibited German union with Austria; and arbitrarily redrew Germany's southern and eastern borders, peeling off significant territory and population. As such, "it was widely regarded among historians, economists, politicians, and policymakers as an unjust peace" and "these guilt feelings effectively obstructed action to enforce its terms when . . . the Third Reich started casting off the treaty restrictions."[108] This harsh and unwise *diktat* was imposed at gunpoint and was unenforceable absent the constant threat of war by those who imposed it. However, British opinion began turning against the treaty (and against continued French belligerence toward Germany) within months after its conclusion in 1919.

The British opposed risking war to enforce a treaty they believed to have been a mistake in the first place, and they believed it inevitable that Hitler would rearm and cast off other Versailles restrictions on Germany. Indeed, in anticipation of inevitable German rearmament, Britain cut a naval deal with Germany in 1935 that violated the Treaty of Versailles and gave Hitler a green light to start building a navy, including submarines. The Anglo-German Naval Treaty, which Hitler repudiated just 4 years later, permitted Germany to construct tonnage up to 35 percent of that the Royal Navy. Since Germany was starting from scratch, the agreement invited the Third Reich to build a navy as a fast as it could. The agreement shocked the French, who had not been consulted in advance, and encouraged Mussolini to believe that the British were too scared of Hitler to oppose the aggression he was about to launch in Abyssinia.[109] Not until March 1939, when Hitler broke the Munich Agreement, did British and French policy toward Germany converge on a willingness to go to war to stop further Nazi expansion.

Dread of Strategic Bombing and Misjudgment of the Nazi Air Threat.

Both governments and publics in Britain and France were gripped by a generic dread of mass air attacks on cities, and governments

misread the size and nature of the German Luftwaffe, taking at face value Hitler's announcement in 1935 that Germany already had air parity with Britain.[110] They saw in war with Germany immediate and massive air attacks on London and Paris. The dread of air attack stemmed from a belief that strategic bombardment was irresistible and that its potential effects could include rapid disintegration of the political and social order. In 1932 British Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin had famously declared: "There is no power on earth that can protect [its people] from being bombed. . . . The bombers will always get through. The only defense is in offense, which means that you have to kill more women and children than the enemy if you want to save yourselves."[111] Baldwin's view was certainly the starting point for British and American air power advocates from the early 1920s onward. They believed that air power, not armies and navies, would determine the outcome of future wars, and that the best defense against air attack was a good offense in the form of massive bomber forces. They rejected investment in defenses which (in the days before radar and "pursuit" aircraft that could fly as fast as bombers) they rightly regarded as futile, and they were firmly opposed to diverting air power to assist ground and naval forces.

Until the summer of 1938, the Royal Air Force (RAF) remained committed to deterrence of air attack via the threat of retaliatory strategic bombardment. The persistence of this commitment was extraordinary, given the RAF's lack of bombers with sufficient range and payload to inflict more than token damage on Germany. Indeed, the strength of the RAF's ideological commitment to strategic bombing stood in stark contrast to its inability to provide convincing answers to such basic questions as what targets to bomb, how to reach them, chances of hitting them, how hard to hit them, how to determine damage inflicted, and what effect on German morale and industry? "The RAF was, in the late 1930s," observes air power historian Tami Davis Biddle, "an organization facing the fact that it could not carry out its own declaratory policy."[112] Ironically, the Chamberlain government, on the recommendation of Sir Thomas Inskip, Minister for the Coordination of Defense, had already decided to shift the RAF's funding priority from bombers to fighters. Inskip believed that German bombers could be more easily destroyed by British

fighters in British air space than by British bombers over German airfields and aircraft production sites; fighters also were much cheaper to build than bombers, and the appearance of radar would tell Fighter Command where the attacking German bombers were.[113] Over the strong objections of the RAF, the Chamberlain government thus opted for defense over deterrence, thereby paving the way for the 1940 Battle of Britain, perhaps the most critical defensive battle of World War II.

The misreading of the Nazi air threat stemmed from failure to appreciate, especially in Britain, that German air power was being developed primarily for purposes other than strategic bombardment, and from deliberate strategic deception by Berlin and such influential American dupes as Charles A. Lindberg, a pro-Nazi defeatist who trumpeted German air power's irresistibility to British, French, and American audiences. Because the RAF "lacked adequate information on the purpose of the Luftwaffe . . . British air planners assumed that its role would not be very much different from the role they envisaged for the RAF."[114] The assumption was that Germany would attempt a knock-out strike against London, and as early as 1934 Winston Churchill, a persistent purveyor of inflated estimates of German air strength,[115] argued that Germany was approaching air parity with Britain and would have three times the RAF's strength by 1937.[116] On the eve of Munich, Lindberg's widely reported view was that "Germany now has the means of destroying London, Paris, and Praha [Prague] if she wishes to do so. England and France together do not have enough modern planes for effective defense."[117] (On the eve of the Munich Conference British intelligence estimated that Germany had a total of 1,963 combat-ready fighters, bombers, and dive bombers, when Germany actually fielded a total of only 1,194.[118]) P. M. H. Bell believes that "Munich was a victory for the terror which the Germans inspired by displaying the Luftwaffe with panache, and letting their opponents' nerves do the rest."[119]

Germany, in fact, had nothing of the sort of air capacity Lindberg claimed. A fleet of long-range four-engine bombers lay beyond Germany's technical and industrial reach in the 1930s, and strategic bombardment was, in any event, alien to the kind of war the Germans planned to fight. "Luftwaffe planners, keenly aware

of Germany's continental position, recognized that pursuit of an air strategy divorced from ground operations represented a luxury the Reich could not contemplate."[120] Accordingly, the Germans built an air force of short-range light bombers, dive bombers, and fighters designed to support army operations; it was a force whose limitations as an instrument of strategic bombardment were evident in the Battle of Britain, notwithstanding the relatively short distances separating Luftwaffe air bases in France and key targets in southern England. Nevertheless, "the misapprehension of a Germany prepared to strike a 'knock-out' blow continued right up to the war's outbreak."[121]

The French were thoroughly pessimistic over the Nazi air threat. Though French intelligence correctly concluded that the Luftwaffe's primary role was to support German army operations,[122] the leadership of the French air force had no confidence in its own service in a contest with the Luftwaffe. The French air force offered Daladier no offensive options and no convincing defensive options against a sustained Luftwaffe assault.[123] Though nominally an independent service since 1930, the French air force was organizationally and doctrinally tied to the methodical defensive strategy of the French army; it had no capacity to wage a coherent air war against either the Luftwaffe or German industry. Additionally, French aircraft factories lacked mass production techniques and suffered chronic labor unrest; worse still, French air planners made premature procurement decisions that rendered much of the French air force obsolete in 1940.[124] Finally, France, like Britain, fell for Berlin's strategic deception on the strength of German air power. A month before the Munich conference, General Joseph Vuillemin, chief of the French air staff, was invited to pay the Luftwaffe an official visit. In Germany he was wined and dined, taken to air bases and aircraft production factories, and treated to "a pageant of German military power calculated to kill any French intention to use its admittedly weak air force, even though it was the only way that Czechoslovakia could be given any immediate aid."[125] The visit convinced the already pessimistic Vuillemin that the Luftwaffe could destroy the French air force in no more than 2 weeks.[126]

Robert Jervis argues convincingly that Britain until 1939 was effectively "self-deterred" from taking military action against Nazi Germany by an exaggerated fear that "Germany would wipe out

London at the start of a world war." Though this fear represented a "fundamental misreading of Germany air policy and air strength," it nonetheless guided British decisionmaking.[127] Moreover, as Dominic Johnson points out, an exaggerated German air threat supported the agendas of both appeasers and anti-appeasers. "For the former it demonstrated that war would be very costly and should therefore be avoided; for the latter a larger Luftwaffe demonstrated that Germany had become more aggressive and therefore that the RAF must be built up to oppose it."[128]

Public Opinion.

Not until 1939, after Hitler violently breached the Munich Agreement with his invasion of the remainder of Czechoslovakia, did British and French public opinion harden against Hitler to the point where it was prepared to risk war to prevent further German expansion. Just 6 months earlier, both Chamberlain and Daladier had returned from Munich to cheering crowds of their respective countrymen who were joyously relieved that war had been avoided over Czechoslovakia.

The shift in British opinion was key because of France's strategic dependence on Britain and because significant segments of the post-World War I British and French electorates were pacifist and/or committed to complete disarmament. In Britain, 4 years of unprecedented bloodletting in Flanders followed by a vindictive "peace" treaty convinced many that the war had been a terrible mistake and the Versailles Treaty not much better. Thus the famous 1933 Oxford Union vote in favor of the motion: "That this House will in no circumstances fight for its King and County." (The vote was 275 ayes to 153 nays.)[129] War phobia was particularly pronounced with respect to Germany because, as the liberal editor of the *New Statesman and Nation* observed in 1929, "Almost everyone, Conservatives, Liberals, and Labour alike, regarded the French notion of keeping Germany permanently as a second-class power as absurd, and agreed that the Versailles Treaty must be revised in Germany's favor."[130] The combination of war trauma induced by the experience of 1914-18 and sympathy toward a Versailles-wronged Germany effectively

precluded any British government from carrying the country into war with Germany until Hitler clearly revealed his aggressive intentions beyond Germanic Europe. It is improbable that even the eloquent, Nazi-despising Churchill, had he been prime minister in 1938, could have mobilized public opinion for war with Hitler over the fate of Germans in a mistakenly created country that Britain was in no position to save.

The situation was not one in which British and French leaders were imprisoned by public opinion; statesmen seek to lead rather than simply follow public opinion—and both Chamberlain and Daladier were experienced men in the business of government. Rather, the situation was one in which Daladier could not hope to mobilize French opinion for military action against Germany absent unambiguous British support for such action, and in which Chamberlain was still of the view that Hitler's aims in Europe were sufficiently limited to be accommodated via concession and negotiation. One could hardly expect Chamberlain to attempt to mobilize British public opinion for a war he believed was both unnecessary and avoidable—indeed, a war that he almost single-handedly thwarted at Munich via the very threat of war itself.

American Isolationism.

U.S. intervention in World War I on the side of Britain and France sealed Germany's military fate, and had the United States remained politically engaged in Europe after the war, the course of events on the Continent might have been different. France wanted a defensive military alliance with Britain and the United States as a deterrent to future German aggression, and had such an alliance been established and had it remained credible (via perhaps the forward deployment of British and American combat forces in France), it is difficult to imagine Hitler courting war with the great coalition that had defeated Imperial Germany. Hitler, who sought to dominate the entire continent, might have been compelled to settle for a German empire confined to Eastern Europe and Russia.

Norman Rich, in his assessment of the reasoning behind Hitler's fatal declaration of war on the United States following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, contends that Hitler, though he expressed

contempt for American military capabilities "to instill courage in people justifiably fearful about America's strength," pursued pre-Pearl Harbor policies toward the United States that were "determined by a very realistic respect for American power and by a constant fear that America might intervene in the war before Germany's position on the European continent had been consolidated."[131] Until the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Hitler was careful not to provoke war with an increasingly belligerent Franklin D. Roosevelt because he was greatly impressed with America's sheer size and capacity for mass production.[132] (His views on America's racial composition were another matter.)

America, of course, absented itself from Europe's political affairs during the Inter-War period. It took World War II and the postwar emergence of the Soviet threat to convince most Americans that the key to avoiding entanglement in yet another European war was to establish peacetime military alliances with threatened states. Roosevelt, who from the beginning had reservations about the wisdom of Chamberlain's policy of appeasement, grasped the nature and severity of the Nazi threat long before he was politically able to do much about it. By the end of 1937, he was persuaded that the Anti-Comintern Pact between Germany, Japan, and Italy constituted a secret offensive-defensive alliance aimed at world conquest, and though he subsequently flirted with appeasement because Chamberlain seemed committed to it, the Munich Agreement and the bloody November 1938 Nazi anti-Jewish pogrom known as *Kristallnacht* convinced Roosevelt that Hitler's aims were unlimited and that Nazi Germany could be stopped only by credibly threatened force.[133]

Roosevelt's freedom of action, however, was severely limited not just by a decidedly isolationist Congress but also by Anglo-French appeasement of Hitler. The Neutrality Act of 1937 prohibited the United States from supplying arms or extending any loans or credits to any belligerent in a future European war. Because the act made no distinction between aggressor states and their victims, it blocked Roosevelt from assisting Europe's democracies if they were attacked by Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. In so doing, it eliminated the possibility of credible American threats to participate

in the strategic containment of Hitler and Mussolini. It is testimony to the isolationists' grip on the Congress (as well as Capitol Hill's determination to reverse what it saw as a growing Executive Branch accretion of power at the expense of the Legislative Branch[134]) that the Senate rejected Roosevelt's personal pleas to loosen the provisions of the Neutrality Act until after war broke out in Europe in September 1939 and did not repeal the key provisions of the act until the eve of Pearl Harbor. (Congress did not authorize conscription until September 1940—after the fall of France and the Low Countries, and amazingly, the House of Representatives voted to renew authorization for conscription by only one vote in August 1941—2 months after Hitler invaded the Soviet Union and only 4 months before Pearl Harbor.)

Even had the Neutrality Act been completely repealed in 1937 (the year Chamberlain became prime minister), the United States could hardly act against Hitler when no one else in Europe would. If public opinion in Britain and France blocked political decisionmakers from risking war to stop Hitler until it was too late, a tradition of isolationism from Europe's wars and the seeming remoteness of the German menace to America and its Western Hemispheric security interests virtually precluded war against Germany absent a German attack or declaration of war. C. A. MacDonald summarizes Roosevelt's dilemma:

> It was difficult to persuade [American] public opinion that an axis danger existed while Chamberlain continued to talk about an Anglo-German agreement. Yet Roosevelt could not persuade Britain to take a stiffer line with Germany without widespread support for an anti-axis policy which would convince London that American support would be quickly forthcoming in the event of war. The President was caught between the desire to play a larger role in world affairs and the necessity of preserving his political position at home. He never solved the problem of balancing these two factors. While public opinion increasingly supported an active anti-axis policy after September 1939, it never reached the point of endorsing American military intervention.[135]

Roosevelt, beginning with his famous October 1937 "Quarantine Speech" in Chicago (which was roundly denounced by isolationists), began a campaign to educate the American people on the gathering

threat posed by the fascist dictators in Europe and Imperial Japan; and beginning in 1938, he started a campaign to rearm the United States, focusing primarily on expanded naval and air power (Roosevelt was an air power enthusiast and believer in a potential German air threat to the Western Hemisphere). Munich convinced Roosevelt that Hitler could never be trusted, that his aims were unlimited, and that Germany would eventually threaten the United States.[136] From the outbreak of war in Europe in September 1939 to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941, Roosevelt transformed the United States from a rigidly neutral bystander into a provider of war assistance (Lend Lease) to Britain (and after September 1941) to the Soviet Union and a de facto naval co-belligerent with Britain against the German submarine menace in the North Atlantic.[137]

Distrust of the Soviet Union and Fear of Communism.

The alternative to appeasement of Hitler in the 1930s was formation of the kind of grand alliance that defeated Imperial Germany in 1918 and crushed Nazi Germany in 1945. This alternative, however, was never more than theoretical until Hitler invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941 and declared war on the United States the following December. For the United States, domestic politics precluded war or military alliance with threatened states in Europe as voluntary policy choices. But this was not the case for the Soviet Union, which Hitler both reviled and targeted for German racial expansion. Stalin clearly understood Nazi Germany for the deadly foe it was, and in 1934 the Soviet Union entered an alliance with France as a means of checking German expansionism. (The alliance remained nominal because the hostility of the French Right to the alliance effectively blocked initiation of Franco-Soviet military staff talks.) Russia and France had been allies against Imperial Germany, and the Soviet Union in the 1930s constituted the only great power east of Germany. It fielded the largest standing army in Europe and possessed war production potential second only to that of the United States. The same logic that underlay the Anglo-French-Russian alliance of World War I against Imperial Germany applied to stopping Hitler from plunging Europe into another world war, and this logic should

have been glaringly apparent after Hitler removed any doubt over his trustworthiness and territorial intentions by invading what remained of Czechoslovakia after Munich.

Yet in August 1939, Stalin entered a nonaggression pact with Hitler that essentially freed German forces, once they (in conjunction with Soviet forces) had erased Poland, to attack in the West with no fear of having to wage war on a second front in the East. Stalin's conversion from a potential ally of the West into a collaborator with Nazi Germany was the product of several factors, but primary among them was Anglo-French appeasement of Hitler and manifest fear of Communism and mistrust of the Soviet Union. Many Britons and Frenchmen believed Communism posed a greater threat to the West than Nazism, and there were in any event reasonable doubts about the Soviet Union's value as an ally against Hitler, especially after Stalin decimated the Red Army's officer corps in 1937-38. "It was natural for European states, especially the great imperial powers, Britain and France, to regard Soviet communism as their sworn enemy—for so it was," observes P. M. H. Bell. "From this fact of life some took the short step to the belief that the enemies of communism were your friends, and that fascist Italy and Nazi Germany were useful bulwarks against Soviet influence. Once this notion took root, it was hard to accept that the Nazi regime was itself a threat, nearer and more dangerous than the Soviet Union."[138]

Hitler was also in a position to offer Stalin extensive territorial concessions east of the Vistula River that Britain and France could not. The nonaggression pact contained a secret protocol that granted Stalin the eastern half of Poland, conceded to the Soviet Union a free hand in Finland, Estonia, and Latvia, and recognized Moscow's interest in the Romanian province of Bessarabia. Under the circumstances, and given the Anglo-French record of appeasing Hitler, Stalin's choice of a deal with Hitler rather than an alliance with Britain and France was a no-brainer. Andrew Crozier has summed up the array of considerations as they appeared to Moscow:

> Did the Western powers really intend to resist Hitler? And, if they did, were they capable of doing so effectively? If the answer to either of these questions was even vaguely negative, the Soviet Union, through too close an association with the democracies, could have found herself at war with Germany without credible allies in the west. This would have

been particularly embarrassing militarily for in 1939 a state of undeclared war existed between the USSR and Japan in the Far East which might ultimately have resulted in a debilitating war on two fronts. On the other hand, the German offer was very attractive. It certainly meant the postponement of war from the Soviet point of view; it implied the possibility of being able to emerge as the *tertius gaudens* from a conflict between the capitalist powers; and [it] allowed the extension of the USSR's defensive lines into Eastern Europe and the Baltic littoral. Stalin opted for the certainties of an accommodation with Hitler, rather than the uncertainties of a tie with Britain and France.[139]

* * * * *

Anglo-French appeasement of Nazi Germany during the 1930s was the product of multiple political, military, and psychological factors that combined to deny any realistic possibility that the Western democracies could or would act effectively against Hitler in time to thwart outbreak of a second world war in Europe. This is not to embrace historical determinism; rather it is simply to argue that the alignment of political, military, and psychological factors in the 1930s were never such as to offer both London and Paris simultaneously a clear appreciation of the nature and scope of the German threat, as well as the opportunity to employ military force confidently and effectively against that threat. In hindsight, it is easy to condemn appeasement because it led to World War II, but until 1939, the record of appeasement was one of sparing Europe *from* war. Chamberlain and Daladier could not know they were making pre-World War II decisions, on the contrary, they were struggling to avoid war. But not at any cost. When in 1939 Hitler violated the Munich Agreement and, in so doing, dispelled any lingering doubts in London and Paris about his real intentions in Europe, Chamberlain and Daladier committed to a policy of war by extending defense guarantees to Poland and other threatened states.

WHY DID APPEASEMENT FAIL?

Anglo-French appeasement of Hitler failed for the simple reason that Hitler was unappeasable. He wanted more, much more, than Britain or France could or would give him. Chamberlain sought to

propitiate Germany within the framework of Europe's traditional balance of power system; Hitler sought to overthrow that system. He fooled Chamberlain (and many others in Europe, including conservative German nationalists) into believing that Nazi Germany's foreign policy ambitions, like those of the Weimar Republic, were limited to rectification of the 'injustices" of the Versailles Treaty, and until 1939 he was careful to limit Germany's explicit territorial demands to Germanic Europe, demands he justified in the name of national self-determination. In this regard, British policy toward Germany was consistent from 1919 on: it sought to bring "Germany back into the community of nations . . . negotiating the relaxation of those [Versailles] treaty restrictions that were perceived as untenable." London "never supported the French policy of enforcing the Treaty of Versailles or the French system of alliance with Eastern Europe."[140] Needless to say, the success of Hitler's diplomacy in the 1930s profited immensely from basic Anglo-French differences over how to deal with Germany.

To be sure, Hitler was not shy about discussing the scope of his ambitions in Europe. *Mein Kampf*, written in prison 10 years before Hitler came to power, might be dismissed as the rantings of a failed revolutionary, but once in power, the Nazis' innate savagery and Chancellor Hitler's numerous public declarations of Germany's racial destiny in the Slavic East—the imperative of Aryan seizure of *lebensraum* in the vast domain of the inferior races that lay between Germany and the Urals—could not be so easily ignored. As Norman Rich notes, what Hitler had in mind as a model was not the Hapsburgian one of "indiscriminate annexation of peoples of different races and religions," but rather "that of the Nordics of North America who swept aside lesser races to ensure their own ethnic survival."[141] But was this not a literally fantastic vision? How would Hitler go about it? Would Eastern Europe and Russia submit? Would the rest of Europe accept a continental German empire that would destroy the European balance of power? Was any head of a major European state really prepared to plunge the continent into another bloodbath on behalf of a crackpot racial theory? It all seemed incredible.

The very fact that Chamberlain could not bring himself to believe that Hitler wanted another world war testified to his understanding

that any German bid for continental domination meant war, and in 1939 Chamberlain was even prepared to—and did—go to war with Germany for the sake of a country Britain was in no position to defend. Hitler, and ultimately Chamberlain, understood that his imperial ambitions in Europe could not be satisfied without war.

But Hitler was not just unappeasable; he was also *undeterrable*. Shows of strength and resolve—Mussolini's reaction to Hitler's attempted Nazi coup in Vienna in 1934, Britain's "special message" of September 1938 that it was prepared to join France in going to war over Czechoslovakia—forced Hitler to back off, but only because Germany was still rearming and Hitler was not yet prepared to risk military defeat or a general war. True, Hitler planned for general war no later than 1943-45 (when he thought Germany's military and ideological strength would peak relative to Germany's enemies)[142] and was surprised when the French and British prematurely visited it upon him in 1939 by honoring their defense guarantees to Poland. But this miscalculation in no way affected pursuit of his long-term racial objectives in the East. J. L. Richardson properly sums it up. Given Hitler's ideologically driven expansionism,

> it follows that neither appeasement nor deterrence could have succeeded in averting war. The fundamental reason for the failure of appeasement was that Hitler's goals lay far beyond the limits of reasonable accommodation that the appeasers were prepared to contemplate. If appeasement encouraged him to increase his demands, it was only in a short-term, tactical sense. Likewise, if a policy of deterrence or firmness had been adopted earlier, it would have changed Hitler's tactical calculations, but there is no reason to suppose that he would have modified his goals.[143]

War was thus inevitable as long as Hitler remained in power. Clearly, the appeasers had illusions about Hitler; but no less clearly, as Ernest R. May observes, "'Anti-appeasers' had their own illusions which were almost equally distant from reality. They believed that Hitler could be deterred by the threat of war. Few suspected that Hitler *wanted* war."[144] The threat of war cannot be expected to scare off a regime that welcomes war. Churchill's postwar declaration that World War II could have been avoided without a shot being fired was wishful thinking; it would have taken either an assassin's bullet or an Anglo-French preventive war to have stopped Hitler.

Hitler's undeterrability renders moot much discussion about what might have been. Would, for example, a credible Franco-British alliance with the Soviet Union have deterred Hitler from seeking to subdue the Slavic *untermensch* in the East? Hitler was ideologically predestined to invade the Soviet Union, for which he had both racial and military contempt, and he proceeded to do so in June 1941 notwithstanding an unfinished and expanding war with Britain in the West and the growing difficulties of his Italian ally in the Balkans and the Mediterranean. There was, of course, virtually no prospect of a credible Anglo-French-Soviet alliance. Most British and much French political opinion was extremely hostile to Bolshevism and the Soviet pariah state; an alliance with Moscow would be a pact with the Devil. Indeed, a significant segment of French opinion preferred a fascist political order in France itself and viewed Nazi Germany as an indispensable barrier to the westward spread of Bolshevism. Russia's military value as an ally was also questionable, especially after Stalin's decimation of the Red Army's senior leadership. Nor did the Soviet Union share a border with Germany, which meant that Moscow could not project military power against Germany except through Poland and Czechoslovakia.

To repeat, because Hitler was both unappeasable *and* undeterrable, war could have been avoided only via Hitler's forcible removal of from power, an option apparently not considered by London or Paris and only briefly considered by German military leaders in 1938. Beyond Hitler's departure from power, only a preventive war that crippled German military power, collapsed the Nazi regime, or both, could have averted World War II. Given the horrors of that war, initiation of a preventive war seems retrospectively imperative, and when neo-conservatives such as Richard Perle speak of how Hitler could have been stopped before 1939, they mean forcible regime change of precisely the kind the United States launched against Iraq in 2003. For Britain and France in the 1930s, however, a decisive preventive war against Germany was morally unacceptable, politically impossible, and militarily infeasible. Rewriting history is always easier than writing it.

These judgments strongly suggest that Germany without Hitler would have been deterrable, and indeed it is hard to see how Europe

gets to World War II without Hitler. Any German government of the 1930s would have pursued rectification of the Versailles Treaty injustices, but even a government of traditional conservative nationalists of the kind that Hitler discarded on his road to war (precisely because they opposed his reckless policies) would have respected the limits of German power and the unacceptability to Britain and France of a German-dominated Europe. They would have been happy to recover lost German territory in Poland, even to see Poland disappear—but not at the cost of general war for which Germany was not prepared (the German economy was not placed on a total war footing until 1942). Almost certainly there would have been no slaughter of the Jews.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Hitler Remains without Equal as a State Threat.

No post-1945 foreign dictatorship bears genuine comparison to the Nazi dictatorship. The scope of Hitler's nihilism, ambitions, and military power posed a mortal threat to Western civilization. No other authoritarian or totalitarian regime has managed to employ such a powerful military instrument in such an aggressive manner to fulfill such a horrendous agenda. Stalin had great military power but was cautious and patient; he was a realist and neither lusted for war nor discounted the strength and will of the Soviet Union's enemies. Mao Zedong was reckless but militarily weak. Ho Chi Minh's ambitions and fighting power were local. And Saddam Hussein was never in a position to reverse U.S. military domination of the Persian Gulf. Who but Hitler was *so* powerful *and* unappeasable *and* undeterrable?

Anglo-French Security Choices in the 1930s Were Neither Simple Nor Obvious.

They were at every turn severely constrained by domestic politics, economic difficulties, perceptions of military inadequacy, and Hitler's effective strategic deception regarding Nazi Germany's intentions and capabilities. Appeasement of attempted German revision of the

Versailles Treaty made both moral and strategic sense because the treaty was unjust, strategically short-sighted, and unenforceable. Nor was it politically possible for the democracies to forcibly oppose the reunification of the German nation within a single state; the victors of 1918 had violated Woodrow Wilson's sacred principle of self-determination by prohibiting union of Germany and Austria and by creating the polyglot state of Czechoslovakia with unhappy German minorities in that state's border areas with Germany.

Appeasement became untenable the moment Hitler demanded, under the threat of force, the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia—which was not only a democratic state prepared to grant the Sudeten Germans considerable autonomy but also a significant military counterweight to German territorial ambitions in Eastern Europe. Yet neither Britain nor France was in a military position to defend Czechoslovakia, although Chamberlain's threat of a general war deterred Hitler from seizing all of Czechoslovakia in 1938.

Beware of Hindsight; It Is Not 20/20 Vision.

Many hindsighters believe they now know what Britain and France (and for that matter the United States) *should* have done in the 1930s—regime change in Berlin via Hitler's assassination or, failing that, an invasion of the Third Reich—because we all know that World War II and the Holocaust were the consequences of appeasement. These facts were hardly self-evident at the time. Today's *should* runs afoul of yesterday's *could not* and *would not.* British and French statesmen did not know they were on the road to general war; on the contrary, they were seeking to avoid it. In any case, neither assassination of the head of a major state nor the launching of preventive war against that state fell within the repertory of practical and politically acceptable policy options available to London and Paris. Past events are viewed through the lens of subsequent events. To be sure, Neville Chamberlain profoundly misjudged Hitler, but if Hitler had dropped dead the day after the Munich Conference of September 1938, Munich would in all likelihood be an historical footnote and "appeasement" a non-pejorative term.

Invocations of the Munich Analogy to Justify Use of Force Should Be Closely Examined.

Such invocations have more often than not been misleading because security threats to the United States genuinely Hitlerian in scope and nature have not been replicated since 1945. Though the Munich analogy's power as a tool of opinion mobilization is undeniable, no enemy since Hitler has, in fact, possessed Nazi Germany's combination of military might and willingness—indeed, eagerness—to employ it for unlimited conquest. This does not mean the United States should withhold resort to force against lesser threats. Nor does it mean that Hitlerian threats are a phenomenon of the past; an al-Qaeda armed with deliverable nuclear weapons or usable biological weapons would pose a direct and much more lethal threat to the United States than Nazi Germany ever did.

The problem with seeing Hitler in Stalin, Mao Zedong, Ho Chi Minh, and Saddam Hussein is that it reinforces the presidential tendency since 1945 to overstate threats for the purpose of rallying public and congressional opinion, and overstated threats in turn encourage resort to force in circumstances where deterrence, containment, even negotiation (from strength) might better serve long-term U.S. security interests. Threats that are, in fact, limited tend to be portrayed in Manichaean terms, thus skewing the policy choice toward military action, a policy choice hardly constrained by possession of global conventional military primacy and an inadequate understanding of the limits of that primacy.

If the 1930s reveal the danger of underestimating a security threat, the post-World War II decades contain examples of the danger of overestimating a security threat.

ENDNOTES

1. Quoted in J. Snell, ed., *The Outbreak of the Second World War: Design or Blunder?* London: D. C. Heath, 1962, p. vii.

2. Quoted in Donald Kagan, *On the Origins of War and the Preservation of Peace,* New York: Anchor Books, 1995, pp. 317-318.

3. See the author's *Making War, Thinking History: Munich, Vietnam, and Presidential Uses of Force from Korea to Kosovo,* Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2002.

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37. Gerhard L. Weinberg, *Germany, Hitler, and World War II: Essays in Modern German and World History,* New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995, p. 30.

38. For a concise discussion of how Hitler saw the world, see *ibid*., pp. 30-53.

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41. Richard Overy, "Misjudging Hitler: A. J. P. Taylor and the Third Reich," in Martel, *op. cit*., p. 95.

42. Ronald M. Smelser, "Nazi Dynamics, German Foreign Policy and Appeasement," in Wolfgang J. Mommsen and Lothar Kettenecker, eds., *The Fascist Challenge and the Policy of Appeasement,* London: George Allen and Unwin, 1983, p. 42.

43. Bell, *op. cit*., pp. 28-29; *The Oxford Companion to World War II,* New York: Oxford University Press, 1995, p. 279; and William L. Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich: A History of Nazi Germany,* New York: Simon and Schuster, 1960, p. 358.

44. Kennedy, *op. cit*., p. 338.

45. On October 3, 1938, Winston Churchill condemned the Munich Agreement before the House of Commons. He said that Nazi Germany "cannot ever be the trusted friend of British democracy" because the Nazi regime was one "which spurns Christian ethics, which cheers its onward course by a barbarous paganism, which vaunts the spirit of aggression and conquest, which derives strength and perverted pleasure from persecution, and uses, as we have seen, with pitiless brutality the threat of murderous force." Quoted in Graham Stewart, *Burying Caesar: The Churchill-Chamberlain Rivalry,* New York: Overlook Press, 1999, p. 346.

46. Donald Cameron Watt, "British Intelligence and the Coming of the Second World War in Europe," in Ernest R. May, ed., *Knowing One's Enemies: Intelligence Assessment Before the Two World Wars,* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984, p. 247.

47. Quoted in Robert Allan Doughty, *The Seeds of Disaster: The Development of French Army Doctrine 1919-1939,* Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1984, pp. 36, 38.

48. Richard Overy with Andrew Wheatcroft, *The Road to War*, Revised edition, London: Penguin Books, 1999, p. 71.

49. Rock, *op. cit*., p. 174.

50. See Robert J. Young, "French Military Intelligence and Nazi Germany. 1938-1939," in Ernest R. May, ed., *Knowing One's Enemies*, *op. cit*., pp. 271-309.

51. See Doughty, *op. cit*., pp. 1-40.

52. Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy,* New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994, p. 303.

53. Quoted in Doughty, *op. cit*., pp. 36, 37.

54. Duroselle, *op. cit*., pp. 189, 190.

55. See Telford Taylor. *Munich, The Price of Peace,* Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, 1979, pp. 472-476.

56. See Richard Lamb, *Mussolini as Diplomat: Il Duce's Italy on the World Stage,* New York: Fromm International, 1999, pp. 100-107. Though British diplomacy in the mid-1930s seemingly went out of its way to alienate Mussolini as a strategic partner against Hitler, an alliance between Rome and Berlin was probably inevitable, given the ideological affinities between Nazism and Italian fascism, especially their shared contempt for bourgeois democracy and Italian imperial ambitions in the Mediterranean and Africa, which could be realized only at the expense of British and French interests.

57. Quoted in Duroselle, *op. cit*., p. 136.

58. Quoted in Shirer, *op. cit*., p. 293.

59. *Ibid*., pp. 294-295.

60. See discussion in Andrew J. Crozier, *The Causes of the Second World War,* Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 1997, pp. 233-245.

61. Kennedy, *op. cit*., p. 320.

62. Committee of Imperial Defense, Annual Review by the Chiefs of Staff Sub-Committee, quoted in John Dunabin, "The British Military Establishment and the Policy of Appeasement," in Mommsen and Kettenacker, *op. cit*., p. 176.

63. Quoted in Telford Taylor, *op. cit*., p. 631.

64. Overy and Wheatcroft, *op. cit*., p. 104.

65. For an extensive discussion of the concept of limited liability as formulated by Liddell Hart and the relationship of that concept to Britain's strategy situation in the 1930s, see Azar Gat, *A History of Military Thought: From the Enlightenment to the Cold War,* New York: Oxford University Press, 2001, pp. 696-783.

66. The Franco-Soviet pact of mutual assistance directed against Germany was a militarily toothless political alliance because the French refused to hold the military staff talks with their Soviet counterparts necessary to coordinate war plans and because the Soviet Union did not share a border with Germany or enjoy right of military passage with Eastern European states that did. Kissinger, *op. cit*., pp. 296-297.

67. See Williamson Murray, *The Change in the European Balance of Power, 1938-1939: The Path to Ruin,* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984, pp. 84-92.

68. *Ibid*., pp. 276-278.

69. Bell, *op. cit*., p. 194.

70. See Martin Gilbert and Richard Gott, *The Appeasers,* London: Phoenix Press, 1963, p. 115; and Richard Meyers, "British Imperial Interests and the Policy of Appeasement," in Mommsen and Kettenacker, *op. cit*., p. 339.

71. Michael Graham Fry, "Agents and Structures: The Dominions and the Czechoslovak Crisis, September 1938," *Diplomacy and Statecraft,* July/November 1999, p. 295.

72. See Robert Frankenstein, "The Decline of France and the Policy of Appeasement," in Mommsen and Kettenacker, *op. cit*., pp. 236-245.

73. Arthur H. Furnia, *The Diplomacy of Appeasement: Anglo-French Relations and the Prelude to World War II, 1931-1938,* Washington, DC: University Press of Washington, DC, 1960, p. 388.

74. Martin Thomas, "France and the Czechoslovak Crisis," *Diplomacy and Statecraft,* July/November 1999, p. 149.

75. Winston Churchill, *The Gathering Storm,* Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1938, p. 302.

76. Gerald Guenwook Lee, "'I See Dead People': Air-Raid Phobia and Britain's Behavior in the Munich Crisis," *Security Studies,* Winter 2003/4, p. 266.

77. Murray, *op. cit*., p. 231; and David Vital, "Czechoslovakia and the Powers: September 1938," *Journal of Contemporary History,* October 1966, pp. 44-45.

78. Donald Cameron Watt, *How War Came: The Immediate Origins of the Second World War, 1938-1939,* New York: Pantheon Books, 1989, p. 195.

79. Murray, *op. cit*., p. 261. Also see Telford Taylor, *op. cit*., p. 819.

80. Vital, *op. cit*., p. 7. Also see Walter Gorlitz, ed., *The Memoirs of Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel*, David Irving, trans., New York: Cooper Square Press, 2000, pp. 62-73.

81. See Klaus-Jurgen Muller, "The German Military Opposition before the Second World War," in Mommsen and Kettenacker, *op. cit*., pp. 67-70; and Shirer, *op. cit*., pp. 366-384, 404-414.

82. See *ibid*., 67-68; Stewart, *op. cit*., p. 297; and R. A. C. Parker, *Chamberlain and Appeasement: British Policy and the Coming of the Second World War,* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993, pp. 153-154.

83. Muller, *op. cit*., p. 70.

84. Ewald von Kleist-Schmenzin, quoted in Telford Taylor, *op. cit*., p. 663.

85. Quoted in Ian Kershaw, *Hitler, 1936-1945: Nemesis,* New York: W. W. Norton, 2000, p. 88.

86. Telford Taylor, *op. cit*., pp. 390-395.

87. Richard Overy, "Germany and the Munich Crisis: A Mutilated Victory?" *Diplomacy and Statecraft,* July/November 1999, p. 203.

88. Kershaw, *op. cit*., p. 122.

89. *Ibid*., p. 122; and Overy, "Germany and the Munich Crisis,"*op. cit*., p. 209.

90. In June Hitler had told Keitel that he would attack Czechoslovakia "only if I am firmly convinced, as in the case of the demilitarized zone and the entry into Austria, that France will not march, and that therefore Britain will not intervene." Quoted in Churchill, *op. cit*., p. 290.

91. See Telford Taylor, *op. cit*., pp. 878-884; and Parker, *op. cit*., p. 173-176.

92. Parker, *op. cit*., p. 175.

93. Quoted in Telford Taylor, *op. cit*., p. 874.

94. *Ibid*., p. 878.

95 Richard Overy, *Interrogations: The Nazi Elite in Allied Hands, 1945,* New York: Penguin, 2001, p. 316.

96. Overy, *The Road to War*, *op. cit*., p. 103.

97. J. W. Wheeler-Bennett, *Munich: Prologue to Tragedy,* New York: Duell, Sloan & Pearce, 1948, p. 331.

98. Quoted in *ibid*., p. p 331.

99. Watt, *op. cit.*, p. 30; Kershaw, *op. cit.*, pp. 163-164.

100. Kershaw, *op. cit.*, p. 230.

101. Quoted in Overy, *The Road to War*, *op. cit.*, pp. 57-58.

102. Goldensohn, *op. cit.*, p. 443.

103. Excerpted in Shirer, *op. cit.*, p. 399.

104. Gerhard L. Weinberg, "Reflections on Munich after 60 Years," *Diplomacy and Statecraft,* July/November 1999, p. 8.

105. "I have always believed that Benes was wrong to yield. He should have defended his fortress line. Once the fighting had begun, in my opinion at the time, France would have moved to his aid in a surge of national passion, and Britain would have rallied to France almost immediately." Churchill, *op. cit.*, p. 302.

106. For an account of the decision, see Vital, *op. cit.*, pp. 60-65.

107. Parker, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

108. Telford Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

109. Lamb, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

110. See Lee, *op. cit.*, and Uri Bialer, *The Shadow of the Bomber: The Fear of Air Attack and British Politics 1932-1939,* London: Royal Historical Society, 1980.

111. Quoted in Wesley K. Wark, *The Ultimate Enemy: British Intelligence and Nazi Germany, 1933-1939,* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985, p. 28.

112. Tami Davis Biddle, *Rhetoric and Reality in Air Warfare: The Evolution of British and American Ideas about Strategic Bombing, 1914-1945,* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002, p. 112.

113. *Ibid.*, p. 121; and Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 648.

114. Biddle, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

115. Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 218.

116. *Ibid.*, p. 112. In fact, when war broke out in September 1939, Germany's strength in front-line aircraft was 3,609, compared to Britain's 1,911 and France's 1,792. German and British aircraft annual production rates were, however, approaching parity at 8,000. *The Oxford Companion to World War II,* New York: Oxford University Press, 1995, p. 14.

117. Quoted in Telford Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 849.

118. Bell, *op. cit.*, p. 202.

119. *Ibid.*, p. 216.

120. Williamson Murray, "Strategic Bombing: The British, American, and German Experiences," in Williamson Murray and Allan R. Millett, *Military Innovation in the Interwar Period,* New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 131.

121. Murray, *The Change in the European Balance*, *op. cit*., p. 51.

122. Young, *op. cit*., pp. 288-289.

123. Thomas, *op. cit*., pp. 140-143.

124. See Anthony Christopher Cain, *The Forgotten Air Force: French Doctrine in the 1930s,* Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2002.

125. Telford Taylor, op, cit., p. 719.

126. Duroselle, *op. cit*., pp. 278-279.

127. Robert Jervis, "Deterrence and Perception," *International Security,* Winter 1982/1983, pp. 14, 15.

128. Dominic D. P. Johnson, *Overconfidence and War: The Havoc and Glory of Positive Illusions,* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004, p. 92.

129. Telford Taylor, *op. cit*., pp. 197, 198.

130. Quoted in *ibid*., p. 200.

131. Rich, *op. cit*., p. 238.

132. Before and during the war, Hitler spoke admiringly of America's continental unity (a model for Europe under German control) and machine-based society. See Gerhard L. Weinberg, ed., *Hitler's Second Book: The Unpublished Sequel to Mein Kampf,* Krista Smith, trans., New York: Enigma Books, 2003, pp. 107-110, and 117-118; and *Hitler's Secret Conversations,* New York: Farrar, Straus and Young, 1953, pp. 228, 337.

133. C. A. MacDonald, *The United States, Britain and Appeasement, 1936-1939,* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981, pp. 50-51, 73, 82-83, 105, 179.

134. In January 1938, the House of Representatives almost passed the Ludlow Amendment, which would have required a national plebiscite to authorize a declaration of war.

135. MacDonald, *op. cit*., p. 182.

136 See Barbara Rearden Franham, *Roosevelt and the Munich Crisis: A Study of Political Decision-Making,* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997, pp. 137-172.

137. See David Reynolds, *From Munich to Pearl Harbor: Roosevelt's America and the Origins of the Second World War,* Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2001.

138. Bell, *op. cit*., p. 131.

139. Crozier, *op. cit*., p. 155.

140. J. L. Richardson, "New Perspectives on Appeasement: Some Implications for International Relations," *World Politics,* April 1988, p. 306.

141. Rich, *op. cit*., p. xlii.

142. See "The Hossbach Memorandum: A Strategy Conference?" in Keith Eubank, ed., *World War II: Roots and Causes,* Lexington, MA: DC Heath, 1975, pp. 95-106.

143. Richardson, *op. cit*., pp. 67-68.

144. Ernest R. May, *Knowing One's Enemies: Intelligence Assessment before the Two World Wars,* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984, p. 520.