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# In The Nation

## We Must Construct a New Foreign Policy

By ARTHUR KROCK

With the compact of Munich the foreign policy of the present administration became obsolete, and presumably the President, Secretary Hull and Under-Secretary Welles are searching for a new one. Perhaps its outlines emerged in Mr. Welles's radio speech Monday night in which, after dutifully seeking to prove that Mr. Roosevelt rather than Mr. Chamberlain and Premier Mussolini resolved last week's crisis, he offered a world program.

In its outlined details this was not new at all: disarmament, no bombing or gassing of civilians and cities, the leveling of economic barriers, all to be arranged at a world conference which this government would be happy to initiate if the prospect of agreement seemed hopeful. Since we have been urging conventions like these for years, since only this week Mr. Chamberlain promised that Great Britain would now rear up at a speedier rate, and since nationalism in Europe seems more acute than ever, an effective world conference appears to be distant still.

But something important happened after the Roosevelt administration began to make these same proposals to the world, something that wrote "finis" on the foreign policy which was their base and called for a substitute. This government through the President associated itself by inference with a settlement (that of Munich) which was founded on treaty-violation. And this government, through Mr. Roosevelt's direct appeals to Hitler and Mussolini, inferentially canceled a long series of official attacks on the dictators by asking and receiving from them consideration of our plea to accept the fruits of aggression instead of rudely plucking them.

### The Dictators Who Obligated

Mussolini, although he had interceded with Hitler before he received Mr. Roosevelt's fervent suggestion that he do so, at any rate proceeded as the President asked. Hitler, whether or not the second American note was in any way responsible, did agree to wait a few days to get nine-tenths of his demands, and this is what Mr. Roosevelt asked the Fuehrer to do. The Washington administration is very proud of, and even inclined to exaggerate, the effects and circumstances of its efforts, and thus is in the position of approving the Compact of Munich. Therefore it cannot conceivably resume its hints that Germany and Italy should be "quarantined"; and, in view of what at Munich the President estimated to Hitler would be "an outstanding historic service to humanity," might not impress Tokyo as logical if it continued to frown on Japan for seizing parts of China. Japanese statesmen might naturally reason that, if China will quit resisting and accept the conquest, that, too, would be "an outstanding historic service to humanity."

Viewed in this light, our intervention in Europe calls for a readjustment of previous foreign policy. On the official record the United States Government is under obligations to one dictator for receiving something on threat of force instead of taking it by force. And it is under obligations to another dictator for persuading the first one so to proceed. If this does not call for an end of official attacks on the treaty-breakers and the aggressors, and that does not imply a change in policy, it is most difficult to understand what else it does call for and imply.

### Realism for the Future

During the barrage of Presidential and State Department utterances in 1937 and 1938 many hard words were spoken of the dictatorial governments, and resentment in Berlin and Rome was at least as great as it was in Tokyo. In that same period Washington high officials denounced the cession or possession of territory by force and unilateral revision or destruction of treaties. Oct. 5, 1937, the President said at Chicago that "when an epidemic of physical disease starts to spread the community approves and joins in a quarantine of the patients in order to protect the health of the community against the spread of the disease." The dictator States accepted this as a definite threat of action. About this same time "a high official" explained to THE NEW YORK TIMES our policy meant that "war-threatening countries cannot obtain their objectives by default because of the unwillingness of peace-loving nations to insist on respect for the rights and sanctity of international obligations."

Those words and that policy were thrown out of the window of the Fuehrerhaus at Munich. In the belief of the governments of Great Britain, France and the United States they had to be ejected to avert a general war. Maybe Hitler was bluffing, but that is beside the point. The outcome is peace, though for how long no man knows. A realistic policy replaced the fine words of Washington, London and Paris, with all three governments assenting directly or tacitly, and British, French and American statesmen publicly rejoicing over the result.

The "quarantine" was not invoked by Mr. Roosevelt. Quite the contrary. The "war-threatening countries" did "obtain their objectives by default." So be it. If a realistic foreign policy at Washington is the result, and pious preachments without intent to implement are abandoned for hard facts, then possibly what happened at Munich may not happen soon again.