

XI

***The message which was communicated to His Majesty's Ambassador
by the German State Secretary on the 31st of August, 1939.***

His Majesty's Government informed the German Government in a note dated August 28, 1939, of their readiness to offer their mediation towards direct negotiations between Germany and Poland over the problems in dispute.

In so doing they made it abundantly clear that they, too, were aware of the urgent need for progress in view of the continuous incidents and the general European tension.

In a reply dated August 29, 1939, the German Government, in spite of being sceptical as to the desire of the Polish Government to come to an understanding, declared themselves ready in the interests of peace to accept British mediation or suggestion.

After considering all circumstances prevailing at the time, they considered it necessary in their note to point out that if the danger of catastrophe was to be avoided, then action must be taken readily, and without delay. In this sense they declared themselves ready to receive a personage appointed by the Polish Government up to the evening of the 30th of August, with the proviso that the latter was in fact empowered not only to discuss but to conduct and conclude negotiations.

Further the German Government pointed out that they felt able to make the basic points regarding the offer of an understanding available to the British Government by the time the Polish negotiator arrived in Berlin.

Instead of a statement regarding the arrival of an authorized Polish personage, the first answer the Government of the Reich received to their readiness for an understanding, was news of Polish mobilization and only towards 12 o'clock on the night of the 30th of August, 1939, did they receive a somewhat general assurance of British readiness to help towards commencement of negotiations.

Although the fact that the Polish negotiator expected by the Government of the Reich did not arrive removed the necessary conditions for informing His Majesty's Government of the view of the German Government as regards possible bases for negotiation since His Majesty's Government themselves had pleaded for direct negotiations between Germany and Poland, the German Minister for Foreign Affairs, Herr von Ribbentrop, gave the British Ambassador on the occasion of the presentation of the last British note precise information as to the text of the German proposals which would be regarded as a basis of negotiation in the event of the arrival of a Polish plenipotentiary.