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CENTRAL (GERMANY).

December 30, 1939.

CONFIDENTIAL.

SECTION 1.

[C 228/7/62 (1940)]

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*Statements on War and Peace Aims made on behalf of His Majesty's Government
in the United Kingdom from the Outbreak of War to the End of 1939.*

(1)

*Extract from Speech by the Prime Minister in the House of Commons on
September 20, 1939.*

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I HAVE only one general comment to make. Our general purpose in this struggle is well known. It is to redeem Europe from the perpetual and recurring fear of German aggression and enable the peoples of Europe to preserve their independence and their liberties.

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(2)

*Extract from Speech by the Prime Minister in the House of Commons on
October 3, 1939.*

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The reason for which this country entered the war has been frequently proclaimed. It was to put an end to the successive acts of German aggression which menaced the freedom and the very security of all the nations of Europe.

The immediate cause of the war was the deliberate invasion of Poland by Germany, the latest, but by no means the only, act of aggression planned and carried through by the German Government.

But if Poland was the direct occasion of war, it was not the fundamental cause. That cause was the overwhelming sense in this country and in France of the intolerable nature of a state of affairs in which the nations of Europe were faced with the alternative of jeopardising their freedom or of mobilising their forces at regular intervals to defend it.

The passage in the Russo-German declaration about the liquidation of the war is obscure, but it seems to combine a suggestion of some proposal for peace with a scarcely veiled threat as to the consequences if the proposal should be refused.

I cannot anticipate what the nature of any such proposal might be. But I can say at once that no threat would ever induce this country or France to abandon the purpose for which we have entered upon this struggle.

To attempt—as German propaganda does—to saddle us with the responsibility for continuing the war because we are not prepared to abandon the struggle before this purpose is achieved, is only another instance of German war technique. The responsibility for the war rests upon those who have conceived and carried out this policy of successive aggression, and it can neither be evaded nor excused.

And I would add one thing more. No mere assurances from the present German Government could be accepted by us. For that Government have too often proved in the past that their undertakings are worthless when it suits them that they should be broken. If, therefore, proposals are made, we shall certainly examine them and we shall test them in the light of what I have just said. Nobody desires the war to continue for an unnecessary day, but the overwhelming mass of opinion in this country, and I am satisfied also in France, is determined to secure that the rule of violence shall cease, and that the word of Governments, once pledged, must henceforth be kept.

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