

# Hitler's Declaration of War (September 1, 1939)

## Abstract

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This speech was delivered to an emergency meeting of the Reichstag on the afternoon of September 1, 1939. German forces had already begun their invasion of Poland in the early hours of the morning. In a relatively calm manner, Hitler portrays himself as having sought peace throughout his years as chancellor, despite the injustices of the Versailles Treaty. He puts particular emphasis on the alleged suffering of ethnic Germans living in the city of Danzig and the Polish Corridor, territories that were removed from German control as an outcome of the Treaty.

After setting Germans up as the victims of the emerging conflict, he makes public the Nazi-Soviet non-aggression pact that was signed secretly a week earlier. In the speech he describes a new friendship with Stalin's regime, though in reality the pact was simply a way to secure Soviet acquiescence to German aggression in western Poland and eventually western Europe. Other important themes in the speech are Hitler's promise not to use violence against neutral countries and civilians and his call on the German people to demonstrate their willingness to stand behind him and the cause of German "self-defense."

## Source

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Source: Sound recording, September 1, 1939. Internet Archive

<https://archive.org/details/19390901AdolfHitlerReichstagsredeKriegserklaerungAnPolen38m33s>

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