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Reich Law Gazette 1939, I, page 485

Decree of the Fuehrer and Reich Chancellor concerning the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, dated 16 March 1939.

The provinces of Bohemia and Moravia have for a thousand years belonged to the living space of the German people. Through force and lack of sense they were arbitrarily segregated from their historical environments and, through incorporation into the artificial structure of the Czechoslovakian State, a center of unrest was created. From year to year the danger increased that from this district - as it has happened once before in the past - a new and enormous menace to the peace of Europe would ensue, for the Czechoslovakian State and its rulers had not succeeded in properly organizing the harmonious living of the national groups which had been arbitrarily united into its state-structure, and therewith had not succeeded to awaken and retain the interest of all concerned. Therewith, however, it has proven its intrinsic incapacity of existence and therefore has now actually been dissolved.

The Reich cannot tolerate continuous disturbances in these territories which are so decidedly important for its own peace and security as well as for the well-being and peace in general. The Reich, as the most interested power in view of its historical and geographical situation, would sooner or later have to suffer the gravest consequences. The Reich therefore, as a matter of self-preservation, is determined to interfere, for the purpose of restoring the fundamental requirements for a sensible Central-European order and to undertake the measures arising therefrom. For it has already proven in its 100 years of history that, owing to the greatness as well as the nature of the German people, the Reich only is qualified to solve this problem. Inspired by the sincere desire to serve the true interests of all nations living in this space, to secure the national life of the German and Czech people, to further the peace and the social welfare of all, I therefore decree, in the name of the German Reich as a basis for the future harmonious life of the inhabitants of these territories, the following :

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Article 1

- 1) the parts of the former Czechoslovakian Republic occupied by German troops in March 1939 are now incorporated into the territory of the Greater German Reich and, designated as "Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia" are under its protection.
- 2) In as far as it is required by the defense of the Reich, the Fuehrer and Reich Chancellor degrades a divergent ruling for individual parts of this territory.

Article 2

- 1) The racial Germans living in the Protectorate will be naturalized and, according to the provisions of the Reich Citizenship Law, dated 15 September 1935 (Reich Law Gazette I, page 1146) will become Reich Citizens. Therefore the provisions of the law for the protection of German blood and honor apply to them as well. They are subject to German law.
- 2) The rest of the inhabitants of Bohemia and Moravia will become nationals of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia.

Article 3

- 1) The Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia is an autonomous state and has its own administration.
- 2) It exercises its sovereign rights, assigned to it within the framework of the Protectorate, in coordinating with the political, military and economic interests of the Reich.
- 3) These sovereign rights are exercised by its own agencies and own authorities with their own personnel.

Article 4

The supreme Head of the autonomous administration of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia enjoys the protection and honor privileges of the State Executive. The State Executive of the Protectorate requires the confidence of the Fuehrer and Reich Chancellor for the exercise of his duties.

Article 5

The Fuehrer and Reich Chancellor appoints, as a representative for the Reich interests, the "Reich Protector in Bohemia and Moravia",

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The seat of his office will be Prag.

- 2) The task of the Reich Protector, as representative of the Fuehrer and Reich Chancellor and as Commissioner of the Reich Government, is to see that the political rules given by the Fuehrer and Reich Chancellor are observed.
- 3) The cabinet members of the Protectorate will be confirmed by the Reich Protector. The confirmation can be withdrawn.
- 4) The Reich Protector is authorized to obtain information with regard to all measures taken by the Government of the protectorate and may also act in an advisory capacity. He can protest against measures which are apt to be harmful to the Reich and, in case of emergency, he can take measures essential for the common interests.
- 5.) The proclamation of laws, decrees and other legal instructions, as well as the execution of administrative measures and final sentences pronounced by the Court are to be suspended if the Reich Protector submits his objection.

Article 6

- 1) The Reich takes care of the Protectorate's foreign affairs, especially the protection of its nationals abroad. The Reich will administer the foreign affairs in such a manner as it is required by the common interests.
- 2) An official will be appointed acting as representative of the Protectorate to the Reich Government with the official designation "ambassador".

Article 7

- 1) The Reich provides the military protection for the Protectorate.
- 2) For the purpose of carrying out this protection the Reich will maintain garrisons and military installations in the territory of the Protectorate.
- 3) For the purpose of maintaining the interior security and order, the protectorate may organize its own units. Organizations, strength and armament will be determined by the Reich Government.

Article 8

Direct supervision of communications as well as the postal- and telegraph system will be executed by the Reich.

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Article 9

The Protectorate is part of the customs-district of the Reich and is under its customs sovereignty.

Article 10

- 1) Until further notice the Crown is the legal currency besides the Reichsmark.
- 2) The proportion of the rate of exchange of both currencies is determined by the Reich Government.

Article 11

- 1) The Reich may decree legal provisions effective for the Protectorate in as far as it is required by the common interest.
- 2) If a common need exists the Reich may take over administrative branches into its own administration and establish Reich Offices therefore.
- 3) The Reich Government may take measures which are necessary for the maintenance of security and order.

Article 12

The law, at present in force in Bohemia and Moravia, remains in effect in as far as it is not contradictory to the meaning in connection with the assumption of protection by the Reich.

Article 13

The Reich Minister of the Interior in agreement with the Reich Ministers concerned may enact the legal - and administrative provisions necessary for the execution and supplement of this decree.

Prag, 16 March 1939.

The Fuehrer and Reich Chancellor
Adolf Hitler

The Reich Minister of the Interior
Frick

The Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs
v. Ribbentrop

The Reich Minister and Chief of the
Reichschancellery
Dr. Lammers