

**ACTING SECRETARY OF STATE, SUMNER WELLES' STATEMENT ON THE GERMAN REICH'S  
ATTACK ON THE SOVIET UNION**

*Washington, June 23, 1941*

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If any further proof could conceivably be required of the real purposes and projects of the present leaders of Germany for world domination, it is now furnished by Hitler's treacherous attack upon Soviet Russia.

We see once more, beyond peradventure of doubt, with what intent the present Government of Germany negotiates "non-aggression pacts." To the leaders of the German Reich sworn engagements to refrain from hostile acts against other countries—engagements regarded in a happier and a civilized world as contracts to the faithful observance of which the honor of nations themselves was pledged—are but a symbol of deceit, and constitute a dire warning on the part of Germany of hostile and murderous intent.

To the present German Government the very meaning of the word "honor" is unknown.

This government often has stated and in many of his public statements the President has declared that the United States maintains that freedom to worship God as their consciences dictate is the great and fundamental right of all peoples. This right has been denied to their peoples by both the Nazi and the Soviet Governments.

To the people of the United States this and other principles and doctrines of communistic dictatorship are as intolerable and as alien to their own beliefs as are the principles and doctrines of Nazi dictatorship. Neither kind of imposed overlordship can have, or will have, any support or any sway in the mode of life, or in the system of government, of the American people.

But the immediate issue that presents itself to the people of the United States is whether the plan for universal conquest, for the cruel and brutal enslavement of all peoples and for the ultimate destruction of the remaining free democracies which Hitler is now desperately trying to carry out, is to be successfully halted and defeated.

That is the present issue which faces a realistic America. It is the issue at this moment which most directly involves our own national defense and the security of the New World in which we live.

In the opinion of this government, consequently, any defense against Hitlerism, any rallying of the forces opposing Hitlerism, from whatever source these forces may spring, will hasten the eventual downfall of the present German leaders, and will therefore redound to the benefit of our own defense and security.

Hitler's armies are today the chief dangers of the Americas.