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Defendant CONSTANTIN von NEURATH

62.03

(Neumann rough draft, unedited)

Von Neurath joined the cabinet of the defendant von Papen after a long diplomatic career and, on 2 June 1932, was made Foreign Minister at the age of 59. He retained this position until 2 February 1938 when he was appointed President of the Geheime Kabinettsrat (Secret Cabinet Council), a newly created institution, which he headed until the downfall of Nazism.

As a member of the von Papen cabinet and later under the Hitler regime, the defendant was one of the foremost protagonists of Germany's aggressive foreign policy the main points of which were:

- 1) The abrogation of the Treaty of Versailles;
- 2) The incorporation of all "racial" Germans living outside German sovereignty into the German Reich, specifically the incorporation of Austria.

The defendant's greatest contribution to the victory of Nazism and the preparation for aggressive war was the large part he played, as one of Germany's most outstanding representatives of the aristocracy and of the high civil service, in bringing about the alliance between the new ruling groups represented by the Nazi Party and the old reactionary ruling groups composed of Junkers, aristocrats, generals and industrialists and high civil servants. He sealed this union by accepting on Hitler's request the position of a Reichsprotektor of Czechoslovakia after the conquest of that country (18 March 1939). On 22 September 1940, Hitler awarded him the War Merit Cross 1st Class

in recognition of his work as Reichprotektor. He received the Nazi Party's Golden Honor Badge. Hitler personally made him honorary SS Gruppenfuehrer on September 1937,^{1/} and SS Obergruppenfuehrer on 21 June 1943. On 30 January 1937, when the Reich Cabinet celebrated its 4th anniversary, the defendant thanked Hitler "on behalf of those cabinet members who up till now had not yet belonged to the Nazi Party" for having been made a Party member.^{2/} On his 70th birthday (2 February 1943), he was praised for his services to Nazi foreign policy.

The defendant was responsible for Germany's withdrawal from the League of Nations and signed the appeal of the Reich Government of 14 October 1933 which informed the German people of this decision. The defendant's foreign policy was instrumental in laying the foundations for the aggressive war of 1939. He consistently deceived German and foreign public opinion about Germany's true aims and in many memoranda and speeches^{3/} distorted the intentions of the Nazi government. He stated, on many occasions, that the sole aim of his government was to attain "Gleichberechtigung" - equal rights - with other nations.

The defendant was thus responsible for the Wehrgesetz of 21 May 1935 (introducing compulsory military service).^{4/} He was responsible for the memorandum of 25 May 1935 addressed to the "Locarno Powers"^{5/} which prepared Germany's breach of the

1/ Dokumente V, p. 59.

2/ Dokumente V, pp. 58/59.

3/ Before the International Road Congress, 17 September 1934, Dokumente II, 86.

4/ R G Bl I, 609.

5/ Dokumente III, 109/111.

Locarno pact. In conjunction with the defendant RIBBENTROP, he engineered the German-English Naval Agreement of 18 June 1935 which was a piece of deliberate deception. He laid the political groundwork for the re-militarization of the Rhineland on 7 March 1936 and, in a memorandum of the same date repudiated the Locarno Pact. He continued to justify Nazi policy and to deceive public opinion, notably through the "Peace Plan of the German Reich Government" of 31 March 1936.^{1/}

The defendant was particularly active in the preparation of the conquest of Austria. He was responsible for the German-Austrian agreement of 11 July 1936^{2/} in which the "German Reich Government recognizes the full sovereignty of Austria." It was he who deceived foreign countries about the size and significance of German intervention in the Spanish Civil War.^{3/} Violating Articles 531-362 and 380-386, the defendant caused Germany to unilaterally abrogate international control of certain German rivers.

Throughout his career, the defendant's primary aim was to organize the so-called Western Powers against the USSR and to isolate the USSR. During his term of office, Germany concluded the "Anti-Comintern Pact" with Japan^{4/} and actively propagated

^{1/} Dokumente IV, 17-155

^{2/} Dokumente IV, 157, 158

^{3/} Note to Francois Poncet 17 August 1936 and the Law for Preventing the Participation in the Spanish Civil War, 18 II 1937 R G Bl I, 241 and German notes of 7 January 1937, on 25 January 1936, 16 February 1937 and others, Dokumente V pp. 105-8

^{4/} 25 November 1936.

friendship between Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, praising the unity of Italy and Germany as "community...solemnly affirmed by the leadership and the people".^{1/} During his term of office, Italy joined the Anti-Comintern Pact, and his policy was instrumental in inducing Italy to leave the League of Nations.

The defendant was also instrumental in drawing the Balkan States into the German orbit having visited Belgrade (7-9 June), Sofia (9-11 June) and Budapest (11-14 June 1937).

The Defendant, deceived Belgium about Germany's future policy in order to strengthen the new "neutrality policy of the Belgian government."^{2/} The defendant caused the Chief of the Foreign Organization of the Party (AO), Gauleiter E.W. Bohle, to be brought into the Foreign Office on 30 January 1937 to take charge of all Germans living abroad. Bohle was placed "personally and immediately" under the Defendant,^{3/} so that the defendant may be held responsible for the subversive activities carried out by the A O.

On 18 March 1939, the defendant acceded to Hitler's request to become REICHSPROTEKTOR in Bohemia and Moravia. According to

1/ Article in New York Journal American, 25 October 1937, Dokumente V, 170-2

2/ Neurath's order of 13 October 1937 Dokumente V, 198.

3/ Hitler Decree of 30 January 1937, R G Bl I, 187.

the Hitler Edict of 16 March 1939, the defendant's powers were as follows:

The defendant was the sole representative of Hitler and the Reich Government. He could confirm and revoke appointments to the "autonomous" government at his discretion. The autonomous government was obliged to keep the defendant fully informed. The defendant could veto all decisions which he believed to be damaging to the interests of the Reich. He could, if necessary, issue orders to the "autonomous" government and could, in emergency situations, act with complete independence. The defendant operated through the OBERLANDRAETE, and the German Security Police then organized into two State Police Directorates. A decree of 1 October 1939 authorized the defendant and the Reich Leader SS and Chief of the German Police "to take if necessary such (police) measures which go beyond the limits usually valid for police measures".

The defendant, as the supreme German authority in the so-called Protectorate from 18 March 1939 until 27 September 1941 thus has full responsibility for all criminal acts committed in that area during this term of office.