

Neville Chamberlain

Audio Guide transcript of National Sound Archive recording

The following extract is from a broadcast he made to the nation in 1938, at the time of the Munich crisis, when his desperate attempts to avoid war brought a brief but controversial breathing space while the nation re-armed.

‘However much we may sympathise with a small nation confronted by a big and powerful neighbour, we cannot, in all circumstances, undertake to involve the whole British Empire in war simply on her account. If we have to fight, it must be on large issues than that. I am myself a man of peace to the depths of my soul. Armed conflict between nations is a nightmare to me. But if I were convinced that any nation had made up its mind to dominate the world by fear of its force, I should feel that it should be resisted. And that such a domination like the people who believe in liberty, would not be worth living. But war is a fearful thing, and we must be very clear before we embark on it, that it is really the great issues that are at stake, and that a call to risk everything in their defense, when all the consequences are weighed, is irresistible.’