

to Europe and the feeling of solidarity to the European nations.

After the other states had not only failed to fulfil their obligation to disarm, but in addition all proposals for a limitation of armaments had also been declined, I felt myself obliged, as the Führer of the German nation, responsible to God and my own conscience, in face of the growth of new military alliances and after receiving the information that France was introducing a two-year period of service, to restore once more, by virtue of the right to life of the nation itself, the legal equality of Germany, which has been refused her internationally. It was not Germany who thus broke a contractual obligation which had been laid upon her but those states which had compelled us to adopt this independent action. The introduction of the universal military service and the promulgation of the law for the establishment of the new German army were nothing else than the restoration to Germany of a status of equal rights which threatens nobody but guarantees Germany security.

In this connection I cannot avoid expressing my astonishment here at a statement which was publicly made by the British Prime Minister, Mr. MacDonald, who said—with regard to the restoration of a German defence force—that the other states had been right after all in being cautious about disarmament. If this view is generally adopted, any sort of conduct may be expected in the future. For, according to this view, every breach of a treaty will be subsequently condoned because the other partner is supposed to deduce the same consequences; that is to say, A and B conclude a treaty. B fulfils his obligation and A fails to observe his obligation: After years of warning B also finally states that the treaty is no longer valid for him, whereupon A is entitled to declare that thereby his previous breach of the treaty has now received subsequent moral justification, in that B has now also abandoned the treaty.

I should like here to deal just briefly with the reproaches

and imputations which have been levelled against the restoration of the German military service.

It is stated in the first place that Germany is not menaced by anyone and hence, secondly, that it is not comprehensible why Germany should rearm at all.

This would give rise to the counter-question of why the other side, who in any case could feel less menaced by a disarmed Germany than vice versa, did not stop rearming and finally reduce armaments. But when it is asserted that Germany menaces the other states by re-arming, then the increase of the armaments of the other states was at least a much greater menace for a disarmed and defenceless Germany.

I believe that in this case there is only a choice of one thing or the other. If warlike armaments are a menace to peace, then they are a menace for all states. But if they are not a war menace, then they are not a menace for any state. It will not do for one group to represent their armaments as an olive branch of peace and those of the others as the devil's wand. A tank is a tank, and a bomb is a bomb. The opinion that it is possible to divide up the world for all time into states with different rights will always be recognised only by the one side. The German nation, in any case, is not prepared to be regarded and treated for all time as a second-class nation or one with inferior rights. Our love of peace is perhaps greater than that of the other nations, for we suffered most from this unhappy war. No one of us means to threaten anybody. It is only that we are all determined to secure and maintain equality for the German people. But this equality is also the primary prerequisite for every form of practical and collective cooperation.

So long as there are any mental reservations in this respect, really successful European cooperation will be impossible from the start. Once in possession of absolute equality of rights, Germany will never refuse to participate in those efforts which are intended to serve the cause of human

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