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Neville Chamberlain and the Spanish Civil War, 1936–9

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Neville Chamberlain's role in the Spanish Civil War is a neglected subject in the history of the conflict. Yet he wielded considerable influence over Britain's Spanish policy. Like most Conservatives, his ideological sympathies lay more with the Nationalist forces led by General Francisco Franco than the besieged Republicans. At the same time, he deplored the intervention of Germany, Italy, and Soviet Russia and was strongly committed to the policy of non-intervention, which he genuinely believed had confined the Spanish conflict and prevented its escalation into a European conflagration. He was strongly opposed to granting belligerent rights to Franco unless foreign volunteers were withdrawn from Spain. He deplored the bombing of civilians in Spain, sought to help the many refugees caused by the war, and tried unsuccessfully on occasions to mediate an end to the conflict. The civil war was a considerable obstacle which threatened to undermine Chamberlain's appeasement of Fascist Italy, intended to weaken the Rome–Berlin Axis, and to constrain Germany in pursuit of general European appeasement. The Prime Minister's commitment to non-intervention in Spain, more the creation of the Foreign Office than his own, did no serious damage to British economic and strategic interests before June 1940.

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I.

The historical literature on the Chamberlain government of the late 1930s is considerable. Neville Chamberlain's role in the formulation and conduct of British foreign policy has been the focus of many books and articles covering subjects as diverse as Anglo-German, Anglo-Italian, Anglo-Japanese, Anglo-French, Anglo-American, and Anglo-Soviet relations, rearmament, economic and colonial appeasement, the Czechoslovak and Polish crises of 1938 and 1939, and the negotiations for a Soviet alliance in the summer of 1939. To date, however, there has not been a specific study of Chamberlain's role in the Spanish Civil War, which started in July 1936 and finished at the end of March 1939. He receives scant attention in Jill Edwards' detailed study of British policy during the civil war.[1] In his equally detailed study Enrique Moradiellos makes a number of references to Chamberlain as part of his narrative and analysis of British policy in the civil war from July 1936 through to the end of March 1939, but there is no sustained examination of his role and contribution.[2] Apart from a few general references to events in the conflict, Keith Feiling in his early biography makes no specific reference to Chamberlain and Spain.[3] In his study of Chamberlain and appeasement Larry Fuscher makes only a single reference to Spain and while Alastair Parker devotes a chapter to the Spanish conflict, there is limited

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emphasis on Chamberlain himself.[4] In his study of the rivalry between Chamberlain and his fellow Conservative, Winston Churchill, Graham Stewart devotes little space to the civil war other than to stress Churchill's support for British non-intervention and the difficulty which Italy's intervention created in Chamberlain's relationship with his Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden.[5] There is only one reference to Spain in David Dutton's short biography, which is to point out that Churchill's record over Spain failed to place him in a different camp from Chamberlain.[6] Even Robert Self's excellent full biography only focuses briefly on the Spanish Civil War and that in the context of Anglo-Italian relations.[7] The latest biography by Nick Smart devotes a single paragraph to Spain.[8]

It is true that in his recent multi-volume history of the Spanish Civil War Angel Viñas has made a number of observations about Chamberlain's role, none of them flattering and some highly critical, but there is no sustained analysis of the Prime Minister's part in what Viñas sees as a conspiracy against the Spanish Republic in the Civil War. This does not prevent him from condemning Chamberlain along with the other 'hollow men', his predecessor Stanley Baldwin, Eden, the President of the United States, Franklin Roosevelt, and French prime ministers Léon Blum, Camille Chautemps, and Edouard Daladier, who in his view had capitulated before the Fascist menace by their appeasement of the dictators, Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini, and in so doing had betrayed the Republic.[9] In somewhat exaggerated language, Viñas characterises Chamberlain as 'egocentric, vain, manipulative and authoritarian' and charges his government with adopting a 'lethal political stance towards the Republic' for whom Chamberlain personally was its 'nemesis':[10]as if British non-intervention was the sole and decisive reason for the defeat of the Republic.

The absence of a sustained analysis of Chamberlain's part in British diplomacy *vis-à-vis* Spain is perhaps surprising since the Civil War was a constant issue in the foreign policy of Baldwin's last year in office and in the first twenty-two months of his own premiership. It was consistently an item on the agenda of the Cabinet and figured prominently in discussion within the Cabinet Foreign Policy Committee. The intense interest of the Labour and Liberal parliamentary opposition in the Spanish Civil War, whose sympathies lay with the Republican side, meant that it was the subject of considerable debate in the House of Commons.[11] It was also the subject of numerous parliamentary questions and answers. From May 1937 onwards, as Prime Minister, Chamberlain was compelled to defend the government's Spanish policy and this became particularly onerous after the resignation of Eden in February 1938 because his successor, Lord Edward Halifax, was confined to the more sedate environment of the House of Lords. Chamberlain, with his parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, R.A. Butler, was left to face a hostile opposition who often seemed more concerned about the civil war in Spain than any other foreign-policy issue facing the country; because for them it was, in Eden's words, 'the war of the Spanish obsession'.[12] In contrast, as Tom Buchanan has observed, the mass of the Conservative Party took little interest in the civil war beyond support for the government's non-intervention policy.[13]

From the beginning of the civil war in Spain the British government consistently pursued strict non-intervention, providing support to neither side, whether the democratic Spanish Republican government or the militaristic Nationalist administration led by General Francisco Franco. The French pursued a similar policy though on occasions they covertly provided assistance to the Republican forces.[14] The other

European powers, Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and the Soviet Union engaged in widespread intervention despite their adhesion to the Anglo-French sponsored non-intervention agreement of August 1936 and their membership of the international committee for non-intervention in Spain which was established in London at the beginning of September 1936.[15] Hitler and Mussolini supported Franco's forces with large quantities of arms, including aircraft, tanks, and artillery, and troops under the guise of 'volunteers', including the German Condor Legion, while the Soviet dictator, Josef Stalin, supported the Republicans with similar weapons and munitions and Soviet advisers and encouraged the Comintern's recruitment of thousands of socialist and Communist volunteers to fight in the International Brigades.[16]

The decision to support the French proposals for a non-intervention agreement and the establishment of an international committee for Spanish non-intervention in London was taken in late July and August 1936 without the involvement of Chamberlain, as Chancellor of the Exchequer.[17] It was Eden and his stand-in Halifax who, along with the officials of the Foreign Office, constructed with the French the non-intervention policy. When the Cabinet Foreign Policy Committee, including Chamberlain, met on 25 August it was to endorse the actions of the Foreign Secretary and the Foreign Office and approve the setting up of the Non-Intervention Committee in London.[18] Ministers found themselves in large measure in agreement with regard to the reasons put forward by Eden and his officials and also the chiefs of staff in favour of non-intervention. There was a genuine concern in the Foreign Office that a general European war based on ideological divisions might develop as a result of unchecked intervention. A policy of non-intervention was therefore considered essential to confine the civil war to the Spanish arena. Their French counterparts at the Quai d'Orsay agreed completely.[19] The officials in both London and Paris as well as their political leaders also feared that any intervention in Spain by either Britain or France might irretrievably jeopardise their efforts to reach a general European settlement, based on a new Locarno agreement, which had been proceeding since Hitler's remilitarisation of the Rhineland in March 1936.[20] At the same time, the chiefs of staff advised that in a war with a European power it would be essential for British economic and strategic interests that Spain should be friendly or at worst strictly neutral and that a hostile Spain would threaten British communications in the western Mediterranean and eastern Atlantic. They shared the Foreign Office view that the best means of securing Spanish neutrality was by promoting non-intervention and they repeated this advice in July 1938.[21]

Within the Conservative-dominated National Government there was a general antipathy towards the Spanish Republic, captured in Baldwin's stricture to Eden in late July 1936 that 'on no account, French or other' should the government enter the civil war 'on the side of the Russians'.[22] The expropriation of British property in Spain by Republican militias in the early weeks of the war did little to endear the Republic with the National Government or its supporters. Foreign Office officials perceived the attempted military coup by the Spanish generals and the civil war which ensued as a result of a crisis of law and order in Spain caused by the failure of the elected Popular Front government to provide firm leadership.[23] Along with the State Department in Washington DC, they likened it to the failed Provisional government of Alexander Kerensky during the Russian Revolution of 1917 and viewed it with contempt, but were concerned about the possible spread of Communism in the Iberian Peninsula, including Portugal, and beyond.[24] The Admiralty had similar misgivings.[25] While there was a strong ideological antipathy towards the Spanish

Republic and sympathy for Franco's cause in British ruling circles, the government could not assist or openly support the military rebellion against a legitimate and democratically elected government because they knew to do so would alienate the French and arouse the fury of the political opposition at home. By supporting the French proposal for a non-intervention agreement it was reasoned the Bolshevik contagion could be contained and that non-intervention would also serve to contain any further polarisation of British society.[26]

II.

Chamberlain was in agreement with all of these reasons for adopting the non-intervention policy. During the course of the civil war he did not openly reveal anti-Republican prejudices, being careful in his parliamentary speeches to avoid showing any strong pro-Franco views. However, there were moments in private or within Cabinet when he came close to revealing these. In a letter to his sister, Ida, on 24 October 1936, for example, he complained vehemently about Soviet intervention, accusing the 'Bolshies' of 'all the time trying to make mischief in Spain'.[27] According to Eden's admission to the Spanish Republican Prime Minister, Juan Negrín, at Geneva in September 1937, Chamberlain feared that through Soviet support for the Republic 'communism would get its clutches into western Europe'.[28] As late as January 1939, Chamberlain felt compelled to warn his Cabinet colleagues that the government 'should avoid showing any satisfaction at the prospect of a Franco victory', which at that time was imminent.[29] There was a perception on the Nationalist side that Chamberlain desired their victory and that he sympathised with their cause.[30] Moreover, as Moradiellos emphasises, Chamberlain himself personally thanked the Duke of Alba, Franco's special accredited agent in London, for the Nationalist offer of neutrality during the later stages of the Czechoslovak crisis in September 1938. It was not, according to Moradiellos, the first time nor the last that Chamberlain had a private interview with Alba, in contrast with his failure to make official or personal contact with Pablo Azcárate, the Spanish Republican Ambassador at London during his two-and-a-half-year mission.[31] In contrast to the Nationalists, the perception on the Republican side was one of British hostility. According to Viñas, Negrín did not hesitate in characterising Chamberlain and 'his acolytes' as 'the worst enemies of the Republic'.[32]

There is sufficient evidence to suggest that Chamberlain, like most of his government, was strongly anti-Communist and did not trust the Soviets whether in the Spanish or other contexts, with a large degree of justification as events after the end of the civil war were to demonstrate, notably the Nazi-Soviet Pact of August 1939.[33] At the same time, he was not averse to expressing privately his quiet satisfaction at Franco's difficulties and those of Germany and Italy in the Spanish conflict, as he revealed to Ida Chamberlain on 22 November 1936 in the context of the General's failure to capture Madrid, largely because of Soviet intervention and the arrival of the International Brigades in the Spanish capital: 'As to Spain, I think you may take it that the tanks and aeroplanes do come from Russia and that Franco is getting desperate as he sees his difficulties growing instead of getting less.'[34] A week later, he expressed his belief that Hitler and Mussolini were 'a bit piano at present' because, as a result of Soviet intervention, 'their friend Franco is making no progress and they are ruefully wondering what they can do to help him.'[35] Certainly, Chamberlain did not take Franco's victory for granted but he was convinced that, if indeed he won,

his regime would need British economic assistance which would provide the opportunity to apply strong pressure and weaken the German and Italian connection.[36]

Whatever his personal views with regard to the civil war in Spain, Chamberlain was firmly committed to maintaining the non-intervention policy as the best means of protecting British interests and security. On many occasions he was required to defend the policy in the House of Commons. Indeed, within weeks of becoming Prime Minister in June 1937, he told MPs that it was essential to prevent an increasing polarisation of two ideological systems by confining the civil war to Spain so that by this means European peace could be maintained. It was for this reason, he argued, that the government had adopted non-intervention and supported the work of the Non-Intervention Committee. And, though he admitted that the scheme of non-intervention had failed to prevent the intervention in Spain of the other Great Powers, it was intended to continue to pursue it for 'as long as we feel that there is a reasonable hope of avoiding the spread of the conflict'.[37] The Prime Minister expressed similar sentiments to his sister, Ida, on 24 July 1937 when he admitted that his government was 'still at a deadlock over Spain' but felt that 'the protagonists seem remarkably calm'. In these circumstances they would 'go on trying to keep up the façade [of non-intervention] which at any rate preserves us from a European conflict'.[38]

The escalation of the Spanish conflict through Italian attacks on shipping bound for Republican Spain in the Mediterranean in August 1937 and the subsequent Nyon Agreement of September, which reconstructed the naval-patrol scheme intended to prevent or at least slow down arms traffic into the Spanish arena, served only to reinforce Chamberlain's determination to maintain the non-intervention policy. The primary effort of the autumn of 1937 was to try to achieve the withdrawal of foreign troops from both sides in Spain in order to lessen the possibility of an escalation of the conflict. For Chamberlain, as he told his colleagues on 13 October, it was of no concern which side won in Spain 'so long as it was a Spanish and not a German or Italian victory' and if the withdrawal of volunteers could be secured the conflict 'would become a Spanish civil war and not a foreign war'.[39] A week later, he seized the opportunity of a Commons debate to reiterate the commitment to the non-intervention policy as the best means of containing the war in Spain and to reaffirm that 'if that policy had not been pursued, there was every prospect that the civil war in Spain might presently become a European war of unknown magnitude.'[40]

Even though little progress had been made in withdrawing foreign troops from Spain by the end of 1937, Chamberlain and his colleagues remained committed to non-intervention. At a meeting with French ministers in London in late November 1937 the Prime Minister did not dissent from the observation of his French counterpart, Camille Chautemps, that their two countries 'could congratulate themselves that their Spanish [non-intervention] policy had undoubtedly helped them to pass a very difficult year without a breach of the peace'.[41] He insisted to the House of Commons that his government had tried 'to keep the balance even between both sides and to back neither' and believed that it could 'fairly claim' that during the previous months there had been 'a perceptible lessening of the tension in Europe' which he put down largely 'to the fact that the Spanish situation has become less acute'. He felt, in addition, that his government could claim that it had 'played a most important part in averting a possible conflict outside Spain'.[42]

There was no lessening of Chamberlain's confidence in the credibility of the non-intervention policy in 1938. In March he insisted before the House of Commons that

while non-intervention had not stopped intervention it had certainly restricted it and that if there had been no Non-Intervention Committee, intervention 'would have undoubtedly taken place on a far larger scale'. He went on to claim that non-intervention had averted 'international war being carried on first on Spanish soil and probably spreading to all Europe' and the fact that war had been confined to 'Spanish territory and for the most part to the Spanish people' was a 'remarkable tribute to the success of the British policy of non-intervention'.[43] Even the bombing of British ships by Franco's air force in June 1938 was not allowed to disturb the government's confidence in the non-intervention policy. Chamberlain reminded MPs that the object had been 'to avoid what we conceive to be the inevitable result of intervention, namely, an extension of the conflict beyond the shores of Spain until it became a general conflagration' and that had been 'our aim through out'.[44] As the civil war drew to a close in January 1939 with the imminent collapse and surrender of Republican-held Barcelona, there was no lessening of Chamberlain's commitment towards non-intervention. Despite the unrealistic pleas of many of the opposition at this late stage to abandon it, he was resolute in insisting on its continuation. He told MPs on 31 January 1939 that the government had regretted intervention by some of the European powers and had 'done their best, not only to prevent more intervention taking place, but to try, if possible, to get those foreign troops who had entered Spain, withdrawn'. He went on to reiterate the commitment to non-intervention and to reject its abandonment, claiming that 'if our policy was right, as I believe it to have been right all along, now is certainly not the moment to change it.'[45]

There can be no doubt that Chamberlain and his ministers were committed and united in supporting the non-intervention policy. Tentative calls for its abandonment at Cabinet level occurred on only three occasions during the thirty-three months of the civil war.[46] On each occasion there was no support for the abandonment of non-intervention and Chamberlain was resolute in his defence of the policy. In particular, at a Foreign Policy Committee meeting in January 1939, in agreement with Halifax, he rejected the suggestion of the chief diplomatic adviser, Sir Robert Vansittart, that pressure could be placed on France to intervene in favour of the Republican forces in Catalonia and Madrid. Chamberlain insisted that there could be no question of any reversal of the strict non-intervention policy and his ministerial colleagues agreed.[47] His statement to the Commons on 31 January underscored this decision.

III.

Apart from the continuing commitment to the policy of non-intervention, Chamberlain and his government had to deal with a number of issues arising from the war in Spain, including the decision not to grant belligerent rights to either side in the conflict, British responses to attacks on British shipping and also civilian bombing, the growing refugee problem in Spain, attempts to mediate in the conflict or seek an armistice, the protection of British economic interests in those areas held by Franco's forces, the question whether to grant recognition to the Nationalist government and, above all, the impact of the civil war on Britain's relations with Fascist Italy and Chamberlain's search for general European appeasement.

The British Cabinet had reservations from the outset about the granting of belligerent rights to the contending parties in the Spanish struggle, because it would allow the Spanish insurgents to stop and search British ships bound for Spanish ports. The French and Soviets were also determined not to legitimise the actions of Franco's

navy and the dominions were lukewarm, particularly New Zealand.[48] The Germans and Italians, having officially recognised Franco's Nationalist administration as the legitimate authority in Spain in November 1936, wished to deny belligerent rights to the Spanish Republicans.[49] Despite their reservations the Cabinet, including Chamberlain, considered granting belligerent rights to Franco in November 1936 when the fall of Madrid appeared imminent but the opportunity receded with the successful Republican defence of the Spanish capital the same month.[50] The Admiralty, led by the First Lord, Sir Samuel Hoare, continued to insist on granting Franco belligerent rights but acting on an initiative by Chamberlain and following a special meeting of ministers, the government announced on 23 November their refusal to recognise belligerent rights for either side in Spain and warned that the Royal Navy would protect British vessels in international waters. In addition, the carriage of arms in British ships was prohibited.[51] In a letter to his sister, Hilda, Chamberlain took full credit for these developments claiming that his proposal for dealing with belligerent rights 'had been very well received' and that 'any other course would have got us into very serious trouble'.[52]

The issue of belligerent rights was revived temporarily in April 1937 as a result of the Nationalist siege of Bilbao, which included a blockade by Franco's naval forces. In the event, the Cabinet, acting on the advice of the Foreign Office, had agreed that 'they cannot recognise or concede belligerent rights and cannot tolerate any interference with British shipping.'[53] When Chamberlain became Prime Minister the issue of belligerent rights was directly connected with the Non-Intervention Committee's naval-patrol scheme and the withdrawal of foreign 'volunteers' from Spain in what was called the 'British Plan' of the summer of 1937, devised in the Foreign Office by Eden and his officials and supported by Chamberlain.[54] The grant of belligerent rights was henceforth made contingent on genuine progress being made in the withdrawal of volunteers from both the Republican and Nationalist sides.[55] Chamberlain stuck firmly to this condition despite his desire to improve relations with Italy. Indeed, in late 1938 the withdrawal of some 10,000 Italians from Spain was regarded as insufficient to warrant the granting of belligerent rights to Franco and, despite his continuing protests, Chamberlain was unmoved. When the Lord Chancellor, Lord Maugham, at a Cabinet meeting on 22 November 1938, queried why Franco had not been accorded belligerent rights the Prime Minister retorted that the governing factor in the case had been the extent of foreign interference in the Spanish dispute.[56] Almost a month later, on 19 December 1938, he made his government's position perfectly clear in a speech before the House of Commons when he stressed that 'so long as there are foreign troops in Spain and so long as no other solution has been found for the Spanish question but that which is involved in the Non-Intervention Plan', belligerent rights would not be granted.[57] In the event, belligerent rights were not conceded even when the British and French governments recognised Franco's regime at the end of February 1939 with the Republic on the point of defeat.[58]

IV.

The Spanish Civil War witnessed numerous instances of civilian bombing, particularly by Franco's side. The most notorious instance was that of the bombing of Guernica in April 1937 by German aircraft, but larger cities and towns were also the target of aerial bombardment, including Madrid, Barcelona, Bilbao, and Alicante.[59] As Chamberlain reminded the Commons on 30 May 1938, in response to the bombing

of Alicante, his government had on more than one occasion expressed to both sides in Spain 'their profound concern at the intensification of aerial bombardment resulting in serious loss of life among the civil population' and had drawn attention to 'the universally accepted principle that aerial bombardment of military objectives is alone admissible'. He repeated how profoundly he deplored 'the maiming and death of defenceless civilians'.[60] However, it was one thing to condemn civilian bombing but quite another to take effective action to counter it, even in the case of the bombing of British ships in Spanish ports. The early summer of 1938, in particular, witnessed an intensification of bombing by Franco's forces and Chamberlain was only prepared to go so far in Cabinet as to recommend a verbal warning to Franco that 'if he must bomb the Spanish Government's ports he must use discretion' otherwise 'he might arouse a feeling in this country which would force the Government to take action.' Such a situation, in his view, was by no means 'beyond the bounds of possibility if the sinkings [of British and other ships] were to reach, say, one ship a day'.[61] In defending the lack of action in the Commons on 21 June 1938, Chamberlain insisted that Franco had been left in no doubt about the government's views on the subject of indiscriminate bombing and he reminded MPs that they had protested 'first against the bombing of open towns and villages, and later against the bombing of British ships'.[62] The lack of direct action was heavily criticised by the opposition and eventually Chamberlain was compelled on 13 July to rule this out, insisting that 'ships trading with ports in the war zone must accept the risks which inevitably result from the existence of a state of war' and that effective protection could not be guaranteed because the government had no intention of 'taking an active part in the hostilities' which 'might well result in the spread of the conflict far beyond its present limits'.[63] In other words, military intervention by Britain to protect her merchant ships against bombing would result in the abandonment of non-intervention and the possibility of an escalated conflict and the end of the general appeasement policy with regard to Germany and Italy, and that was inconceivable to Chamberlain and his ministers. As he related privately to his sister Hilda, in late June, he had 'been through every possible form of retaliation' and it was 'abundantly clear that none of these can be effective unless we are prepared to go to war with Franco which might quite possibly lead to war with Italy and Germany and in any case would cut right across my policy of general appeasement'.[64] Consequently, British responses continued to be restricted to diplomatic protests.

Chamberlain took the lead in making humanitarian appeals to both sides in the Spanish conflict, including dealing with the refugee problem and the exchange of prisoners. In the latter case, Field Marshal Sir Philip Chetwode was charged with the task of arranging the exchange with limited success during 1938 and 1939.[65] As to the refugees, given their proximity to Spain the French participated much more extensively than the British in offering support. However, British naval support was forthcoming during the siege of Bilbao, in the spring of 1937, to protect the Basque refugees and was continued after Chamberlain became Prime Minister.[66] As he informed MPs in late June 1937, British warships were prepared to carry Basque women and children to France, provided the conditions were similar to those at the siege of Bilbao and as long as the French were willing to receive them.[67] Later, in October 1937, with the conquest of Republican territory by Nationalist forces, no fewer than 30,000 refugees were removed from Gijón in northern Spain in British ships under the protection of the British flag, though most of them ended up eventually in France.[68] Moreover, as Chamberlain informed the House of Commons, the British

Ambassador at Paris, Sir Eric Phipps, was instructed to support a French appeal to Franco to treat 'those who have been taken prisoner with all the humanity possible'.[69]

Later, in mid-December 1937, Chamberlain urged his Cabinet to consider assistance for the repatriation of the Basque children and the wider refugee problem in Spain. He argued that Britain had to get on good terms with the Spain of the future and that the Spanish people 'might contrast the action of those nations who had supplied arms to kill Spaniards and others who had done something to help the people and especially the children'. At the following meeting, on 22 December, he reiterated that 'in the long run it would be politically advantageous to have done something for the children.'[70] While agencies such as the Basque Children Committee and the Save the Children Fund did sterling work in Spain, it remained to be seen whether the Spanish people, Nationalist supporters, or followers of the Republic, would feel such gratitude.[71] It was an expression more of hope than conviction. The same was true of an appeal made by the government in January 1939, with the fall of Catalonia imminent, that Franco 'exercise all possible humanity in the circumstances which prevail in Catalonia': an appeal which Chamberlain reported personally to the Commons on 31 January.[72]

V.

Chamberlain was also a keen supporter of the idea of mediation in the civil war and in particular the idea of an armistice. In late 1936 he supported Eden's failed attempt to take the initiative along with the French in offering mediation in the civil war.[73] He supported a further attempt by Eden in late April/early May 1937, but it was abandoned on the advice of senior officials in the Foreign Office and the ambassadors at Paris, Berlin, Rome, Moscow, and Lisbon, none of whom believed the time was propitious.[74] The prospects for mediation continued to be elusive despite Chamberlain's expressed hope in June 1938 that 'if only we can get an armistice all this bombing of civilians and ships would cease and what suffering and misery would be saved.'[75] In September 1938, as the Czechoslovak crisis gathered pace, the Foreign Office instructed the Embassy in Republican Spain to warn the Negrín government not to hope for British mediation.[76] However, buoyed by the apparent success of the Munich Conference, where both Hitler and Mussolini had expressed some reservations about their intervention in Spain, Chamberlain told his ministerial colleagues on 3 October 1938 that it was 'just possible that an opportunity might present itself for stopping the Spanish war before the winter'.[77] By the end of October he was ready to announce his intention to visit Mussolini in Rome in January 1939 and that one of his objectives was to secure the Duce's help in bringing about an armistice in Spain.[78] Having failed in the early summer to persuade the Italians to support an armistice, the Prime Minister had taken the opportunity during the Munich conference to solicit Mussolini's support for one and he had promised to think about it.[79] In conversation, the Italian dictator had confessed to Chamberlain that he was 'fed up' with Spain where he had 'lost 5000 men in dead and wounded' and that he was 'sick of Franco who continually threw away all chances of victory'.[80] Unfortunately, the prospects in late 1938 for an armistice were not good, with Franco determined to achieve nothing less than the unconditional surrender of the Republican forces.[81] When Chamberlain visited Rome in January 1939 he found Mussolini unwilling to support an armistice and still committed to a Franco victory in Spain.[82]

The prospects of an armistice had evaporated despite Chamberlain's hopes and French support.

Although Chamberlain's official attitude was to favour neither side in the Spanish struggle, he was sometimes ambivalent about taking a strong line against Franco when Nationalist activities threatened British interests, particularly where German and Italian involvement was concerned. When the General, at the end of February 1937, requisitioned the products of the mines of the British owned Rio Tinto Company and Tharsis Copper and Sulphur Company, some of it for export to Germany and Italy, Eden and his officials initially proposed that British warships should intercept any ship carrying such products and that Franco should be informed that the British government would apply compulsory measures, such as requisition of cargo. Chamberlain, persuaded by Admiralty opposition which feared international complications and even the possibility of war with Germany and Italy, rejected this proposal and proposed instead that strong representations be made to Franco, including demand for proper compensation.[83] There again, in early February 1938 in response to a suspected Nationalist submarine attack on the British merchant-ship *Endymion* Chamberlain and Eden were in complete agreement that British warships should reserve to themselves the right to destroy any submarine found submerged in the western Mediterranean zone patrolled under the Nyon arrangements by the Royal Navy.[84] Chamberlain was also in full accord with the Foreign Secretary when it was suggested in March 1937 that the government should exchange special diplomatic agents with the Franco authorities in order to protect the considerable British economic and commercial interests in those areas of Spain controlled by the Nationalist forces and possibly achieve the presence of British military observers there.[85] This was a deliberate attempt to counter German influence and protect British economic interests, including the Rio Tinto mines. Chamberlain had become Prime Minister when, in November 1937, agents were exchanged with Sir Robert Hodgson accredited in Burgos, the Nationalist capital, and the Anglophile Duke of Alba accredited in London.[86] To the annoyance of the Labour and Liberal opposition both were in effect accorded diplomatic status though there was no formal recognition of the Franco regime.[87]

The issue of recognition was certainly divisive and Chamberlain had no intention of granting it to Franco unless it could be demonstrated clearly that the Nationalist side was going to win the civil war. He and his Cabinet colleagues came close to granting at least *de facto* recognition in the autumn of 1936 when it appeared that Madrid was about to fall.[88] But the failure of Franco to capture the Spanish capital meant that British recognition was withheld until late February 1939 when Republican Spain was clearly and demonstratively on the point of total defeat. By this time a number of countries had already recognised the Nationalist regime or had stated their intention to do so, including, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Eire, Czechoslovakia, and Argentina; others in Europe and South America were expected to follow. Nonetheless, Chamberlain realised that recognition was politically divisive and that it would be received badly by the opposition in Parliament.[89] When, during the first part of February, Halifax expressed his anxiety to recognise Franco at once in order to consolidate the British position in the new Spain and make it more difficult for any possible German or Italian intrigues to succeed, Chamberlain agreed, provided they delayed a little longer in order that some new development might provide a more complete justification for recognition.[90] By 16 February such a development had taken place with news from the Republican government that they would

surrender if Franco would give reasonable assurances about reprisals.[91] Chamberlain and Halifax instructed Hodgson to make this request for assurances, but with or without them the decision was taken to grant *de jure* recognition of the Franco regime at the same time as the French government in late February 1939. As anticipated, the opposition took the decision badly but its censure motion was heavily defeated by 344 votes to 137. Leading Conservative dissidents, Eden and Alfred Duff Cooper, voted with the government. Churchill was conveniently absent.[92]

VI.

Apart from increasing Anglo-French co-operation, the civil war had a considerable impact on Chamberlain's appeasement policy as far as Fascist Italy was concerned. The war scarcely affected Anglo-German relations directly as the Czechoslovak crisis of 1938 undoubtedly did. The situation with regard to Italy was entirely different. The civil war in Spain was a major obstacle in the way of a successful appeasement of Italy, not least because it encouraged and then cemented the Rome–Berlin Axis.[93] As Chamberlain himself told King George VI on 17 January 1939, Spain was the 'nigger in the woodpile' and that 'unless and until that affair is settled there will always be a danger of an open quarrel with France and always the road to appeasement will be blocked.'[94]

With the opportunity presented by the end of the Abyssinian conflict in the early summer of 1936, before the outbreak of the civil war in Spain, Chamberlain, along with his ministerial colleagues, was anxious to appease Italy in order to solicit its support to improve relations with Nazi Germany – bearing in mind his revealing comment that 'if only we could get on terms with the Germans I would not care a rap for Musso[lini]'[95] – or to drive a wedge in the Rome–Berlin Axis. As the Ambassador at Rome, Sir Eric Drummond, put it in early July 1936, if Mussolini was forced to remain 'in Coventry' for too long a period then it was possible that he would become 'impatient and endeavour to conclude an agreement with Germany'. Later, in November 1937, Chamberlain would refer privately to the need to avoid throwing 'Germany and Italy together in self-defence when our policy is so obviously to try and divide them'.[96] At the end of the month, during Anglo-French ministerial conversations in London, he confessed to Chautemps and Foreign Minister Yvon Delbos that he would himself 'like to weaken the Berlin–Rome axis'. He could not believe 'there was any real sympathy between Rome and Berlin'.[97] However, after the Anschluss in March 1938, and the realisation that far from weakening the Axis it had strengthened it, the emphasis changed so that Chamberlain now wished to prevail on Mussolini to moderate Hitler.[98] In his appeasement of Italy the Prime Minister was influenced by the chiefs of staff, not only by their review of the impact of the Spanish Civil War on the Mediterranean of 25 August 1936, alluded to earlier, but also by their contribution to the defence review of December 1937 when they advised the Cabinet to do everything possible to reduce the number of enemies confronting the United Kingdom and to gain potential allies.[99]

From the autumn of 1936 through to the end of 1938 and beyond, the British government sought to achieve the desired rapprochement with Italy; along the way events in Spain, and Italy's continuing intervention there, intervened to throw them off course. The decision to improve Anglo-Italian relations was first taken at cabinet level in November 1936 and negotiations for an agreement commenced thereafter.[100] As a result, at the beginning of January 1937 a Gentleman's Agreement was signed

between the two countries which included assurances from Italy regarding the *status quo* in the Mediterranean and limits on Italian intervention in Spain.[101] As part of the agreement, although not specifically written into it, the Italians accepted a British formula that 'the integrity of the present territories of Spain shall in all circumstances remain intact and unmodified.'[102] Unfortunately, the Gentleman's Agreement was immediately rendered void by further Italian intervention in Spain in January–February 1937 to the acute disappointment of Eden and his officials, particularly Vansittart, at this time Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office, who believed that with careful diplomacy the 'Italo-German tie' could be loosened with the result that they should have 'a more reasonable, or anyhow, tamer Germany to deal with'.[103] But the British government continued to explore the prospects of further improvement in Anglo-Italian relations, including the issues of recognition of the Italian conquest of Abyssinia, Italian propaganda in the Middle East, and Italian reinforcements in Libya.

When Chamberlain became Prime Minister he was determined to increase the pace of Anglo-Italian relations and, without first consulting Eden, intervened personally with Mussolini in July 1937 despite Italy's withdrawal from the Non-Intervention Committee's naval-patrol scheme in June.[104] Unfortunately for Chamberlain, before Anglo-Italian conversations could commence, Spanish affairs intervened again with Italian submarine attacks in the Mediterranean on Russian, British, and other ships destined for Republican Spain.[105] The outcome was the Nyon Conference and Agreement of September 1937. By this time it was obvious to Eden that any conversations with Italy must be linked with Spain; Chamberlain for the time being was compelled to agree because the civil war remained 'a constant source of anxiety'.[106] Eden, the Foreign Office and the French government continued to insist on the Spanish linkage before conceding conversations to Italy, but as time went by, with no progress, Chamberlain became less and less convinced and his patience ran out in February 1938 when he demanded the opening of Anglo-Italian talks and prompted Eden's resignation.[107] The Prime Minister had refused Eden's insistence that progress on Spain should be achieved before opening conversations in order to test Mussolini's sincerity. But he was compelled to recognise the reality of the Spanish Civil War and its connection with the desired Anglo-Italian rapprochement. As he informed the Commons on 21 February, the day after Eden's resignation, no agreement with Italy 'could be considered complete unless it contained a settlement of the Spanish question'.[108]

The annexation of Austria by Nazi Germany on 12 March made it even more essential to include Spain on the agenda of Anglo-Italian conversations which were proceeding in Rome. The Anglo-Italian Agreement was concluded in April 1938 but its ratification was made conditional on the Spanish question being settled to Britain's satisfaction; only then would Britain recognise the Italian conquest of Abyssinia.[109] What, in Chamberlain's mind, constituted a satisfactory settlement was revealed on 26 July when in answer to a question from the Labour leader, Clement Attlee, he replied: 'If His Majesty's Government think that Spain has ceased to be a menace to the peace of Europe, I think we shall regard that as a settlement of the Spanish Question.'[110] In the aftermath of Munich, Chamberlain and his ministerial colleagues were satisfied that Spain was no longer a menace to European peace; the withdrawal of 10,000 Italian volunteers from Spain being deemed a sufficient solution to the Spanish question.[111] The decision to ratify the Anglo-Italian Agreement was made in November 1938, two years after the original decision to

improve Anglo-Italian relations. But it was largely superfluous and of no real value to Britain as the inconclusive visit of Chamberlain and Halifax to Rome in January 1939 demonstrated. At this time, Italy further intervened in Spain, sending more than 3,000 troops and war materiel to assist Franco in the final stages of the civil war which ended on 1 April 1939, followed by the Italian invasion of Albania and then the Pact of Steel with Germany in May.[112]

VII.

In conclusion, it is the case that the non-intervention policy and the Non-Intervention Committee failed to prevent foreign intervention in the Spanish Civil War in the form of 'foreign volunteers' and armaments and, as far as the Left in Britain was concerned, denied the Spanish Republic its legitimate right to acquire arms.[113] But that was not its primary intention. Chamberlain and his ministers were unsympathetic towards the Spanish Republican side and viewed the non-intervention policy as limiting the degree of intervention and preventing the civil war from escalating into a general European conflict. It was essentially a policy of containment and perhaps a face-saving device for Britain and France.[114] Chamberlain remained convinced that non-intervention had prevented an escalation of the Spanish conflict and there were many in Parliament and among the British public who agreed with him. The Spanish Civil War certainly made Chamberlain's task of improving relations with Germany and Italy even more difficult and presented a serious obstacle to the successful appeasement of Italy, which was supported by the British chiefs of staff on strategic grounds from the summer of 1936 onwards. The impact of the conflict in Spain on Anglo-German relations was less marked, although it was Spanish events in late May and June 1937, notably a Republican air attack on the German battleship *Deutschland* while on non-intervention patrol, that led to the cancellation of the planned visit of the German Foreign Minister, Baron Constantin von Neurath, to London;[115] had it taken place it would have represented the first official visit by a senior member of the Nazi government to Britain. In the event, no such visit ever took place and Chamberlain's hopes that his sympathetic comments in the House of Commons concerning German losses on board the *Deutschland* would have 'a far-reaching effect' on Anglo-German relations were to be dashed unequivocally.[116]

Contrary to Viñas' view, the appeasement policy adopted by Chamberlain and his government was not a capitulation to German and Italian Fascism; rather, following the Prime Minister's dictum 'to hope for the best and prepare for the worst', it was intended to set limits to German expansion as a Great Power in Europe and to the reunification of the German-speaking peoples, the prevention of which was certainly not considered at the time, both in government circles and among the wider public, sufficient reason for fighting another European war. Non-intervention in Spain was intended to avoid complications which could threaten to derail the appeasement policy which was, contrary to Viñas, an entirely realistic one in view of the incomplete state of British, and particularly French rearmament, the entrenched isolationism of the United States, Dominion reticence and opposition to getting involved in another European conflict and clear reasons, ideologically and militarily, to distrust the Soviet Union.[117] Unlike Josef Stalin, who as a ruthless totalitarian dictator had no such concerns, Chamberlain, as the leader of a democracy, had to avoid accentuating further the political divisions which existed within British society. By pursuing non-intervention it was intended that those divisions, real as they were,

could be contained. At the end of the civil war, Britain could not be characterised as a divided country. Moreover, it was Britain (and France) led by Chamberlain, who provided guarantees to Poland and Romania and who went to war in September 1939 against Nazi Germany and not the Soviet Union, which had made its infamous pact with Hitler less than two weeks before.

Chamberlain was also quite perceptive in his judgement of Hitler's and Mussolini's ambitions in Spain. He believed their assurances at the Munich conference that both Germany and Italy had no territorial ambitions whatever in Spain.[118] As he told his sister Ida on 12 February 1939: 'I have always maintained that when the Germans and Italians declared that they had no territorial ambitions in Spain and would get out as soon as the war was over, they meant what they said and should be believed.'[119] In the event, all German and Italian military personnel were withdrawn from Spain by early June 1939, including the Italian Air Force on Majorca.[120] Chamberlain's belief that Italy (and Germany) had no intention or wish to establish a Fascist regime in Spain but only to counter a Communist revolution there, was also borne out by subsequent events with Franco's regime remaining essentially a right wing, authoritarian, military dictatorship in which the Spanish Fascist movement, the Falange, failed to achieve a position of lasting preponderance.[121] Moreover, his conviction that, if victorious, Franco's regime would eventually require economic assistance was confirmed by the events of the Second World War when consistent British (and US) economic pressure was used to keep the Iberian Peninsula neutral.[122] Finally, despite the failure to achieve the chiefs of staff's aim of strict Spanish neutrality at the outbreak of the war, Britain still held the strategic advantage in the western Mediterranean and eastern Atlantic. The effective blockade instituted by the Royal Navy clearly constrained and damaged German-Spanish economic relations. It was only with the fall of France in June 1940 that the strategic position became less favourable to Britain as the Franco regime declared a policy of non-belligerency.[123]

Notes

1. J. Edwards, *The British Government and the Spanish Civil War* (London and Basingstoke, 1979).
2. E. Moradiellos, *La perfida de Albión: El Gobierno britanico y la Guerra civil española* (Madrid, 1996). In his previous book, *Neutralidad benévola: El Gobierno británico y la insurrection military española de 1936* (Oviedo, 1990), Moradiellos makes only a few references to Chamberlain which are focused on belligerent rights and the possible recognition of the Franco regime in November 1936: 301–2, 341–2, 344.
3. K. Feiling, *The Life of Neville Chamberlain* (London, 1946), 297–8, 330–2.
4. L. Fuscher, *Neville Chamberlain and Appeasement: A Study in the Politics of History* (New York, 1982), 81; R.A.C. Parker, *Chamberlain and Appeasement: British policy and the coming of the Second World War* (Basingstoke, 1993), 80–92.
5. G. Stewart, *Burying Caesar: Churchill, Chamberlain and the Battle for the Tory Party* (London, 1999), 263, 282.
6. D. Dutton, *Neville Chamberlain* (London, 2001), 111.
7. R. Self, *Neville Chamberlain: A Biography* (Aldershot, 2006), 274–5.
8. N. Smart, *Neville Chamberlain* (London, 2010), 227–8.
9. A. Viñas, *El Escudo de la República: El oro de España, la apuesta soviética y los hechos de mayo de 1937* (Barcelona, 2007), 356, 643. A. Viñas and F. Hernández Sánchez, *El Desplome de la República* (Barcelona, 2009), 431.
10. A. Viñas, *El Honor de la República: Entre el acoso fascista, la hostilidad británica y la politica de Stalin* (Barcelona, 2009), 47, 58.

11. Debates concerned specifically about Spain occurred on 29 Oct. 1936, 1 Dec. 1936, 19 Jan. 1937, 14 April 1937, 20 April 1937, 8 Nov. 1937, 16 March 1938, 23 June 1938, 21 Dec. 1938 and 22 Feb. 1939. See *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, 5th series, HC, vol. cccxvi, 39–152; vol. cccxviii, 1053–1224; vol. cccxix, 92–170, vol. cccxxii, 1029–1142, 1651–1718; vol. cccxxviii, 1501–1552; vol. cccxxxiii, 486–538; vol. cccxxxvii, 1343–1402; vol. cccxlii, 3045–56; and vol. cccxliv, 1099–1218. Spain also figured prominently in foreign-policy debates in the Commons. For example, 2 March 1937, 25 June 1937, 19 July 1937, 21 Oct. 1937, 4 April 1938, 2 May 1938, 21 June 1938, 26 July 1938, 2 Nov. 1938, 19 Dec. 1938, and 31 Jan. 1939. See *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, 5th series, HC, vols. cccxxi, cccxxvi, cccxxvii, cccxxxiv, cccxxxv, cccxxxvii, cccxxxviii, cccxl, cccxlii, and cccxliv.
12. Lord Butler, *The Art of the Possible: The Memoirs of Lord Butler* (London, 1971), 74. Stewart, *Burying Caesar*, 282.
13. T. Buchanan, *The Impact of the Spanish Civil War on Britain: War, Loss and Memory* (Brighton, 2007), 2, 15–16.
14. G. Stone, *Spain, Portugal and the Great Powers, 1931–1941* (Basingstoke, 2005), 51.
15. Ibid., 71–4. Edwards, *British Government and the Spanish Civil War*, 40–5.
16. Stone, *Spain, Portugal*, 27–50.
17. Neville Chamberlain to Ida Chamberlain, 2 Aug. 1936, [University of Birmingham Library], Neville Chamberlain Papers, NC 18/1/972.
18. Cabinet Foreign Policy Committee meeting, 25 Aug. 1936. The [Kew, United Kingdom National Archives, Public Record Office] National Archives, CAB[INET]27/622, F.P. (36) 5th mtg.
19. For the French view see J. Dreifort, *Yvon Delbos at the Quai d'Orsay: French Foreign Policy during the Popular Front, 1936–1938* (Lawrence, KS, 1973), 52–3 and G. Warner, 'France and Non-Intervention in Spain, July–August 1936', *International Affairs*, xxxviii (1962), 206–7. For the Foreign Office view see minutes by Assistant Under-Secretary Sir Orme Garton Sargent and Deputy Permanent Under-Secretary Sir Alexander Cadogan, 12–13 Aug. 1936. *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919–1939*, second series, vol. xvii (London, 1979), 90–1. Hereafter DBFP. For Eden's view see his conversation with Arthur Greenwood, deputy leader of the Labour party, and Sir Walter Citrine, General Secretary of the Trades Union Congress, 19 Aug. 1936. [Kew, United Kingdom National Archives, Public Record Office], F[oreign]O[ffice] 371/20534, W9331/62/41. See also Lord Avon, *The Eden Memoirs: Facing the Dictators* (London, 1962), 463; Lord Halifax, *Fulness of Days* (London, 1957), 192.
20. For Franco-British efforts to reach a general settlement with Italy and Germany between March and August 1936 see W. Norton Medlicott, *Britain and Germany: The Search for Agreement, 1930–1937* (London, 1969), 25–30.
21. 'Western Mediterranean – situation arising from the Spanish Civil War', 24 Aug. 1936, CAB24/264, C.P. 234(36), CID 1259-B (COS 509). 'The Spanish Civil War: position in the Straits of Gibraltar', 20 July 1938. CAB5/9, 478-C (also CID1457-B and COS 750).
22. T. Jones, *A Diary with Letters, 1931–1950* (London, 1954), diary entry, 27 July 1936, 231.
23. See, for example, minutes by Sir Robert Vansittart, Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office, and Sir George Mounsey, Superintending Assistant Under-Secretary to the League of Nations and Western Department of the Foreign Office, 12 Sept. 1936. FO371/20575, W10779/9549/41.
24. G. Stone, 'Britain, Non-Intervention and the Spanish Civil War', *European Studies Review*, ix (1979), 136–7; E. Moradiellos, 'The Origins of British Non-Intervention in the Spanish Civil War: Anglo-Spanish Relations in Early 1936', *European History Quarterly*, xxi (1991), 347–61; D. Little, *Malevolent Neutrality: The United States, Great Britain and the Origins of the Spanish Civil War* (Ithaca, NY, 1985), 118, 222–45.
25. Stone, 'Britain, Non-Intervention', 131–2.
26. See, for example, T. Buchanan, *The British Labour Movement and the Spanish Civil War* (Cambridge, 1991) in which he shows how the British labour movement itself was divided over the issue of intervention in Spain. See also K. Watkins, *Britain Divided: The Effect of the Spanish Civil War on British Political Opinion* (London, 1963);

B. Shelmerdine, *British Representations of the Spanish Civil War* (Manchester, 2006); Buchanan, *Impact of the Spanish Civil War on Britain*.

27. Chamberlain to Ida Chamberlain, 24 Oct. 1936, University of Birmingham Library, Neville Chamberlain Papers, NC 18/1/982.
28. D. Smyth, '"We Are With You": Solidarity and Self-Interest in Soviet Policy towards Republican Spain, 1936–1939' in P. Preston and A. Mackenzie (eds.), *The Republic Besieged: Civil War in Spain, 1936–1939* (Edinburgh, 1996), 105.
29. Cabinet Foreign Policy Committee meeting, 23 Jan. 1939. CAB27/624, FP(36), 35th mtg.
30. Duke of Alba, Nationalist agent in London, to Gómez Jordana y Sousa, Nationalist Foreign Minister, 22 June 1938, cited in Moradiellos, *La perfidia de Albión*, 285.
31. Ibid., 323.
32. Viñas, *El Honor de la República*, 444.
33. For Chamberlain's strong distrust of Soviet aims see, for example, Chamberlain to Ida Chamberlain, 20 March 1938, University of Birmingham Library, Neville Chamberlain Papers, NC 18/1/1042.
34. Chamberlain to Ida Chamberlain, 22 Nov. 1936, University of Birmingham Library, Neville Chamberlain Papers, NC 18/1/986.
35. Chamberlain to Hilda Chamberlain, 28 Nov. 1936, University of Birmingham Library, Neville Chamberlain Papers, NC 18/1/987.
36. Cabinet meeting, 3 March 1937, CAB23/87, CM 10 (37).
37. 25 June 1937. *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, 5th series, HC, vol. cccxxv, 1546.
38. Chamberlain to Ida Chamberlain, 24 July 1937, University of Birmingham Library, Neville Chamberlain Papers, NC 18/1/1013.
39. Cabinet meeting, 13 Oct. 1937, CAB23/89, CM 37(37).
40. 21 Oct. 1937. *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, 5th series, HC, vol. cccxxvii, 168.
41. 'Record of conversations between British and French Ministers, 29–30 November 1937'. DBFP, 2nd series, vol. xix, 614.
42. 21 Dec. 1937. *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, 5th series, HC, vol. cccxxx, 1808.
43. 16 March 1938. *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, 5th series, HC, vol. cccxxxiii, 494–5.
44. 23 June 1938. *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, 5th series, HC, vol. cccxxxvii, 1353.
45. 31 Jan. 1939. *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, 5th series, HC, vol. cccxliii, 75.
46. Meeting of ministers, 2 Sept. 1937, CAB24/271, CP 208(37); Cabinet meeting, 16 March 1938, CAB23/93, CM 14(38); Cabinet Foreign Policy Committee meeting, 23 Jan. 1939, CAB27/624, FP (36), 35th mtg.
47. Cabinet Foreign Policy Committee meeting, 23 Jan. 1939, CAB27/624, FP (36) 35th mtg.
48. Edwards, *British Government and the Spanish Civil War*, 184–6.
49. See *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918–1945*, series D, vol. iii (London, 1951), 132–4, 136–7, 140–1.
50. Cabinet meeting, 18 Nov. 1936, CAB23/86, CM 64(36). See also M. Thomas, *Britain, France and Appeasement: Anglo-French Relations in the Popular Front Era* (Oxford, 1996), 101–2.
51. 'Notes of a meeting of ministers, 22 November 1936', CAB24/265, CP 312(36); Cabinet meeting, 25 Nov. 1936, CAB23/86, CM 67(36); Chamberlain to Ida Chamberlain, 22 Nov. 1936, University of Birmingham Library, Neville Chamberlain Papers, NC 18/1/986.
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53. Minutes by William Beckett, Foreign Office legal adviser, Mounsey, Vansittart, and Anthony Eden, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 7–10 April 1937, FO371/21352, W6481/23/4; Cabinet meeting, 11 April 1937, CAB23/88, CM 15(37). See also J. Cable, *The Royal Navy and the Siege of Bilbao* (Cambridge, 1979), 58–61 and M. Alpert, *A New International History of the Spanish Civil War* (Basingstoke, 2nd ed., 2004), 119–24.
54. 24th and 25th meetings of the Non-Intervention Committee, 9 July 1937, FO849/1, NIS (36); Bodleian Library, Hemming Papers. Francis Hemming was the Secretary of the Non-Intervention Committee. See also FO371/21389, W13547/169/41 and FO371/21390, W16478/169/41.

55. The Foreign Office to Sir Charles Wingfield, British Ambassador at Lisbon, 14 July 1937, FO371/21342, W13561/7/41.
56. Cabinet meeting, 22 Nov. 1938, CAB23/96, CM 56(38).
57. 19 Dec. 1938. *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, 5th series, HC, vol. cccxlii, 2522.
58. Edwards, *British Government and the Spanish Civil War*, 209.
59. See A. Beevor, *The Battle for Spain: The Spanish Civil War, 1936–1939* (London, 2006), 181–4, 231–3, 328, 332.
60. 30 May 1938. *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, 5th series, HC, vol. cccxxxvi, 1629.
61. Cabinet meeting, 6 July 1938, CAB23/94, CM 31(38).
62. 21 June 1938. *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, 5th series, HC, vol. cccxxxvii, 943.
63. 13 July 1938. *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, 5th series, HC, vol. cccxxxviii, 1330. See also N. Chamberlain, *The Struggle for Peace* (London, 1939), 240.
64. Chamberlain to Hilda Chamberlain, 25 June 1938, University of Birmingham Library, Neville Chamberlain Papers, NC 18/1/1057.
65. H. Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War* (London, 1977), 854. Edwards, *British Government and the Spanish Civil War*, 175–6, 202–3.
66. Cable, *Royal Navy*, 103–4.
67. 22 June 1937. *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, 5th series, HC, vol. cccxxv, 1027.
68. Statement by Chamberlain, 21 Oct. 1937, *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, 5th series, HC, vol. cccxxvii, 171. T. Buchanan, *Britain and the Spanish Civil War* (Cambridge, 1997), 116.
69. 21 Oct. 1937. *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, 5th series, HC, vol. cccxxvii, 171.
70. Cabinet meetings, 15 and 22 Dec. 1937, CAB23/90A, CM 47 (37) and CM 48 (37).
71. For the work of the various agencies see Buchanan, *Britain and the Spanish Civil War*, 109–16.
72. 31 Jan. 1939. *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, 5th series, HC, vol. cccxliii, 74.
73. For details of the mediation proposal see DBFP, 2nd series, vol. xvii, 600–1, 636, 647–8; *Documents Diplomatiques Français, 1932–1939*, 2nd series (1936–1939), vol. iv (Paris, 1968), 53–4.
74. Cabinet meeting, 28 April 1937, CAB23/88, CM19 (37); minutes by Mounsey, Vansittart and Eden, 28 April–7 May 1937; Foreign Office telegram to the Embassies in Paris, Berlin, Rome, Lisbon, and Moscow, 11 May 1937, FO371/21333, W9306/7/41; DBFP, 2nd series, vol. xvii, 740–1, 750–1, 810–11.
75. Chamberlain to Ida Chamberlain, 18 June 1938, University of Birmingham Library, Neville Chamberlain Papers, NC 18/1/1056.
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79. Note of a conversation between the Prime Minister and Herr Hitler, 30 Sept. 1938, DBFP, 3rd series, vol. ii, 636.
80. Chamberlain to Hilda Chamberlain, 2 Oct. 1938, University of Birmingham Library, Neville Chamberlain Papers, NC 18/1/1070.
81. 'Hemming Report', 17 Nov. 1938, Bodleian Library, Hemming Papers. See also Bodleian Library, Hemming Diaries, diary entries 21–22 Nov. 1938; H. Graham, *The Spanish Republic at War, 1936–1939* (Cambridge, 2002), 384.
82. 'The visit to Rome of the Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs from January 11 to January 14, 1939', CAB24/282, CP 8(39); Stafford, 'The Chamberlain-Halifax Visit', 93.
83. Cabinet meeting, 3 March 1937, CAB23/87, CM 10(37); 'Spain: Position of certain British mining companies in Spanish insurgent territory: Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs', 1 March 1937 and 'Spain: The Rio Tinto mines: Note by the First Lord of the Admiralty', 3 March 1937, CAB24/268, CP 80(37), and CP 82(87).
84. Cabinet meeting, 2 Feb. 1938, CAB23/92, CM 3(38).
85. Cabinet meeting, 17 March 1937, CAB23/87, CM 12(37).

86. C. Harvey, 'Politics and Pyrites during the Spanish Civil War', *Economic History Review*, 2nd series, xxxi (1978), 99–100. See also Moradiellos, *La Perfida de Albión*, 210–20; J.L.N. Hernández, 'La sublevación y la improvisación una política exterior de guerra' in J. Tusell, J, Avilés, and R. Pardo (eds.), *La Política Exterior de España en el Siglo XX* (Madrid, 2000), 292–3.
87. 4 Nov. 1937. *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, 5th series, HC, vol. cccxxviii, 1124–7.
88. Cabinet meeting, 4 Nov. 1936, CAB23/86, CM 62(36).
89. 'Situation in Spain: Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs', 13 Feb. 1939. CAB24/283, CP 46(39). Cabinet meeting, 14 Feb. 1939, CAB23/97, CM 7(39).
90. Cabinet meeting, 14 Feb. 1939, CAB23/97, CM 7(39); Chamberlain to Ida Chamberlain, 12 Feb. 1939, University of Birmingham Library, Neville Chamberlain Papers, NC 18/1/1085.
91. Halifax to Chamberlain, 17 Feb. 1939, [Kew, United Kingdom National Archives, Public Record Office] PREM[IER]1/360; Cabinet meeting, 22 Feb. 1939, CAB23/97, CM 8(39). See also 'Situation in Spain: Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs', 13 Feb. 1939, CAB 24/283, CP 46(39).
92. 28 Feb. 1939. *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, 5th series, HC, vol. cccxliv, 1218–22.
93. See G. Stone, 'Italo-German Collaboration and the Spanish Civil War, 1936–1939' in G. Johnson (ed), *The International Context of the Spanish Civil War* (Newcastle, 2009), 33–56.
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106. Chamberlain to Ida Chamberlain, 26 Sept. 1937, University of Birmingham Library, Neville Chamberlain Papers, NC 18/1/1022.
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108. 21 Feb. 1938. *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, 5th series, HC, vol. cccxxxi, 62.
109. Lord Perth (formerly Drummond) to Lord Halifax, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 16 May 1938, enclosing a 'memorandum on the negotiation in Rome for an Anglo-Italian Agreement, March 8-April 16, 1938', DBFP, 2nd series, vol. xix, 1092–3. See also Perth to Halifax, 4 June 1938 and Halifax to Perth, 17 June 1938. Ibid., 1125, 1127.
110. 26 July 1938. *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, 5th series, HC, vol. cccxxxviii, 2955.
111. 2 Nov. 1938. *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, 5th series, HC, vol. cccxl, 209–10; Cabinet meeting, 26 Oct. 1938, CAB23/96, CM 50(38); 'The Anglo-Italian Agreement:

Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs', 21 Oct. 1938, CAB24/279, CP 231(38).

112. For Italy's further intervention in Spain see Coverdale, *Italian Intervention*, 374, 381.
113. For the Spanish Republic's considerable difficulties in buying weapons on the global arms market as a result of non-intervention, see G. Howson, *Arms for Spain: The Untold Story of the Spanish Civil War* (London, 1998).
114. Alpert, *New International History*, 197.
115. Eden to Sir Nevile Henderson, British Ambassador at Berlin, 11 June 1937, DBFP, 2nd series, vol. xviii, 876.
116. 25 June 1937. *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, 5th series, HC, vol. cccxxv, 1548–9; Chamberlain to Hilda Chamberlain, 26 June 1937, University of Birmingham Library, Neville Chamberlain Papers, NC 18/1/1009.
117. Viñas, *El Honor de la República*, 533.
118. Chamberlain to Hilda Chamberlain, 2 Oct. 1938, University of Birmingham Library, Neville Chamberlain Papers, 18/1/1070.
119. Chamberlain to Ida Chamberlain, 12 Feb. 1939, University of Birmingham Library, Neville Chamberlain Papers, NC 18/1/1085.
120. A. Randle Elliott, 'Spain after Civil War', *Foreign Policy Reports*, xvi (1940), 67; A. and V. Toynbee (eds.), *Survey of International Affairs, 1939–1946: The Eve of 1939* (London, 1958), 2.
121. Coverdale, *Italian intervention*, 83–4, 399–404; D. Smyth, 'Reflex Reaction: Germany and the Onset of the Spanish Civil War' in P. Preston (ed), *Revolution and War in Spain*, 1931–1939 (London, 1984), 244; M. Blinkhorn, 'Conservatism, Traditionalism and Fascism in Spain, 1898–1937' in M. Blinkhorn (ed), *Fascists and Conservatives: The Radical Right and the Establishment in Twentieth Century Europe* (London, 1990), 129–34.
122. See D. Smyth, *Diplomacy and Strategy of Survival: British Policy and Franco's Spain, 1940–1941* (Cambridge, 1986); G. Stone, *The Oldest Ally: Britain and the Portuguese Connection, 1936–1941* (Woodbridge, 1994).
123. C. Leitz, *Economic Relations between Nazi Germany and Franco's Spain, 1936–1945* (Oxford, 1996), 114, 120–1.