

REGENT 0501.

Cranborne

21, ARLINGTON STREET,  
S.W. 1.

June 25th, 1935

Dear Aunt Noel Buxton,

Many thanks for your letter, which I was most interested to read. I gather you did not come to the same conclusion about Russia as I did. I spoke in the House with great diffidence, for the impressions of a four days tourist are notoriously undependable, but I think that the conclusion I reached was shared by other members of the party.

As you say, it is probably true that the main cause of Hitler's dislike of Russia is temperamental. He is the type of leader who takes very strong, often unreasoning views on a great many questions. Moreover, there is no doubt that the Germans do feel a genuine anxiety about Russian propaganda, at least that was the strong impression I formed in Berlin. But the fear of military invasion is a very different thing, and I must confess that I could not see that they had any reason for this. Indeed, all my conclusions led me to the opposite view. It seemed to me that the Russian Government were concentrating more and more on home affairs. It is probable that they realise that in all industrial organisation they are years behind Western nations, and they are very anxious to catch up. Indeed, indeed, I got the strong impression that their interests were becoming far less internationalist and far more nationalist. They were being gradually transformed into a nation like any other nations, and no longer were they a mere force for world revolution. That was what made it possible for them to give Eden so warm a welcome, and to drink the King of England's health.

In addition, they had no incentive that I could see for invading any neighbouring territory. They have vast territories of their own, which are very thinly populated, and would take years to develop. Nor was I

What into me was the  
view that I was doing wrong  
- probably  
- making  
Yes. That  
about  
to you  
seemed  
to fear  
of intervention  
Yes  
of Benes

True. I should be surprised  
bec she stands off for R  
P's wd equally ably to f-



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by any means convinced that, big though their army is, it is in a condition to conduct a modern war. Reports that I heard made me very doubtful, and descriptions which were told me of the condition of the railways did not sound as if they were in any state to stand a great mobilisation, or the constant movement of troops and stores, not to speak of the fact that their lateral lines along the frontiers seemed to be few and far between.

Finally, there is the very simple geographical difficulty, that they could not march into Germany without crossing Polish territory, which would certainly bring Poland in against them. Even if they were to go by way of the Baltic States, it is hardly possible that the Poles would face that with equanimity. Of course I know that this argument does not apply to the same degree to the movement of aeroplanes. Though the movement of hostile aircraft over foreign territory would not fail to cause great indignation, it is possible that they might get, say, to Czechoslovakia without actually being stopped, but it is very improbable that the Czechs would welcome this. After all, Czechoslovakia has a large German population, and I am quite certain they would be very disinclined to intervene in any European war if they could possibly avoid it.

*Then why  
parade  
Benes*

For these reasons I got a very distinct impression that Russia is not contemplating any offensive move, and that her Army and Air Force were intended, not for attack, but for defence. You will say, I am sure, that the grounds I give you are very general, but I feel that these various considerations, taken together, cannot be ignored. I do feel that people do not engage in a European war without a very strong motive, and in this case I do not believe that the motive is there. I think that if the Russian Government have built up an immense Army and Air Force -

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as they undoubtedly have - they have been actuated not  
by desire for aggression, but by fear of aggression  
from Germany.

Yours sincerely,

*C. A. ...*



18 COWLEY STREET  
WESTMINSTER.

28th June 1935

Dear Lord Cranborne,

Many thanks for your letter, and may I congratulate you very warmly on your recent appointment?

The impression I formed agrees with yours at many points, and I am much obliged to you for amplifying what you said in the House, as I was puzzled by the apparent absence in your argument of some features in Russia which your letter mentions. I agree <sup>with</sup> ~~that~~ what you say in regard to Russian pre-occupation with their own affairs, their industries, and the weakening of their international propaganda, the difficulties which

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their army would meet with, and the uncertainty as to aeroplanes crossing Poland. But I am glad that you do think the German anxiety is natural, at least about Russian propaganda. After all, the enormous size of the Russian air force, not to speak of the army, and again the universal propaganda of interest in rifle-shooting and flying, instilled into both sexes, makes a parallel to German military education. The alarms of both sides are easily fed by such facts as we both noted, and one can see that the visit of Benes, markedly emphasizing the relation of the Russian air force with Czech aerodromes, is good material for German anxiety. The point I felt that your speech made was that



18 COWLEY STREET  
WESTMINSTER.

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Hitler was rightly viewed with suspicion, because his attitude of fear of Russia was make-believe, concealing plans of aggression. I felt that was not confirmed by what one sees in Moscow, nor, on the other hand, by the views of our Embassy people at Berlin. It seems to me that the interests of international agreement have been very much hampered by unbalanced suspicion of German aims, such as those of Austen Chamberlain.

The point is not so much worth debating now as it was when I went to Moscow, because the Government has made a definite move towards treating Hitler as a man to deal with

But Chamberlain or Churchill may whip up  
the old anti-German feeling at any time,  
and one wants policy to be based on objec-  
-tive views.

I hope you feel that, while the  
Russians are not making aggressive plans,  
neither are the Germans doing so in the new  
situation.





*at*

DOMINIONS OFFICE,  
DOWNING STREET, S.W.1.

11th December, 1941.

*Dear Noel Buxton,*

Thank you for your letter.

I fully appreciate your desire to introduce your motion on Abyssinia as soon as possible. I have been in touch with the Foreign Office about the matter and I am afraid that at the moment there is nothing that I could usefully say. I hope however that it will be possible to make a statement as soon as the House meets after Christmas. I will certainly let you know as soon as I am in a position to answer your motion.

*Yours sincerely  
Cranborne*

The Right Honourable  
The Lord Noel-Buxton.



*Cranborne*  
as from Scotland



Standyng House,  
Whitehall, S.W.1.

25th August 1943

Dear Lord Noel-Buxton,

Just a line to thank you for so kindly sending me a copy of the reprint of your article "Germany and the Hitlerite State" from the July "Contemporary", which has been sent to me up here. I have read it with much interest. I am looking forward to reading Maurice's book, which I understand is a very good one.

Yours sincerely  
*Cranborne*

The Rt. Hon. Lord Noel-Buxton,  
Heathside Hotel,  
Woking.

18.3.44

TELEPHONE: CRANBORNE 3  
TELEGRAMS: CRANBORNE  
STATION: DAGGONS ROAD

MANOR HOUSE  
CRANBORNE  
DORSET.

Cranborne

Dear Noel Buxton,

Many thanks for your letter. It is nice of you to ask after my health. I was not very fit, but am getting on all right now & hope to be back at work soon. In any case, I shall, unless anything very unforeseen occurs, be in the House well before the 4th April, which will suit me very well for your notice. I will ask Hendricks to get in touch with you as soon as I return, so that we may have a talk about the point you wish to raise.

Yours sincerely  
Cranborne





I shall be able to give you an answer myself, which might well be impossible if the Empire Talks were still going on. For all these reasons, I hope very much that you will feel able to withdraw your motion and raise your point in the Foreign Affairs Debate. I cannot give you yet the exact day when this will take place, as it will depend on when the Empire talks come to an end. But it should involve a delay, at the most, of only a few days.

Yours sincerely  
Cranborne