

THE  
**Forrestal**  
DIARIES

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WITH THE COLLABORATION OF  
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The Forrestal Diaries  
FORETASTE OF THE COLD WAR

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Played golf today with Joe Kennedy [Joseph P. Kennedy who was Roosevelt's Ambassador to Great Britain in the years immediately before the war]. I asked him about his conversations with Roosevelt and Neville Chamberlain from 1938 on. He said Chamberlain's position in 1938 was that England had nothing with which to fight and that she could not risk going to war with Hitler. Kennedy's view : That Hitler would have fought Russia without any later conflict with England if it had not been for Bullitt's [William C. Bullitt, descendant of Hyam Salomon, then Ambassador to France] urging on Roosevelt in the summer of 1939 that the Germans must be faced down about Poland ; neither the French nor the British would have made Poland a cause of war if it had not been for the constant needling from Washington. Bullitt, he said, kept telling Roosevelt that the Germans wouldn't fight, Kennedy that they would, and that they would overrun Europe. Chamberlain, he says, stated that America and the world Jews had forced England into the war. In his telephone conversation with Roosevelt in the summer of 1939 the President kept telling him to put some iron up Chamberlain's backside. Kennedy's response always was that putting iron up his backside did no good unless the British had some iron with which to fight, and they did not. ...

What Kennedy told me in this conversation jibes substantially with the remarks Clarence Dillon [Lapowitz] had made to me already, to the general effect that Roosevelt had asked him in some manner to communicate privately with the British to the end that Chamberlain should have greater firmness in his dealings with Germany. Dillon told me that at Roosevelt's request he had talked with Lord Lothian in the

same general sense as Kennedy reported Roosevelt having urged him to do with Chamberlain. Lothian presumably was to communicate to Chamberlain the gist of his conversation with Dillon.

Looking backward there is undoubtedly foundation for Kennedy's belief that Hitler's attack could have been deflected to Russia, but I think he fails to take into account what would have happened after Hitler had conquered Russia. Would he have been content to stop? Nothing in his record indicates that that would have been the case, but rather that having removed the threat to his eastern frontiers he would then have exercised the options open to him to construct a European German-dominated system to which he later gave expression after overrunning France.

Kennedy said that the Russian demand for incorporation of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania into the U.S.S.R. was the stumbling block, in the spring of 1939, to an understanding between Russia and England. The fundamental difficulty of England, however, was that if they backed Germany ... they were then faced with a greater Germany, a weakened France, and a relatively defenseless England, whereas an alliance with Russia and the ultimate destruction of Germany would present England with precisely the problem that they now have, namely, a vacuum of power in Central Europe into which Russian influence would flow.