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NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN AND THE POLICY OF APPEASEMENT

CORE COURSE 1 ESSAY

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CHAMBERLAIN: IMAGE, REALITY, AND POLITICAL BACKGROUND

Neville Chamberlain is usually remembered today as a weak man feebly clutching an umbrella, trying to satisfy Hitler's voracious appetite so England will be let alone. World War II made appeasement, and its crowning diplomatic event, the 1938 Munich conference, synonyms for sacrificing the interests of others in futile attempts to placate dictators.¹ This view of appeasement and of Munich influenced several generations of American Cold War diplomats and strategists, and is still frequently employed today to flay policies deemed weak in the face of bullying dictators.² While Vietnam goes far to offset Munich as a foreign policy metaphor in the minds of today's statesmen, the image of appeasement has persisted strongly enough for the U.S. Institute of Peace to conduct a conference on Munich's modern relevance in 1988, even as the Cold War was beginning to come to an end.³

But contrary to the harsh Cold War image of Neville Chamberlain as a political *naïf* and weakling, in reality he was a remarkably strong political personality, who consciously pursued a long-term settlement of post-Great War issues through a calculated strategy that had Britain's *economic* security at its heart. For him, appeasement was "not the diplomacy of capitulation, but a dramatically positive effort to achieve a settlement of the issues that had plagued European politics since 1919" — akin to gentlemenly agreements in the Victorian era to redraw the political map of Europe.⁴ Far from being a portrait of foreign policy weakness, the study of Neville Chamberlain suggests that resolution and clearly related ends and means are dangerous substitutes for foreign affairs knowledge and judgment. And it may serve as a reminder also that an economics-oriented national security policy depreciates the importance of political and military power at its peril, perhaps even in the post-Cold War era.

Neville Chamberlain was the younger son of a prominent English politician, the Liberal Party figure Joseph Chamberlain. His half-brother Austen was the one intended to carry on the family's distinguished political life, and given the education and backing to do

so Neville was to manage the family's financial fortunes, with training as an accountant, and a business career in his hometown of Birmingham, one of England's principal commercial centers. But Neville became interested in local politics, and after several terms on the city council became Lord Mayor in 1914. He was soon noted for his sound administration and financial planning, with more than usual concern for labor questions and social welfare — a family tradition. In 1917, he served a brief, embarrassingly unsuccessful, stint in London as director of national service in Lloyd George's wartime Cabinet. It whetted his appetite for national politics, while convincing him that one could not thrive at that level without being a member of Parliament. At the end of the war, he switched to the Conservative Party, and won election to Parliament. His first Cabinet post a few years later was as Minister of Health, dealing with issues like housing, slum clearance, maternal mortality, industrial tax reform, and pensions. He "fairly wallowed in figures," said an admiring contemporary, bowling over his colleagues and the Opposition with them — a sort of statistical automaton with a social conscience.⁵ A good but sensible man.

BRITAIN'S ECONOMIC SECURITY, AND THE WORLD OUTSIDE

In 1932, with the Depression underway, Chamberlain achieved the powerful position of Chancellor of the Exchequer (head of the Treasury). He presided over six annual Budgets in his years at the Treasury, overseeing the orthodox and careful management of the nation's and empire's economic recovery. His goals were fiscal stability, and a helping hand to the unemployed. The twin pillars of his policy, he said in his 1936 Budget speech, were tariffs, to protect British industry from foreign competition, and cheap money, to stimulate growth. In the process he balanced the budget and produced surpluses that wiped out a large deficit inherited from his predecessors (including Winston Churchill). While still at the Treasury, Chamberlain began to extend his influence over British security and defense policy, with his insistence that everything else in public policy be subordinated to finance.⁶ But by 1936,

the black shadow of rearmament was already falling over the national finances, blighting instantly all the hopes that the trade recovery had inspired and scattering to the winds the modest harvest reaped by Mr Chamberlain's caution, economy and sedulous avoidance of adventure⁷

Chamberlain's sway over national recovery had begun at same time that Britain was forced to deal with the question of Nazi Germany. Its Ten-Year Rule, an annual judgment of whether Britain was likely to go to war with a major power during the following decade, had been adopted in the early 1920s to justify heavy cuts in military spending. But when Japan attacked Manchuria in 1931, London had to face the possibility of an eventual war to defend its farflung empire, and the Ten-Year Rule was abandoned, and when Hitler became chancellor of a Nazi Germany in 1933, Britain had to face rearming against the possibility of another war in Europe as well. Chamberlain presided over finance and defense spending in a Conservative government headed by Stanley Baldwin, who took little interest in foreign affairs. By 1936, Chamberlain had made himself Baldwin's obvious successor, and was using his Treasury position more and more to dominate issues of national security — the government's principal decisionmaker on rearmament and Anglo-German relations, instead of the Foreign Secretary. "Sound" financial policy and "normal" industrial production therefore remained the government's key goals despite the deteriorating international situation.

As a result, and with nervous concurrence from Britain's service chiefs, Chamberlain brought about an important alteration of the balance that Whitehall had traditionally striven to maintain between three competing military priorities: imperial defense and defense of the empire's trade routes, home defense of the British Isles, and the ability to project a force onto the European continent. The last priority was sharply downgraded now, and the British Army's force structure and readiness severely curbed⁸. In doing so, Chamberlain studiously chose to ignore the traditional British goal of a balance of power on the European continent, in which Britain served as the linchpin of a coalition of weaker nations against the strongest. Yet at same time, Chamberlain did not build up collective security as a substitute for the

balance of power in fact he began to weaken collective security further now, by reducing the sanctions imposed upon Italy as a result of its invasion of Abyssinia. This "encouraged the assumption," wrote one of his supporters with no sign of regret, "that Mr Chamberlain had a foreign policy of his own which was certainly not that of [Foreign Secretary Anthony] Eden and perhaps not that of the League of Nations at all."⁹

The factors molding Chamberlain's views of Britain's situation, and the appropriate strategy to meet it, were shared by many others in the 1930s,¹⁰ giving him the confidence to pursue a policy of appeasement. The first, and most important, was the conviction that the Great War had been a tragic mistake which must never be repeated. Pre-1914 Europe's rigid dynastic blocs, fueled by a senseless arms race, had made it possible for a devastating war to be triggered by a trivial incident. Another such war, with weapons even more terrible than those used in 1914-18, had to be avoided at all costs. Britain could not survive another modern total war, in which the bomber "would always get through," and lay waste to civilian population and industrial targets.¹¹ A second factor was the view that Germany had been treated unjustly at Versailles in 1919, and had legitimate grievances to be redressed. A third was the belief that while a small measure of rearmament might be necessary, for domestic political reasons if nothing else, Britain's true security lay in its economic recovery, and rearmament was the least remunerative form of government expenditure. Only a special loan could finance the kind of rearmament demanded by irresponsible people like Churchill, Chamberlain argued, and this, he insisted — unpersuaded by the new Keynesian views just coming into vogue about that time — would be ruinous.¹² A fourth factor was the belief that rational men could resolve their differences through bargaining, once you identified the interests that they had in common, a view taken from his domestic political life, especially experience in labor-management relations.¹³ (When Chamberlain became prime minister in 1937, he chose as his principal adviser on how to deal with the Germans the government's

Chief Industrial Adviser, Horace Wilson, whose expertise lay in labor conciliation) And finally, a fifth important factor was the Tory view that Britain's true enemy was not Germany in any event, but communist Russia, the class-warfare enemy — and that a revived Germany could be a useful bulwark against Soviet expansion

Appeasing Hitler: Authority at Home, Personal Diplomacy Abroad

When Chamberlain became prime minister in at the end of May 1937, he put his views into action. Rearmament, already far behind in the area now deemed central to a future war in Europe, the Anglo-German air balance, was kept under a tight rein,¹⁴ while a policy of active appeasement — in the non-perjorative terms of the day, the peaceful addressal of Germany's legitimate grievances — was launched.

To manage these issues, Chamberlain acted to consolidate his authority at home. Not for him Stanley Baldwin's style, of presiding over the Cabinet like a paternal chairman of the board — Chamberlain acted as an assertive CEO, brooking no challenge or disagreement, and never shrinking from usurping the portfolios of his own ministers, especially the Foreign Office, for which he had a contemptuously low regard.¹⁵ He made himself for all intents and purposes his own foreign minister. The skeptical young Foreign Secretary he had inherited, Anthony Eden, was soon pushed out of the Cabinet, and replaced by the ageing weak figure of Lord Halifax. The British Ambassador in Berlin, Sir Eric Phipps, whose warnings about Nazi Germany were inconvenient, was replaced by Sir Neville Henderson, whose reporting and representation reflected his feeling that he "had been specially selected by Providence with the definite mission of helping to preserve the peace of the world."¹⁶ The despairing Air Minister, Lord Swinton, was brought to resign over Chamberlain's repeated refusal to adopt his rearmament goals. Critics were brushed off by the government, and ridiculed by the press, especially the *Times*, whose editor, Geoffrey Dawson, believed that "the peace of the world depends more than anything else upon our getting into reasonable relations with

Germany "¹⁷ With the help of various press barons and editors, Chamberlain skilfully manipulated Britain's press in order to influence public opinion, and did it so well that in time he came to take the press's echoing of his own views *for* the public's opinion ¹⁸

Abroad, Hitler's remilitarization of the Rhineland in 1936 had already been swallowed by the Baldwin government. In the spring of 1938, Chamberlain was confronted with Hitler's takeover of Austria, an act followed with bewildering speed by new German demands for the Sudetenland of Czechoslovakia, with its large numbers of ethnic Germans. While Chamberlain was startled by the *Anschluss*, it convinced him that collective security was useless, and ended in his accelerating efforts to reach a negotiated settlement with Hitler, based upon the principle of self-determination for the German people. Czechoslovakia, in Chamberlain's view, was an artificial and unsustainable unit, the residue of Versailles ¹⁹. And without bothering to obtain Parliamentary authority for the course he took — without seeking military advice,²⁰ in opposition to the Foreign Office, without consulting Paris, "and in almost complete ignorance of Soviet attitudes,"²¹ he embarked upon a personal-diplomacy campaign which culminated in a series of hastily launched trips to Germany to negotiate directly with the Nazi dictator (in the final stages, dragging a reluctant but weak and fearful French government behind him).

There followed the remarkable spectacle of a British statesman trying, with little reference to the government of the small democracy that was Hitler's prey, harder and harder as time passed, to persuade the Nazi dictator to accept the territory and people that he was demanding. Hitler's tactic was to not take yes for an answer. The closer Chamberlain came to agreeing to the German demand's distasteful details, the farther Hitler moved beyond it, and demanded more. As war jitters grew, Chamberlain actually weakened his people's will with his (later notorious) radio address of September 27, 1938: "How horrible, fantastic, incredible it is that we should be digging trenches and trying on gas masks here because of

a quarrel in a far-away country between people of whom we know nothing " The final talks ended in the Munich Agreement of September 30, 1938 The Sudetenland, with its strategic system of fortresses (the equivalent of 35 divisions, had Britain and France chosen to fight, it was estimated), was detached from Czechoslovakia, and handed over to Germany It was his last territorial demand, Hitler said, and Chamberlain, for a while the most popular man in Europe, returned home to a tumultuous reception declaring "peace in our time "

COUNTING UP THE RECKONING

Events proved otherwise Chamberlain had failed to discern Hitler's true nature and intentions, interpreting him in the conventional terms with which Chamberlain the man of business was familiar Until it was too late, he was incapable of recognizing Hitler as the revolutionary he was, having brushed away all warnings by others Personal impressions proved a poor substitute for the Foreign Office insight that Chamberlain had disregarded ²²

Appeasement euphoria in Britain did not last long By December, second thoughts, and what might be called a moral twinge, were beginning to set in among many Britons who at the end of September had felt relieved when the threat of war was lifted ²³ Three months later, in March 1939, Hitler seized the remainder of Czechoslovakia, and then set his aim on Poland Public opinion in Britain finally turned against appeasement,²⁴ and opponents of the government gathered political strength In the final months of peace, Chamberlain, while continuing to assure Hitler of Britain's wish for peace, attempted to shore up its security position But where his earlier efforts at appeasement had been strong and tireless, now his measures were half-hearted Rearmament was stepped up, but had far to go to make up for what Churchill called "the locust years" of 1933-38 ²⁵ No effort was made to rally the British people in ways that would make a useful deterrent impression upon Nazis And what might have counted most at this juncture, an alliance with the Soviet Union, to threaten Germany with a two-front war if Poland was attacked, was given only desultory and grudging pursuit

by Chamberlain. The result was Hitler out-maneuvering Chamberlain diplomatically by late August 1939 — stunning the world by signing a non-aggression pact with his arch-rival Stalin. Hitler was freed to attack Poland without fear of war with Russia, and on September 1, 1939, Chamberlain found himself called upon to honor his tardy commitment to Poland (Even then, it took three days and the threat of a Cabinet revolt for him to do so.)

From the first, Chamberlain let Hitler, whom he failed to understand, set the agenda and define the issues of peace and war. His response had been "a capital illustration of the latest technique in industrial conciliation," drawn from Chamberlain's and Horace Wilson's civil experience, where in fact labor and management *do* have interests in common — not the most useful model for dealing with international predators, and one that produced terrible results here.²⁶ Chamberlain's appeasement policy had helped bring on the war by convincing Hitler that he had little to fear from Britain (or France, since it became clear that Paris would not act without London). And Chamberlain's behavior had convinced Stalin that the British preferred Hitler to him, and that Whitehall's goal was to foment war between Russia and Germany. Politically, Chamberlain's policy encouraged Britain's enemies to eventually go too far, while turning an important potential ally away.

Militarily, Chamberlain's economic policies and restrictions on military spending left Britain at war without forces capable of conducting meaningful operations against Germany in 1939 and 1940. Chamberlain had assiduously avoided developing forces for a continental war, and while peace lasted another eleven months after Munich, it was only after Germany seized the rest of Czechoslovakia in March 1939 that illusions finally gave way to serious rearmament efforts. They were far from complete when Poland fell in the autumn of 1939, and so six months of "phony war" followed in the West until Germany suddenly attacked in May–June 1940, with a new kind of armored warfare that few in Britain understood yet. The Low Countries and a weak and divided France fell, the small British Army on the continent

was barely evacuated before being overrun, and England was left to face, on its own, the greatest continental threat it had ever known. Neville Chamberlain finally fell from office, to be succeeded as prime minister by his most indefatigable peacetime critic, Winston Churchill.

In addition to having helped bring about what Churchill called an unnecessary war, Neville Chamberlain's appeasement policy had some effects upon international politics which outlasted the war. While it goes some distance to say, as A. L. Rowse has, that appeasement led to the shift away from Europe as the center of the world's affairs,²⁷ since many other elements of national power were involved in the emergence of a superpower bipolar world at the end of World War II, undeniably appeasement played a key role in bringing on the conflagration that ended in the emergence of that world, and Europe's long eclipse.

The experience of appeasement and its costs also restored the appreciation of power in international affairs, which had been neglected in the foreign policies of the democracies between the World Wars. In reaction to this neglect, E. H. Carr had begun writing his seminal work *The Twenty Years' Crisis* in 1937, publishing it just as World War II broke out, and when he came to write an introduction to the second edition, a few months after the end of the war, with Europe in ruins, he dryly observed

The Twenty Years' Crisis was written with the deliberate aim of counteracting the glaring and dangerous defect of nearly all thinking, both academic and popular, about international politics in English-speaking countries from 1919 to 1939 — the almost total neglect of the factor of power. Today this defect, though it sometimes recurs when items of a future settlement are under discussion, has been to a considerable extent overcome, and some passages of *The Twenty Years' Crisis* state their arguments with a rather one-sided emphasis which no longer seems as necessary or appropriate today as it did in 1939.²⁸

Finally, appeasement, as noted earlier, created a foreign policy metaphor which strongly influenced the thinking of U.S. Cold War strategists.²⁹ Diplomatic historians are a long way from drawing up a final balance-sheet on the Cold War reaction to appeasement — where it had a positive outcome, and where it didn't — but at least the Cold War's statesmen tried to avoid the mistakes of the 1930s. And where the United States did stand aside

during the Cold War, for example in response to the Hungarian uprising of 1956, its decisions tended to be based upon cool calculations of what was at stake, and the overall, long-term, U S interest

Today, following the Cold War, Munich and Vietnam continue to jostle each other in the minds of U S policymakers. When a crisis such as Bosnia arises today, Munich and Vietnam are perhaps altogether too much poles of misplaced historicity between which our minds swing indecisively in foreign policy debate. One can learn a great deal from history. But it may be possible to learn too much, applying "lessons of history" uncritically when less emotionally-charged calculations of power and interest would serve the public and nation better.

Notes

- 1 Telford Taylor in his monumental study *Munich The Price of Peace* (New York. Doubleday), 1979, p xii, provides this definition "In the world of international affairs, Munich has come to mean a conciliatory, yielding approach to the resolution of conflicts, and in this sense 'Munich' is commonly coupled with a policy of avoiding confrontations of force by giving way to the demanding party, a policy to which the term 'appeasement' is attached "
- 2 For example, columnist Anthony Lewis's recent use of the term to deride European inaction before Serbian aggression "President Clinton has acted now He has shown again the irreplaceability of American leadership Without it, the Europeans were feckless With it, even an appeasement-minded British Government will follow " "How Serious Are We?", *New York Times*, September 9, 1995, p A27
- 3 See its report *The Meaning of Munich Fifty Years Later* (Washington, D C United States Institute of Peace), 1990
- 4 Larry William Fuchser, *Neville Chamberlain and Appeasement* (New York. Norton), 1982, p x
- 5 Stuart Hodgson, *The Man Who Made the Peace* (New York. Dutton), 1938, p 39 Hodgson (whose book was written in tones of unstinting admiration and approval before Munich began to go sour,) had been the editor of the *London Daily News*
- 6 For example, no paper could be circulated to the Cabinet, Chamberlain insisted in 1936 to Minister for War Duff Cooper, until it had received the approval of the Treasury Fuchser, p 69
- 7 Hodgson, p 51
- 8 See Michael Howard's *The Continental Commitment The dilemma of British defence policy in the era of the two world wars* (London Temple Smith), 1972, which notes (p 103) the British service chiefs' own inclination in favor of colonial defense over the ability to fight a new war on the European continent "four-square behind Mr Chamberlain when in 1937 he began his search for friendship with at least one of the dictators " Chamberlain also drew upon B H Liddell Hart's views in the *Times*, that in a future war, air and naval power would play the dominant roles, rather than land power, allowing Chamberlain to argue that a diminished Army would not seriously impair British security Fuchser, pp 85-86
- 9 Hodgson, p 57
- 10 In his memoir *Appeasement A Study in Political Decline* (New York. Norton, 1961), A L Rowse, who as a Fellow at All Souls College, Oxford, in the 1930s had been a witness to the debate, defined Chamberlainites as possessing the following traits in common they were "men of peace" — "i.e. no use for confronting force, or guile, or wickedness", they were of Nonconformist origin, with its "characteristic self-righteousness", they were middle-class men with pacifist backgrounds, lacking knowledge of European history and languages, or of diplomacy or military strategy, they were concerned about communism, and happy to find bulwarks against it, they had no real comprehension of the traditional British principle of the balance of power, and they believed that neither was anyone else willing to consider war as a means any longer See Rowse, pp 19-20 (Emphasis added)
- 11 See Uri Bialer, *The Shadow of the Bomber The Fear of Air Attack and British Politics 1932-1939* (London Royal Historical Society), 1980 British military projections of bomb casualties in a new war, based on more or less straight-line extrapolations of what turned out to be disproportionately high casualties of German air raids on London in 1916, predicted as many as 50,000 fatalities a day Bialer quotes a later prime minister, Harold Macmillan (*Winds of Change*, 1966), who had been a young M P

in the 1930s "expert advice had indicated that bombing of London and the great cities would lead to casualties of the order of hundreds of thousands or even millions within a few weeks. *We thought of air warfare in 1938 rather as people think of nuclear warfare today*" (Emphasis in the original)

12 Keith Feiling's sympathetic 1946 biography, *The Life of Neville Chamberlain* (London: Macmillan) curiously provides only two passing mentions of John Maynard Keynes, with no explication whatever of his ideas about the role of government spending to end recessions — his landmark work *The General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money* was published in 1936 — of what Chamberlain as Chancellor of the Exchequer and then Prime Minister thought about them

13 For example, in a speech in Birmingham soon after becoming prime minister, Chamberlain said that the fundamental lesson that he had learned in his long political career was that "there is always some common measure of agreement if only we will look for it." His mission as prime minister, he continued, was to find that common measure of agreement, and act upon it before it was too late. See Fuchser, p. 82

14 Parity in the Anglo-German air balance became the principal measure of military strength by which Chamberlain's opponents attacked him in Parliament. To respond, since despite an increasing rate of aircraft production through the 1930s Britain's air force was still falling behind Germany's, the Baldwin and then the Chamberlain government kept changing the terms of measurement in order to portray the RAF as not as far behind the Luftwaffe as Churchill and others charged. And as time went on, the year of comparison was pushed further and further out into the future. Hence, while in 1935 the comparison was between combat-ready aircraft, not counting squadron reserves, by 1936, reserve aircraft were being counted as well, even in cases where airframes lacked engines, by 1937, as the RAF continued to slip further behind, the measurement was switched to bombers alone, with the argument that bombers were what would count in the next war, and by 1938, when intelligence indicated that Germany was producing greater numbers of bombers as well as fighters, bomb damage was made the measurement of parity, since the Luftwaffe was building light and medium bombers, and the RAF had a heavy bomber on the drawing boards. The year chosen for comparison was 1943, since the Lancaster heavy bomber was expected to enter service then. Unfortunately for Britain, the war came not in 1943, but in 1939.

15 Chamberlain had been "for some years girded at the conduct of the Foreign Office," says Feiling, p. 326, though "he was by no means solitary in that." Anthony Eden's distrust of Hitler and appeasement was shared by many others at the Foreign Office, such as Permanent Under-Secretary Sir Robert Vansittart, and Ralph Wigram, head of the Central Department (and an informant of Churchill's). Given the Foreign Office's views, Chamberlain found it expedient to bypass it at critical times, and safe to do so as far as his own political supporters were concerned.

16 Neville Henderson, quoted in Gaines Post, Jr., *Dilemmas of Appeasement: British Deterrence and Defense, 1934-1937* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press), 1993, p. 305

17 Quoted in Rowse, p. 10

18 See Richard Cockett, *Twilight of Truth: Chamberlain, Appeasement and the Manipulation of the Press* (New York: St. Martin's Press), 1989, who identifies three principal effects of Chamberlain's "tight control of the press" — first, that "no alternative to appeasement as pursued by Chamberlain could ever be consistently articulated in the British press, nor were the facts and figures that might have supported such an alternative policy ever put in front of the majority of the British public. Chamberlain, helped by the press barons and certain editors, did his utmost to ensure that there was no 'education' of the country, thus allowing him to pursue his policy of appeasement as the only available policy option" (pp. 188-89), second, that Chamberlain "thus managed artfully and successfully to obscure the divisions over his policy that existed not only in Whitehall and Westminster but

throughout the country" (p 189), and third, that "Chamberlain, and to a certain extent the rest of the inner Cabinet, were so mesmerized by the game of news control as exercised in the conspiratorial corridors of Whitehall that they became almost totally incapable of detecting real 'public opinion' Chamberlain, in particular, operated in a political vacuum for the last eighteen months of his premiership, unable to accept any criticism at face value, constantly attributing such unwelcome intrusions to personal spite or the inspired machinations of another part of Whitehall" (pp 190-91)

19 Fuchser, p 111 See also Feiling, p 348, about Chamberlain abandoning any idea of a guarantee to Czechoslovakia within eight days of the *Anschluss*

20 In any event, given the low military preparedness, "whatever its deficiencies appeasement in the circumstances of 1937, 1938 and 1939 was a policy heartily approved, and frequently recommended, by the service departments" David Dilks, "The Unnecessary War? Military Advice and Foreign Policy in Great Britain, 1931-1939," in *General Staffs and Diplomacy Before the Second World War*, ed by Adrian Preston (London Croom Helm), 1978, p 119

21 Fuchser, p 116

22 Chamberlain, it appears, could have benefitted from the National War College course *Genius, Rogue, Saint or Psychopath How Will You Know?*

23 Harold Nicolson, in his diary for December 31, 1938, wrote "It has been a bad year Chamberlain has destroyed the Balance of Power A foul year Next year will be worse" Harold Nicolson, *Diaries and Letters 1930-1964*, edited by Stanley Olson (New York Atheneum), 1980, p 143

24 The scales fell from the eyes of even ardent Chamberlainites like Henry "Chips" Channon, who recorded in his diary for March 15, 1939 "Hitler has entered Prague, apparently, and Czechoslovakia has ceased to exist No balder, bolder departure from the written bond has ever been committed in history The manner of it surpassed comprehension and his callous desertion of the Prime Minister is stupefying His whole policy of appeasement is in ruins" *Chips The Diaries of Sir Henry Channon*, ed by Robert Rhodes James (London Penguin Books), 1970, p 230

25 G C Peden, *British Rearmament and the Treasury 1932-1939* (Edinburgh Scottish Academic Press), 1979, pp 8-11

26 "The theory of this," says Hodgson, "is that the arbitrator should never intervene until the last possible moment He should have the courage to resist popular clamour for his intervention and to turn a deaf ear even to the demands of the disputants themselves He should tell them bluntly to put their own house in order for themselves, and leave them to continue the quarrel till the very last moment when a final breach seems certain Then he must not wait, for if the strike or lockout is actually called, then, apart from the loss which such things entail in themselves, it is much harder to bring the parties together But just before that happens there is a moment when at least the soberer people on both sides are wondering whether the game is really worth the candle That is the arbitrator's opportunity If he has spent the time of waiting in examining the situation, he may be able to produce a scheme on the spot which will command at that moment the support of the mass of both sides" Hodgson, pp 76-77 In fact, this is too charitable to Chamberlain Britain, France, Italy and Germany agreed without the presence of the Czechoslovak government to transfer part of its territory to Germany, in the name of self-determination, but without the plebiscite that Hitler refused to permit — and when informed of the outcome of the Powers' talks, were told that Czechoslovakia's alternative was to face war with Germany alone

27 Rowse, p 4

28 E H Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919–1939* (London Macmillan), second edition, 1946, pp vii–viii

29 John Lewis Gaddis's *Strategies of Containment* (Oxford U P, 1982) documents many instances in postwar US history when concern about the implications of appeasement, in the pejorative, played a role in strategic decisions — for example, during the debate in 1949 over selective versus global containment, over the possibility of dividing the Soviet Union from other communist states (p 69), whether to develop the hydrogen bomb (p 81), and whether to limit military operations in Korea to south of the 38th parallel (p 111). As a British historical experience, the postwar reaction to appeasement may have played a role in latter-day Britain's "little wars" of the 20th (as opposed to 19th) century — Anthony Eden's unsuccessful Suez expedition of 1956, and Margaret Thatcher's successful but expensive Falklands campaign in 1982.