

OFFICE OF U.S. CHIEF OF COUNSEL
FOR THE PROSECUTION OF AXIS CRIMINALITY

INTERROGATION DIVISION SUMMARY

Interrogation of Konstantin von Neurath
By: Major Monigan, 2. October 1945, p.m., Nuremberg.

PERSONS AND ORGANIZATIONS IMPLICATED,
AND SUBJECTS

1. VON NEURATH
 - a. Personal political History and views (p. 1, 2, 5, 8, 9, 16, 17, 19)
 - b. As Reich Protector for Bohemia and Moravia (p.3, 4, 5)
 - c. As President of Secret Cabinet Council (p.5)
 - d. Conference of 5. Nov. 1931, (Hoszbach Minister) (p.9-10)
2. HITLER
 - a. Use of force in settling Austrian, Czechoslovakia, Polish, and Russian issues (p. 7, 9, 10, 14, 17, 19)
 - b. Conference of 5. Nov. 1931 (Hoszbach Minister) (p.9-10)
3. VON RIBBENTROP
 - a. Influence over Hitler in regard to a policy of aggression (p.11,12,13,14)
4. VON BLOMBERG, VON FRITSCH, GOERING, HOSZBACH, RAEDER
 - a. Conference of 5. Nov. 1931 (p. 9 - 10)
5. NSDAP
 - a. Activities in Czecho-Slovakia (p. 8)

1932 - 1938

1. Was Foreign Minister from June 1932 to February 4, 1938; then out of office, residing at his home in Wuerttemberg (1) Annexation of Czecho-Slovakia. On learning of Hitler's intention of solving the Sudetenland problem by force, in Sept. 1938, went to see Hitler in Berlin (1); told him it would be a crime, "it will mean war, and I know that you can get the Sudetenland without it." On the same night -Sept.27 or -28 witness went to Munich where Hitler and Goering met with Chamberlain and Daladier. Ribbentrop as Foreign Minister was present after this meeting, returned home, remaining there until the end of February, 1939 (2).

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2. On private business in Berlin, March 18, 1939, he learned that President Dr. Hacha of Czechoslovakia had come to place Bohemia and Moravia under German protection. On March 20, Lammers telephoned asking him to come at once to Vienna to see Hitler. He flew to Vienna where Hitler begged him to take the office of Reich Protector. Agreed to try, hoping he would be able to restrain the extremists in the party. As Reich Protector, says he did not have many powers, but immediately had difficulties with Himmler. Had no control over the police and SS. activities (3). He was Reich Protector from March, 1939 to September 24, 1941 (4). After that date, he never saw Hitler again but, in name, remained Reich Protector.
3. In 1938, after resigning as Foreign Minister, Hitler appointed him President of the Secret Cabinet Counsel, which, however, never "existed" (5).
4. Reviewed the period from 1928 to 1933. In January, 1933, when Hitler was named Chancellor, von Neurath, together with von Schleicher's cabinet, resigned but Hindenburg asked them to stay in office (5). Proposed to Hitler non-aggression pact with Poland (6).

HITLER'S POLICY OF AGGRESSION

1. At the end of 1936, Hitler became more aggressive. (7) Von Neurath was not in favor of incorporating Austria in the Reich; one reason was that the Catholic party in the Reichstag would grow too strong (7). Austria's Anschluss took place in 1938, after his resignation (8).
2. Says the Czech problem grew more acute in May, 1937 owing to the Czech treatment of the Sudetenland and the growing movement of the Nazi party under Henlein (8).
3. Did not like Ribbentrop, opposed his appointment as ambassador to London (8). Hitler's whole attitude became increasingly aggressive whenever the Austria, Czech, or Polish questions were discussed, making remarks such as, "if they won't see it, I will force them." (9)
4. Was opposed to an alliance with Italy and Japan (9). Says that he resigned in Jan. 1938 because of Hitler's anti-Russian politics in January 1938, told Hitler: "If you continue that, we are going to have a new world war." (9).
5. Recalled Hitler's conference of November 5, 1937 in the Reich Chancellery with generals von Blomberg, von Fritsch, Raeder, Goering, Hossbach and himself but claimed to have forgotten the subject matter. (9, 10).

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6. Hitler was greatly disappointed when Ribbentrop's mission failed to come to an agreement with the British Empire (11,12). Von Neurath considered Ribbentrop's reports from London based on poor information, giving Hitler erroneous ideas about England's unwillingness to make war (12). Says Ribbentrop was no diplomat, that he had formed a separate bureau where all kinds of men, mostly untrained and unqualified, worked for him, behind von Neurath's back (13).
7. At a conference Nov.5, 1937 Hitler said "We must now be prepared to go into action." Now I am 50, if I want to solve these problems I must act now or the material of the army will become obsolete." von Neurath holds Ribbentrop responsible as having influenced Hitler's policy (14).
8. Claims he always opposed incorporation of Czechoslovakia and Austria (16,17) but that nobody could get in a word when Hitler orated for hours. (17). Hitler thought it desirable to have Czechoslovakia and Austria joined with Germany because it would provide a single frontier. Von Neurath thought that Austria would like to join but that this was not the case with regard to Czechoslovakia. In 1937, Czechoslovakia was considered as a military threat to Germany, and as a center of military intrigue (19).
9. States that Poland took a piece of Moravia (20). According to his views, Hitler was mistaken in wishing continuation of the war in Spain (20,21). Immediately afterwards, asserts Hitler held the opposite view. With respect to Italy's position on the Balearic islands, disagreed with Hitler. (21). Told Hitler at the end of the conference that an Italian-English-French conflict was not as near as Hitler appeared to assume (summer 1938) and says that events have proved he was right. (22).