

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

THE SECRETARY

October 24, 1941

MEMORANDUM TO THE PRESIDENT

x48  
The British and the Allied Governments contemplate issuing a declaration similar to that quoted in the attached telegram concerning the shooting of hostages by the German authorities. While practical effects of such a declaration may be slight, I believe that this Government should also forcefully declare its revulsion at this practice. There is accordingly attached a statement which, if you approve, you may wish to make to the press either concurrently with the issuance of the Allied declaration or at a fixed time. I suggest tomorrow noon.

x20  
12 noon E.S.T., Oct 25 -  
notes prominently announced  
in London.

10-25-41

FOR THE PRESS

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

The practice of executing scores of innocent hostages in reprisal for isolated attacks on Germans in countries temporarily under the Nazi heel revolts a world already inured to suffering and brutality. Civilized peoples long ago adopted the basic principle that no man should be punished for the deed of another. Unable to apprehend the persons involved in these attacks the Nazis characteristically slaughter fifty or a hundred innocent persons. Those who would "collaborate" with Hitler or try to appease him cannot ignore this ghastly warning.

The Nazis might have learned from the last war the impossibility of breaking men's spirit by terrorism. Instead they develop their "lebensraum" and "new order" by depths of frightfulness which even they have never approached before. These are the acts of desperate men who know in their hearts that they cannot win. Frightfulness can never bring peace to Europe. It only sows the seeds of hatred which will one day bring fearful retribution.

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