

**(4) REPLY FROM HIS MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT IN THE UNITED KINGDOM TO HERR HITLER, DATED 28th AUGUST, 1939.**

1. His Majesty's Government have received the message conveyed to them from the German Chancellor by His Majesty's Ambassador in Berlin and have considered it with care which it demands. They note the Chancellor's expression of his desire to make friendship the basis of relations between Germany and the British Empire, and they fully share this desire. They believe, with him, that, if a complete and lasting understanding between the two countries could be established, it would bring untold blessings to both peoples.

2. The Chancellor's message deals with two groups of questions—those which are matters now in dispute between Germany and Poland, and those affecting the ultimate relations of Germany and Great Britain. In connection with these last, His Majesty's Government observe that the German Chancellor has indicated certain proposals which, subject to one condition, he would be prepared to make to the British Government for a general understanding. These proposals are of course stated in very general form and would require closer definition, but His Majesty's Government are fully prepared to take them, with some additions, as subjects for discussion and they would be ready, if the differences between Germany and Poland are peacefully composed, to proceed so soon as practicable to such discussion with a sincere desire to reach agreement.

3. The condition which the German Chancellor lays down is that there must first be a settlement of the differences between Germany and Poland. As to that, His Majesty's Government entirely agree. Everything, however, turns upon the nature of the settlement and the method by which it is to be reached. On these points, the importance of which cannot be absent from the Chancellor's mind, his message is silent, and His Majesty's Government feel compelled to point out that an understanding upon both of these is essential to achieving further progress. The German Government will be aware that His Majesty's Government have obligations to Poland by which they are bound and which they intend to honour. They could not, for any advantage offered to Great Britain, acquiesce in a settlement which put in jeopardy the independence of a State to whom they have given their guarantee.

4. In the opinion of His Majesty's Government a reasonable solution of the differences between Germany and Poland could, and should, be effected by agreement between the two countries on lines which would include the safeguarding of Poland's essential interests, and they recall that in his speech of the 28th April last the German Chancellor recognized the importance of these interests to Poland. But, as was stated by the Prime Minister in his letter to the German Chancellor of the 22nd August, His Majesty's Government consider it essential for the success of discussions which would precede agreement that it should be understood beforehand that any settlement arrived at would be guaranteed by other Powers. His Majesty's Government would be ready, if desired, to make their contribution to the effective operation of such a guarantee.

In the view of His Majesty's Government it follows that the next step should be the initiation of direct discussions between the German and Polish Governments on a basis which would include the principles stated above, namely, the safeguarding of Poland's essential interests and the securing of a settlement by an international guarantee. They have already received a definite assurance from the Polish Government that they are prepared to enter into discussions on this basis, and His Majesty's Government hope that the German Government would for their part also be willing to agree to this course. If, as His Majesty's Government hope, such discussions lead to agreement, the way would be open to negotiation of that wider and more complete understanding between Great Britain and Germany which both countries desire.

5. His Majesty's Government agree with the German Chancellor that one of the principal dangers in the German-Polish situation arises from reports concerning the treatment of minorities. The present state of tension, with its concomitant