

HITLER ON AMERICAS

LIFE CORRESPONDENT INTERVIEWS FÜHRER ON WAR AND THE FUTURE

by JOHN CUDAHY

9/9/41



JOHN CUDAHY
respondent in a year. Herewith LIFE publishes what the Führer told Mr. Cudahy about a German invasion of Amer-

This spring LIFE commissioned John Cudahy, former U. S. Ambassador to Belgium, to go to Berlin and write a series of articles about Nazi Germany and its war aims. Two weeks ago he was accorded an interview with Adolf Hitler—the first the German dictator has given an American press cor-

ica, the future of German trade, German treatment of occupied countries, etc.

LIFE is well aware of its grave responsibility in printing this article at such a critical time. It does so because it is confident its readers can intelligently recognize this interview for what it really is—an essential part of Hitler's political strategy of "softening up" the U. S. with large denials of aggressive intentions.

LIFE suspects that Hitler chose this particular time for his interview because he hoped it would undercut the President's speech. In LIFE's opinion the President's speech contained an annihilating answer to Adolf Hitler's "honeyed words." This answer is printed immediately following the interview.—ED.

"Convoys mean war," Adolf Hitler told me quietly on the afternoon of May 23 as we sat in the famous living room of his Berghof at Berchtesgaden. International legal precedents were well established, he said, that escorting munitions, war materials and deadly weapons to an enemy with armed naval forces was a warlike act. These precedents had been determined by Anglo-Saxon maritime powers for a long time, were thoroughly well known and understood by all legal authorities.

At my side was the celebrated interpreter Herr Schmidt and, across the big round table, Walter Hewel, liaison officer of the German Foreign Office. Through the largest bay window I have ever seen, the snow-sheeted Alps seemed startlingly close and white as antimony in the spring sunshine. Far down, the green valley was polka-dotted with spring flowers. The distant silhouette of Salzburg looked vague and fluttering against a cumulous cloud embankment, like a phantom city.

I told the Führer that the primary cause of opposition to Germany in the U. S. was based upon the sentiment that the security of the Western Hemisphere was threatened by German aggression. People argued that German conquest might go on and on and the next logical field for German military adventure was the two American continents. He laughed at that and refused to take me seriously. He said the idea of a Western Hemi-

sphere invasion was about as fantastic as an invasion of the moon.

I replied that, fantastic or not, an eventual attack by Germany on the Americas was feared by a large number of thoughtful American people. He could not believe it, he persisted, because he had too high an opinion of the intelligence and good sense of Americans. He said he was convinced this invasion story was put out by warmongers against their better knowledge, men who wanted war in the belief it would be profitable for business—an erroneous conception since the last great war had demonstrated that war was ruinous to business.

He said that the German High Command considered an invasion of either American continent to be as wildly imaginary as an invasion of the moon and he was confident that Army and Navy chiefs in the U. S. shared the same views as the German military authorities.

"Why," he asked, "do not the British send more troops to Greece and North Africa?" He answered his own question by saying it was because sufficient transports were not available although the distances were comparatively short. The combined shipping tonnage of Britain, the U. S. and Germany would be hopelessly inadequate, he insisted, to transport an army of millions which would be required for a successful conquest of the Western Hemisphere.