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Nature of totalitarian diplomacy: Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini as test cases

Gary Lee Frazer

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THE NATURE OF TOTALITARIAN DIPLOMACY:
ADOLF HITLER AND BENITO MUSSOLINI AS TEST CASES

by

Gary Lee Frazer

B.A., University of Montana, 1980
B.A., University of Montana, 1981

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

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1986

Approved by:

[Signature]
Chairman, Board of Examiners

[Signature]
Dean, Graduate School

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ABSTRACT

Frazer, Gary Lee, M.A., Spring, 1986 History

The Nature of Totalitarian Diplomacy: Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini as Test Cases

Director: Paul G. Lauren, Ph.D.

The objective of this thesis is to gain a better understanding of the vital problem of totalitarian diplomacy in relation to twentieth-century diplomatic history by examining the manner in which Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini practiced their diplomacy. By examining government documents, diplomatic papers, diaries, memoirs and the classic works of English language scholarship on the subject of Fascist and Nazi diplomacy, I plan to demonstrate the differences and the problems which totalitarian diplomacy presented to the traditional methods of diplomacy as practiced by the Western democracies.

The differences between Hitler's and Mussolini's diplomacy and the traditional diplomacy of the Western powers can be summarized as follows: (1) both Hitler and Mussolini possessed an extraordinary amount of independence in the conduct of their foreign affairs as compared to the Western leaders, (2) both dictator's regimes suffered from a lack of professionals in their diplomatic corps, (3) neither dictator had to consider the impact of public opinion upon his diplomacy to the same degree as the Western diplomats, (4) both Hitler and Mussolini held different views from the Western diplomats as to the purpose of diplomacy in foreign affairs, and (5) neither dictator shared the same ideological beliefs as the Western leaders.

Not only were the Western diplomats forced to adapt to the changes in diplomatic method introduced by such modern pressures as new elaborate departments, expanded staffs, enlarged budgets, new personnel policies, and sophisticated inventions, but they were also forced to confront a direct challenge to the very purpose of diplomacy which formed the universal basis for all international negotiations. Both Hitler and Mussolini accepted warfare as a necessary ingredient of national policy, and they were both confident that they could achieve their goals by the proper exercise of military force.

The failure of the Western diplomats to recognize Hitler's and Mussolini's contempt for the values of traditional diplomatic practice, and to counter the challenges which both Hitler and Mussolini presented to traditional diplomacy by adopting suitable countermeasures, clearly demonstrated the inability of traditional diplomacy to cope with the unique problems which totalitarian diplomacy introduced to international relations.
For My Parents

George and Ruth Frazer
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I. INTRODUCTION

In order to understand the nature of totalitarian diplomacy as Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini practiced it, one must consider not only the unique conduct of each dictator, but also the underlying differences between "traditional" or "classical" diplomacy and totalitarian diplomacy.

The classical period of diplomacy, which reached its zenith during the nineteenth century, was characterized by certain accepted standards which the major European nation states agreed to follow in conducting their foreign relations. In his book, The Evolution of Diplomatic Method, Harold Nicolson affirms that the classical period of diplomacy was characterized by the "establishment in every European country of a professional diplomatic service on a more or less identical model." Moreover, according to him, the professional diplomats of each European country "possessed similar standards of education, similar experience, and a similar aim." They all shared a common heritage, and they all desired the same sort of world. In short, "they all believed, whatever their governments might believe, that the purpose of diplomacy was the preservation of peace."\(^1\)

The Great Powers of Europe--England, France, Germany, Italy, and Russia--essentially agreed that a relative "balance of power" should be maintained which would preserve the existing status quo on the European continent. Moreover, they agreed that warfare between nation
states should be kept limited and that every effort should be made to resolve disputes through diplomatic negotiation. The Great Powers of Europe shared a common heritage, and they agreed that the purpose of diplomacy should be to preserve the peace and maintain the European nation state system.

The totalitarian period of diplomacy, which reached its zenith during the 1930s under the guidance of Hitler and Mussolini, presented a challenge to the classical concept of diplomacy. Both dictators were radically opposed to the accepted standards of traditional diplomacy. They did not believe that a balance of power should be maintained in order to preserve the existing status quo on the European continent. Moreover, they considered warfare to be a necessary and useful means of promoting their political goals. In short, neither Hitler nor Mussolini supported the accepted standards of diplomatic negotiation or the nation state system which the Western democracies hoped to preserve.

Both Hitler and Mussolini took advantage of the changes which occurred in the composition of the diplomatic community in the twentieth century. In his book, Diplomats and Bureaucrats, Paul Gordon Lauren points out that the "decline of Europe as the epicenter of international politics, the growth in the numbers of nations actively participating in affairs, and the influx of outsiders all contributed to end the former cultural homogeneity" of the European diplomatic community. Moreover, according to Lauren, the "destruction of this former unity and the subsequent introduction of new ground rules opened the door to
ideological rivalries, soon permitting exponents of communism, fascism, and democracy to contort the traditional forms of diplomacy into unrecognizable ones."

Both dictators had their own conceptions as to the purpose of diplomacy and how it should be conducted. Hitler, for example, considered the sole purpose of diplomacy to be preparation for war. He was determined to conquer additional living space or Lebensraum for his "racially superior" Germany and he was convinced that he could accomplish this goal only by launching a major European war. Therefore, Hitler had no use for international diplomacy as a means of preserving peaceful relations between nation states. He conducted his diplomacy solely for the purpose of advancing his planned wars of conquest.

Mussolini, on the other hand, considered the main purpose of diplomacy to be a means by which he could build up his own personal prestige. In his view, the best way to accomplish this goal would be to establish a new Roman Empire with himself as the new Caesar, and like Hitler, he was convinced that the only way he could accomplish his goal would be to launch wars of conquest and gradually expand Italian territory until he had created his new Empire. Therefore, Mussolini gradually lost all interest in international diplomacy as a means of preserving peaceful relations between nation states. He conducted his diplomacy mainly for the purpose of advancing his planned wars of conquest.
Both Hitler and Mussolini also had their own conception of how they should control their respective regimes. It is not surprising that in the field of foreign policy each dictator was anxious to maintain as much authority in his own hands as possible. However, both Hitler and Mussolini realized that they would have to delegate a certain amount of their authority in order to keep their day-to-day diplomatic operations functioning at an acceptable level. The problem, in each leader's view, was how to delegate enough authority to keep their administrative systems functioning, without losing personal control over major foreign policy decisions. The solutions that both Hitler and Mussolini settled upon were very similar. Both leaders decided to use the party and the services of loyal subordinates to help them maintain their personal control over all aspects of their regimes. This is why the manner in which Hitler and Mussolini delegated their authority and the effect this delegation of authority had upon the Party, the military, and the Foreign Office must be examined in order to understand the conduct of each dictator's diplomacy. Each of these organizations influenced the conduct of diplomacy, and therefore the role that each of these organizations played in Hitler's and Mussolini's regimes must be examined in connection with each dictator's concepts of diplomacy and each dictator's ideological goals.

Since a complete examination and comparison of every aspect of each dictator's regime is beyond the scope of this thesis, it is necessary to examine Hitler's and Mussolini's diplomacy in a limited context. Therefore, an examination of each dictator's diplomacy in a
particular test case, such as their combined intervention in the Spanish Civil War, will provide a better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of totalitarian diplomacy. Moreover, by comparing the intervention policies of Hitler and Mussolini, against the policies of the Western democracies, it should be possible to gain a better understanding of the differences between totalitarian diplomacy and traditional diplomacy.

Since the objective of this thesis is to gain a better understanding of the vital problem of totalitarian diplomacy in relation to twentieth-century diplomatic history, I plan to examine the classic works of English language scholarship on the subject of Fascist and Nazi diplomacy. There is an abundance of excellent material available which addresses the subject of totalitarian diplomacy in relation to Fascist and Nazi diplomacy. Government documents, diplomatic papers, diaries, and memoirs are all available in English. In addition, several excellent works by respected scholars are also available in historical journals and popular magazines. Finally, several monographs of both a primary and secondary nature also provide valuable material on the subject of Fascist and Nazi diplomacy. Two works which are particularly useful in exploring the relationship between Hitler and Mussolini and their respective regimes are Ernst Nolte's *Three Faces of Fascism*, and F. W. Deakin's *The Brutal Friendship*. Both monographs provide an excellent evaluation of the role of each dictator in relation to twentieth-century history.
Since both Hitler and Mussolini played such a dominant role in the conduct of their diplomacy, it is necessary to examine the personal traits of each dictator in preference to the particular characteristics of each dictator's state in relation to foreign affairs. In short, by examining both Hitler's and Mussolini's diplomacy in relation to their personal traits, and by using their combined intervention in the Spanish Civil War as a test case, I plan to demonstrate the different challenges which totalitarian diplomacy presented to the Western democracies as practiced by Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini. It will then be possible to distinguish the different characteristics of totalitarian diplomacy as opposed to traditional diplomacy.
II. HITLER'S DIPLOMACY

In order to understand Hitler's diplomacy, it is not only necessary to examine his personal traits as a leader, but also to consider whether he possessed a detailed plan of action, or if he simply took advantage of any situation which might advance his goals. A controversy exists in the historical community as to whether Hitler was merely a power hungry opportunist who exploited any opportunity to enhance his position, or if he was more rational and followed precise coherent plans in the pursuit of his objectives.

One scholar who supports the theory that Hitler was merely an opportunist who did not possess a concrete plan of action is A. J. P. Taylor. In his book, The Origins of The Second World War, Taylor argues that Hitler's goal was to make Germany the dominant power in Europe, however, he did not possess a concrete plan for achieving this goal. He planned to achieve his goals through a series of small wars in a piecemeal fashion. Hitler expected French and British resistance to his plans, but he made no specific plans or took any specific preparations for a great war.3

A scholar who opposes the view of Hitler as merely an opportunist without a long-term plan of action is Gerhard L. Weinberg. In his book, The Foreign Policy of Hitler's Germany, Weinberg supports the view that Hitler did have a long-term plan which he attempted to follow to the best of his abilities, and simply took advantage of opportunities
which presented themselves during the course of events. Weinberg agrees with Taylor that Hitler was preparing for a series of smaller wars, however, he argues that Hitler's strategy was to launch quick campaigns against isolated enemies, in the belief that success in each war would help him to prepare for the next war "by increasing Germany's resources and terrifying others into submission or at least abstention from intervention."\(^4\)

I agree with the theory that Hitler did possess a long-term plan which dominated his thinking and his actions. However, even though Hitler did possess a long-term plan of action, he was also willing to take advantage of any opportunity to advance his goals, even if he had to temporarily change course. Hitler never abandoned his long-term goals, however, no matter how promising the opportunities of the moment might seem. He was determined to achieve his Lebensraum policy, and nothing could tempt him to abandon the pursuit of this goal.

In the case of both Hitler and Mussolini, the personal traits of each dictator had a unique influence upon the conduct of their regime's diplomacy, therefore I shall concentrate my examination upon Hitler and Mussolini as individuals rather than upon the political, economic, or social make up of each dictator's particular state.

**Hitler as Leader**

Hitler's personal traits were of course varied and numerous, but certain qualities remained constant and contributed to both his rise and fall. One of Hitler's dominant traits was a passionate belief in
his own infallibility. His confidence carried him through such episodes as the invasion of the Rhineland, but the same trait also doomed his soldiers at Stalingrad to utter defeat. Clearly, Hitler's personal idiosyncrasies are an important factor which must be taken into account if one desires to understand the workings of Hitler's leadership.

One of Hitler's personal traits which affected his diplomacy was his aversion to routine administrative paper work. In fact, he was so anxious to avoid administrative detail that he allowed his subordinates a considerable amount of authority to act on their own initiative. As long as they remained loyal to him personally, Hitler did not care who carried out his plans or what methods they used to accomplish his objectives. He was even willing to rely upon the bureaucrats of the foreign ministry whom he had inherited from the Weimar government if they could "deliver the goods."  

In keeping with Hitler's ideological outlook, he believed that struggle should determine the distribution of power among his subordinates. As Edward N. Peterson mentions in his book, *The Limits of Hitler's Power*:

> Hitler believed the strong would survive and the stronger should have the authority. Yet instead of deciding who was stronger, he simply gave similar authority to various persons, leaving their powers vague and letting them fight it out. 6

Hitler hated to change his subordinates, and once he became comfortable with an associate, he would display an unshakeable loyalty for his "old comrade." He was convinced that he could evaluate people quickly and accurately, however, he seemed capable of evaluating only who was...
loyal to him and who was not, and he appointed a large number of in-
competent people to positions of authority.

Despite Hitler's practice of promoting rivalry among his sub-
ordinates, and his appointment of incompetent personnel, he was able
to maintain a surprising degree of authority over his administrative
apparatus. As in most political systems, Hitler's subordinates were
dependent upon him for their power, and consequently, they would perform
any of his desires, no matter how unorthodox, in order to curry favor
with their leader. By delegating his authority among numerous in-
dividuals and organizations, Hitler was able to position himself as
the "referee in the constant fighting for power." As a result, no
institution or individual posed a serious threat to his position. Hitler
always remained wary of rivals to his personal power, and if any one
organization became too powerful, he would create another rival
organization in order to maintain his own superiority.

Even though Hitler delegated a large amount of authority to his
subordinates, he was nevertheless quite capable of carrying out his
schemes by relying upon his own abilities. As Major General F. W.
von Mellenthin points out in his book, Panzer Battles, Hitler was a
very clever man who possessed an excellent memory, a terrific will
power, and an outstanding oratorical ability which helped him to con-
vince his subordinates to obey his commands. Moreover, Hitler also had
an "extraordinary flair for sensing the weakness of his adversaries,
and for exploiting their failings to the full."
In addition to his political gifts, Hitler also possessed many tragic traits as well. In his book, *Arms, Autarky and Aggression*, William Carr argues that, "Hitler was a moody, restless and explosive character, lacking in human affection..., inordinately suspicious of mankind..., domineering, opinionated" and "positively paranoid in some of his views." Moreover, Hitler combined all of these traits, good and bad, into his extraordinary will power. Hitler had nothing but contempt for any individual who gave in at the least sign of resistance. According to Hitler, if enough will power was applied to a particular task, then all obstacles could be over come. Hitler made his views in this regard very clear in his own *Secret Book*:

> These unhappy souls have no understanding at all of the fact that..., a decision which I deem to be necessary, whose success however does not seem completely assured, or whose success will offer only a partial satisfaction, must be fought for with an increased energy so that what it lacks in the possibility of success in percentage points, must be made up for in the energy of its execution.

One positive feature of Hitler's tremendous will power was his ability to get people to believe in him and to follow him. This particular ability helps to account for much of Hitler's power. In his book, *Panzer Leader*, the German General Heinz Guderian maintains that Hitler's will power was so extraordinary that its "effect on many men was almost hypnotic."

Moreover, Hitler's will power was buttressed by his other physical and intellectual qualities. Hitler had the amazing ability to assimilate large amounts of information very rapidly, and to block out all distractions from the single-minded pursuit of his objectives.
He would then proceed to convince his followers that any task could be accomplished if it were reduced to simple objectives, and if enough will power was committed to the task.

In addition to his will power, Hitler was able to capitalize upon his oratorical abilities to help maintain his power. Hitler's oratorical abilities were so masterful, that he could convince almost all audiences that his was the correct path to follow, even when his logic was based upon personal assumptions which might not conform to reality. He knew how to adjust his manner of speech to suit the mentality of his audience, and he could judge his listeners and sense exactly what they wanted to hear, or what they hoped to gain. As Norman Rich argues in his book, *Hitler's War Aims*, "Hitler was convinced that every man had his price, and he had a flair for sensing what that price might be, whether it was peace, power, status, money, or simply personal security."

Another one of Hitler's idiosyncracies was his tendency to procrastinate and to delay decisions as long as possible. Instead of issuing necessary orders he would deliver "long and vague harangues," and "when dealing face-to-face with skilled associates he was likely to avoid conflict, postpone unpleasant decisions, and delay solutions." The resulting delays meant that many of Hitler's decisions arrived too late to be of any use to his subordinates. For example, by the time Hitler finally decided to withdraw his troops from Stalingrad, their situation was already hopeless.

Hitler's tendency to delay solutions to problems was partly a reflection of his desire to wait for the most opportune moment to strike.
In his book, *Hitler: A Study in Tyranny*, Alan Bullock argues that Hitler "contrived to keep his plans flexible, and until he was convinced that the right moment had come, he would find a hundred excuses for procrastination." Once Hitler did finally make a decision to act, however, he moved very quickly. Of all his demagogic skills, Hitler was clearly very fond of quick and decisive action. "Surprise was a favorite gambit of Hitler's in politics, diplomacy, and war."\(^{14}\)

Another one of Hitler's traits which encouraged him to attack innocent people without warning, was his complete lack of scruples and inhibitions. He respected only power, and he was willing to commit any crime, no matter how repulsive, in order to achieve his goals. Hitler even admitted his lack of respect for principles in his own book, *Mein Kampf*. Hitler said that "in questions of foreign policy I shall never admit that I am tied by anything."\(^{15}\) Other than the firm belief in the necessity of preserving his own power and the power of Germany, there seems to be few principles that Hitler would not sacrifice. Hermann Rauschning, who interviewed Hitler and reported some of his findings in his book, *The Voice of Destruction*, was convinced of Hitler's lack of principles. He mentioned that Hitler "was prepared to repudiate all treaties and standards of justice as irrelevant in the decisive struggle for power."\(^{16}\) Hitler was in no way restrained by any feelings of compassion, decency, or moral principles.

Hitler's lust for power was the main force which dominated his behavior, and he took advantage of any situation which might improve his position. He simply used Germany to achieve and maintain his
personal power. Hitler was fond of Germany, and he connected his destiny with Germany, but Hitler would sacrifice anything or anybody to maintain his position. He clung to a "fanatic belief that he had been selected by destiny to lead the German people... to a permanent status of security and greatness," and he believed that this mission exempted him from the ordinary rules of human conduct.\textsuperscript{17}

Hitler partly justified his actions by claiming that he was following the dictates of history. He was fascinated by the rise and fall of civilizations, and as Percy Schramm points out in his book, \textit{Hitler: The Man and the Military Leader}, "the decline of classical civilization preoccupied him as an example of what he felt he had to prevent in his own time."\textsuperscript{18} According to Hitler, the Bolshevik ideology of the masses would overrun Europe unless the Nazi racist ideology of the elite proved strong enough to stop it. Only Nazi Germany could save Europe from the Bolshevik threat from the East. Hitler believed that it was his mission to lead Germany on a crusade to save Western Europe from this eastern threat. In his book, \textit{The Three Faces of Fascism}, Ernst Nolte argues that Hitler always "succumbed to an ungovernable passion on the subject of bolshevism" because he "regarded it as the most radical form of Jewish genocide ever known..."\textsuperscript{19}

Moreover, according to Nolte, Hitler had no choice but to portray Bolshevik Russia as the major enemy of Nazi Germany because the entire basis of National Socialism's race-doctrine rested upon the acknowledged aim of annihilating the "Jewish-Bolshevik head" and returning the "Slavic masses to their natural state of slavery, so that the superior
race could find space to ensure its existence, and subjects over which to exert its claim to hegemony." Hitler was convinced that history had provided him with a just guide to his world view, and once he had formed his ideological framework, it became rigid and inflexible. He violently rejected any alternative views, and he refused to allow others to criticize his assumptions.

Hitler's Racism

Although Hitler's personal characteristics are an important guide to his actions, his ideological framework can be used as an even more permanent guide to understanding his foreign policy. His concepts of racial purity and of Lebensraum, or living space, dominated Hitler's thinking and actions. Hitler's personal traits influenced his actions, but his ideological concepts provided him with his goals. Therefore, if one wants to understand Hitler's motivations and actions, one must examine not only his personal traits, but also his doctrine of race, and his attitude toward space.

Hitler's doctrine of race was based upon the assumption that history could be understood only in terms of racial analysis. He believed that the security of civilizations depended upon their success or failure in maintaining their racial purity. Therefore, Hitler decided to make racial purity the guiding principle of his foreign policy. Hitler said that:

The essential fundamental and guiding principle, which we must always bear in mind..., is that foreign policy is only a means to an end, and that the end is solely the promotion of our own nationality.
No consideration of foreign policy can proceed from any other criterion than this: Does it benefit our nationality now or in the future, or will it be injurious to it?

Hitler used his racial views to provide a basis for his vision of Germany's future empire. He believed that Germany's defeat in the First World War was not due to its "inherent weakness." Hitler considered Germany's "ability to hold out for so long against a world of foes" as a sign of Germany's "inherent racial superiority," and he was determined to draw from this racial superiority the necessary strength to produce a victory in the next war.

Hitler's race and space policy went beyond "the classic imperialist answer to the problem of growing numbers pressing on limited resources." Hitler wanted to create a continuous cycle of expansion, and he contrived to make the need for expansion both the justification and the objective of his policy. He deliberately "encouraged" the German people "to outstrip" their "resources in order to create" a new need for further expansion. In this manner, a continuous cycle of expansion could be maintained. Hitler considered the old nationalist goals of former times to be outdated, and he despised anyone who failed to recognize the new importance of racial policy. He asserted that:

diplomacy must see to it that a people does not heroically perish, but is practically preserved. Every road that leads to this is then expedient, and not taking it must be characterized as criminal neglect of duty.

In Hitler's view, old-fashioned nationalism should be used solely as a means to an end, and not as an end in itself. He believed that the old nationalist goals of the past would not provide the security
that Germany needed. Only additional living space and not the mere reestablishment of Germany's former borders would guarantee Germany's future. Hitler was convinced that Germany could be made the dominant power of Europe by expanding its racially superior population eastward. Hitler knew that such a policy would make war with Russia a virtual certainty, but he believed that the future of Germany demanded such a course.

According to Hitler, Russia represented not only a potential area for German conquest, but also an area of potential threat to Germany's security. He believed that this Russian "territory provided the breeding grounds for an inexhaustible supply" of racially inferior people who would one day overrun Germany. Hitler believed that these inferior races "had been held at bay over the centuries only by the bravery of the Germans, whose racial qualities had enabled them so far to withstand a numerically superior foe."25 In Hitler's view, only territorial expansion could provide the necessary security that Germany needed in order to protect Western civilization from the masses of racially inferior people of the East.

Hitler's racial concepts were a natural complement to his desire to wage an aggressive foreign policy. Russia proved to be a handy target, but Hitler had always planned to expand in the east no matter what form of government controlled Russia and no matter how strong or weak Russia might prove to be at the time. Hitler intended to expand at Russia's expense, and he used his racial concepts to help justify this decision, and to make the task appear both necessary and easy.
The preservation of the Aryan race was a basic component of Hitler's ideological framework. According to Hitler, everything worthwhile that mankind had achieved had been the direct result of the Aryan race. In Hitler's view, the Aryan race constituted an elite group of superior individuals who had the right and the duty to rule over inferior people in order to preserve civilization from cultural decay. This was the basis upon which rested Hitler's entire ideological program. Hitler believed that, "a people had the right to exist only if it were racially valuable." He was convinced that the preservation of the Aryan race and of civilization required the elimination of inferior races, and he was not concerned about the consequences of such objectives. "The first commandment of Hitlerian morality was... the preservation of the collective vital force of the German people," and all other peoples were simply to be "brushed aside." Racism was more than just a mere propagandistic slogan for Hitler. He was determined to make his racial concepts a guidepost for the National Socialist Party. Hitler said that:

It will be the task of the National Socialist movement to carry over into a policy applied in practice the knowledge and scientific insights of race theory, either already existing or in the course of development, as well as the world history clarified through it.

Moreover, Hitler knew that his racial goals would be costly to achieve, and "he warned" the German people "that the fulfillment of his program would require work and sacrifice on an unprecedented scale." Hitler knew that his racial goals "could only be met by" consolidating
"the undivided devotion and entire energy of the German people" in preparation for foreign expansion. Therefore, he made every effort to consolidate all authority under his personal control in order to shape Germany into the instrument which would allow him to carry out his racial policies. As far as Hitler was concerned, the preservation and security of the German race depended upon expansion in the east, and all policies should be directed towards this goal. Moreover, Hitler made it very clear that his goals could only be achieved through conquest, and he was confident that the superior German race could accomplish his goals.

**Lebensraum**

Hitler's doctrine of space was a logical complement to his doctrine of race. In Hitler's view, both doctrines should be combined into one comprehensive ideology. He believed that, "racial vitality and spatial expansion were directly related. The stronger race would always have the right to take the additional space that it needed in order to meet the demands of its growing population. Hitler argued that if the Germans did not expand, then they would gradually weaken and eventually lose their racial superiority. Therefore, the desirable course for Germany to follow would be to conquer additional territory. Hitler said that, "the increase of population can be balanced only through an increase, that is an enlargement, of living space." Moreover, since Hitler intended to exterminate all conquered peoples, he maintained that he could avoid any dangers of contaminating the purity of the German race through conquest. According to Hitler, the availability
of conquered territory free from the dangers of racial contamination would ensure the future security of the superior Aryan race. Therefore, Hitler decided to make eastward expansion the major goal of his leadership. As Hitler said: "the task of the leaders of a nation's struggle for existence consists in... restoring a tolerable relation between population and territory."\(^{31}\)

Hitler saw territorial expansion as a natural component of man's struggle for existence, and he considered any display of compassion for the elimination of inferior races during the process of expansion contrary to the rules of nature. He said that there is "nothing sinful in territorial acquisition, but something quite in keeping with nature."\(^{32}\) Hitler had nothing but contempt for weaker races, and he believed that human rights counted for nothing when compared to the duty to protect and enhance the Aryan race.

Moreover, in Hitler's view, the threat from the east embraced not only the German people, but all of European civilization. Therefore, it was his duty to acquire additional territory in the east in order to provide both Germany and Western Europe with the security needed to guarantee the future of Western civilization. Hitler believed that territorial expansion would therefore protect both Germany and Western Europe, and he was determined to carry out this task.

Hitler's belief that he was protecting Western civilization by increasing the size and power of Germany added a universal and crusading aspect to his ideological framework. In Hitler's mind, his expansionist policy took on a limitless character. Hitler described his concept
of limitless struggle as follows:

We calculate our own sacrifices, weigh the extent of the possible success and will stride forward to the attack, regardless of whether it will come to a halt ten or a thousand kilometers behind the present lines. For wherever our success ends, it will always be only the point of departure for a new struggle.

Even though Hitler's doctrine of space had a universal and limitless character, Hitler was mainly concerned with Russia. Germany might expand in every direction, but the eastern areas held the greatest promise for Hitler. He insisted that the major theme of his foreign policy should always be based upon the conquest of eastern territories.

Hitler argued that Germany should follow:

not the diplomatic aimlessness of the last decades, but a conscious and determined course, and stick to it. Neither western nor eastern orientation must be the future goal of our foreign policy, but an eastern policy in the sense of acquiring the necessary soil for our German people.

Hitler believed that Russia would be easy to conquer because of its racially inferior inhabitants. In Hitler's view, the combination of the necessity of expansion coupled with the weakness of Russia's racial stock, made eastward expansion the most logical direction for his aggressive policy. Expansion at Russia's expense provided Hitler with the perfect opportunity to implement his combined theories of racial superiority, economic advantage, and even strategic necessity. To Hitler, German foreign policy would retain significance only if it sought to carry out his ideological theories by conquering new territory in Eastern Europe.
Hitler as Diplomat

In order to understand Hitler's concept of diplomacy it is necessary to acknowledge that Hitler considered diplomacy as simply one more means of preparing for war. As far as Hitler was concerned, any form of alliance or other diplomatic agreement should be dropped immediately if it did not prepare Germany for war. Hitler recognized that his policies could be achieved only through war, and he was quite willing to make preparation for war the guiding principle of his foreign policy. In Hitler's view, there would be no need for negotiations between states because he was determined to initiate a war and not to prevent one.

Hitler's concept of diplomacy as a means for preparing for war naturally had a profound effect upon the handling of treaties and other international agreements. To Hitler, the main purpose of forming an alliance was to increase the power of Germany in its struggle for space. "An alliance whose aim does not embrace a plan for war is senseless and worthless," he wrote. "Alliances are concluded only for struggle." Moreover, Hitler also believed that alliances were only temporary instruments which could be broken as soon as they were no longer useful. He assumed that there could be no alliance based upon good will. Alliances should be based solely upon the prospect of mutual gain on the part of both parties. He proclaimed: "Alliances will be all the stronger, the more the individual contracting parties may hope to derive private advantages from them. It is fantastic to wish to form an
alliance on any other basis." It was only logical to him therefore, that once the prospect of mutual gain was gone or in any way obstructed, the alliance should be dropped immediately.

Hitler's view that alliances should only be temporary in nature, helps to explain why he avoided all multilateral commitments. Hitler always wanted to preserve his own freedom of movement, and he considered it much easier "to make and break a treaty with" only one power, rather than to withdraw "from a complicated multilateral structure." Therefore, Hitler not only took Germany out of all international organizations, but he also refused to join any multilateral commitments if he could avoid it.

Hitler's concepts of the uses of diplomacy also affected the manner in which he viewed his diplomats and the methods of procedure which he allowed them to carry out. He was determined not to let his diplomats repeat what he considered to be the mistakes of the past. Hitler described the diplomats of the prewar period as, "supercilious, arrogant know-it-alls, without any capacity for cool testing and weighing, which... must be recognized as the pre-condition for any... action in the field of foreign affairs." Moreover, Hitler considered the prewar German policy of alliances to be weak, defeatist, and even "treasonable in nature." According to him, the prewar diplomats were responsible "for the collapse of Germany" during the war because their alliance policies left Germany in a weak and impossible position.

In order to avoid these alleged mistakes of the past, Hitler tried to place complete control of the foreign service in his own hands.
He soon found out however, that he would have to rely upon older members of the diplomatic corps until he could organize enough of his loyal followers who were competent enough to replace the older diplomats. 

Therefore, Hitler found it much easier in the beginning of his rule to force the older foreign service to do his bidding, rather than to create a new organization that would be both loyal and efficient. He instituted strict procedures designed to curb the power of the older officials until he could replace them with his own loyal subordinates. For example, he made it a constant practice to keep his officials in the dark as much as possible. Hitler only told his officials "what he wished them to know" so that he could "retain absolute control of policy making" decisions and "keep the reins of authority in his own hands." 

Hitler was totally convinced that he was the only person who had the necessary insight to guide German policy along the correct path.

Another important aspect of Hitler's concept of diplomacy was his insistence that Germany should seek an alliance with Italy. Hitler considered such an alliance for both practical and personal reasons. On the practical level, Hitler believed that an alliance with Italy could be based solely on the prospect of mutual gain. According to Hitler, Italy's ambitions of expansion would not conflict with Germany's expansionist plans. While Germany conquered the continent, Italy could take control of the Mediterranean and its surrounding areas. The obvious enemy of both Italy and Germany was France. Therefore, it would be only logical for Italy and Germany to form an alliance.

Indeed, as F. W. Deakin argues in his book, The Brutual Friendship,
Mussolini essentially agreed with Hitler on the practical benefits of forming an alliance:

The conception of an Italo-German alliance, apart from its ideological significance, was therefore, from the Italian point of view, to cover and secure by treaty with the greatest European land power the continental position of Italy, and free her to pursue her vital interests in the Mediterranean and in Africa.

On the personal level, Hitler desired an alliance with Italy because he admired Mussolini and his Fascist regime. According to Nolte, Hitler "revered the Italian as the first destroyer of Marxism, and if Hitler had died in 1930 a historian would hardly hesitate to call the man, whose study contained a bust of the Duce, a disciple and imitator of Mussolini." Hitler's admiration for Mussolini never faltered, and he considered Mussolini and his Fascist doctrine as guideposts for his own leadership and his own ideology. Ironically, Mussolini did not return Hitler's admiration in the same unqualified terms. Indeed, as the fortunes of war began to turn against the Axis, Mussolini's opinion of Hitler's strategic thinking began to wane. Unlike Hitler, Mussolini realized that the Axis Powers would be defeated unless Germany came to terms with Russia and turned her military strength against the Western Powers. According to Deakin, only the Duce could persuade Hitler "to consider the necessity of a strategic revolution by liquidating the anti-Russian crusade. In such a move lay the last opportunity of the Axis to avoid defeat, and all depended on the person of Mussolini." Unfortunately for Mussolini, he could not persuade Hitler to abandon his anti-Russian crusade. Therefore,
it is understandable why Mussolini admired the sheer power of Hitler's regime, but did not consider Hitler to be a wise leader.

Whether Hitler desired an alliance with Italy for practical reasons or for personal reasons, his overriding concern always remained the preparation of Germany for war. Hitler said that: "If... I advocate an alliance between Italy and Germany I do so only because I believe that both states can thereby achieve useful advantages. Both states would prosper as a result." Hitler knew that his policies would result in war, and he wanted to strengthen his position as much as possible. Hitler's desire for an alliance with Italy was just one more reflection of his view that the purpose of diplomacy was simply to prepare for war. This belief remained a constant bulwark of his ideological framework.

Delegation of Authority

The manner in which Hitler delegated authority among his subordinates, and the various organizations that they represented, had a profound effect upon the conduct of his diplomacy. If one wants to understand how Hitler's dissemination of power affected his policies, then one needs to examine the role played by the Foreign Office, the military, and the Party in administrative affairs. Before examining these separate organizations in closer detail, however, one should first take into account Hitler's basic attitudes towards the dissemination of power and responsibility among his subordinates and the various organizations that they represented.
In Hitler's view, his personal authority over his governmental organizations outweighed the importance of establishing a completely uniform administrative organization. As Herbert Jacob argues in his book, *German Administration Since Bismarck*, "Hitler... preferred competition among" his "subordinates to complete coordination and uniform organization." Hitler "feared that subordinates would use undivided power for their own purposes rather than according to" his "instructions." He was convinced that the best way to maintain his power was to continue his practice of creating various organizations which remained in direct competition with each other. Hitler recognized the importance of administrative centralization, but he always remained careful not to concentrate too much power in the hands of subordinates.

Whenever Hitler did increase administrative centralization, he very often found that such centralization could retard his goals as well as advance them. Hitler's system of competition between rival organizations did allow him to maintain ultimate authority, but the actual workings of administrative procedure became more and more difficult to control. As one might expect, he discovered that the central government could not "maintain effective administration" because centralism was inefficient. In order to overcome this problem, Hitler turned to the practice of placing trusted Nazis in key positions. Since he hated career bureaucrats in general anyway, he was only too happy to replace them whenever possible. "Hitler looked on bureaucrats as technicians whose role consisted of executing orders but not formulating policies." Hitler was unable to purge the old bureaucrats in governmental service
as quickly as he would have liked however, because he soon found out that he would have to utilize the major portion of the bureaucracy which he had inherited from his predecessors. Hitler simply found that he lacked the competent personnel to replace all of the older bureaucrats.

Hitler's basic goal in dealing with the dissemination of power always remained the perservation of his own authority. In order to maintain his authority, Hitler attempted to erect a totalitarian state in which all public organs would remain submissive to his will. The system that he created to ensure his authority was known as the Fuhrerprinzip. According to this system, "absolute authority" was to flow "from the top to the bottom of the party hierarchy," while "absolute loyalty and obedience" was "to flow from the bottom to the top." Moreover, each Party member was ultimately responsible to Hitler as the supreme leader of the nation.50

Hitler wanted this principle to be strictly applied to his governmental bureaucracy. He wanted all of his officials to obey his commands and to concern themselves only with their own work. Hitler was determined that his own position should remain supreme, and he applied his Fuehrer principle to every one of his separate organizations in order to remain in control. His concepts of delegating authority remained the same for the Foreign Office, the military, and the Party.

Role of the Foreign Office. The role that the Foreign Office played in Hitler's diplomatic affairs was conditioned by the uneasy relationship between Hitler and the career diplomats. The mutual
contempt between Hitler and his diplomats added a certain urgency to Hitler's wish to replace the older diplomatic staff with his loyal followers; however, Hitler found that he could not dispense with the older professionals as quickly as he desired and still maintain an efficient Foreign Office. As Paul Seabury argues in his book, *The Wilhelmstrasse*, "there were few in the ranks of National Socialism who possessed any awareness of political conditions abroad," and Hitler was "forced to rely heavily upon the ministerial bureaucracy." Even though Hitler was quite willing to dispense with the advice of his career diplomats, he was unwilling to dispense with the trappings of diplomacy. As Seabury argues:

regard for the sensibilities of foreign missions in Berlin, for public opinion abroad, and a host of other considerations doubtless had made Hitler aware of the peacetime utility of keeping his correct, conventional, and urbane diplomats in their posts, as shock absorbers between the outside world and the grim realities of Nazi power and purpose.

Hitler had no intention of becoming dependent upon the governmental bureaucracy however, and he "carefully nurtured auxiliary instruments of diplomacy, responsible to himself alone or to Party formations, as counterbalances to the Wilhelmstrasse." As Gordon Craig points out in his study, "The German Foreign Office from Neurath to Ribbentrop," Hitler encouraged the National Socialist Party's Foreign Organization, known as the *Auslandorganisation*, or simply the AO for short, to encroach upon the prerogatives of the Foreign Office in order to expand its power base into the realm of foreign affairs. In Hitler's view, the competition between the Foreign Office and the Party would
help him to maintain his personal control over both organizations. Therefore, the Auslandorganisation began to compete with the Foreign Office by sending its own agents abroad in order to "spread National Socialist propaganda, maintain contact with subversive elements and extend party discipline over German nationals."\textsuperscript{54}

Moreover, in order to facilitate his personal control over the Foreign Office, Hitler also encouraged the National Socialist Party to infiltrate and control the Foreign Office itself as much as possible. Therefore, in compliance with Hitler's wishes, the Party sought to destroy the traditional nonpolitical and "neutral" character of the Foreign Office administration. The Party wanted to reshape the civil service as a whole into a legal and ideological framework which would accord "the Nazis the monopoly of determining" state policy.\textsuperscript{55}

Nazi ideology assumed a theoretical harmony between the Party and the state bureaucracy. According to these precepts, state officials would have to consider themselves as National Socialists first, and as civil servants second. In the National Socialist system the state official was to be guided by both the laws of the state and by the rules of the Party. However, the "National Socialist official's loyalty was first to the Party, and second to the state."\textsuperscript{56} The National Socialist Party was willing to allow the Foreign Office to continue to operate, but it remained determined to bring the Foreign Office under its effective control. The Party demanded an end to the concept of political neutrality and unconditional obedience from the state bureaucracy. In order to ensure this compliance, every official was
forced to take an oath of loyalty to Hitler, pledging:

I swear that I will be true and obedient to the Fuhrer of the German Reich and People, Adolf Hitler, and that I will observe the laws and conscientiously fulfill my duties of office, so help me God.

Under Hitler's system the civil servant became obligated not only to adhere to National Socialist doctrine, but also to report any activities which might possibly endanger the existence of the Nazi state. In effect, the National Socialist system attempted to make the civil service responsible for policing its own activities. The result of such interference was "that the Nazi Party decisively... triumphed over the nonpolitical principle once so cherished by the German foreign service." The alleged neutral character of the Foreign Office was replaced by a subservience to the new National Socialist ideology. Hitler was determined to use Party ideology as a tool to maintain control over the Foreign Office.

In addition to using the Party to help him control the Foreign Office, Hitler also appointed his loyal follower Joachim von Ribbentrop to the position of foreign minister. With the appointment of such men as Ribbentrop to the Foreign Office, Hitler intended to replace the older career officials upon whom he was forced to depend with a younger group of activist officials who would be more amenable to his personal authority. The new diplomats were to be compliant tools of his commands. In Hitler's view, the Foreign Office was not to be a major policy-making organization. Major policy decisions were to remain the work of himself and a few close but amateur advisers such as Ribbentrop.
As the new foreign minister of Nazi Germany, Ribbentrop was always careful to obey Hitler's wishes and to make himself appear indispensable to the fulfillment of Hitler's foreign policy goals. Ribbentrop took note of whatever Hitler said and adopted his ideas as his own in order to maintain Hitler's favor and increase his own personal power. Ribbentrop knew that the stability of his position depended entirely upon Hitler's favor, and he therefore made it a constant practice to act even "more Hitlerian than Hitler himself," and to encourage Hitler whenever "he developed doubts about the possible success of his plans." It is clear that Ribbentrop was very skilled in the art of flattery, for even though his servility often bordered on the ridiculous, Hitler "never fully recovered from the conviction that Ribbentrop was a man of parts." However, it is also clear that in reality Ribbentrop was a very poor foreign minister. The appointment of Ribbentrop as foreign minister helped to destroy "any pretense of rationality in the Foreign Office's structure." Ribbentrop destroyed the administrative structure of the Foreign Office by creating "a vast and loose undergrowth of new divisions" and agencies which were ordered to carry out assignments "which could hardly have been considered to have much to do with diplomacy in its usual sense." Moreover, Ribbentrop virtually destroyed the traditional chain of command within the Foreign Office. By disseminating authority "in all directions through a confusing maze of bureaus" and by placing his personal followers in select positions of authority, Ribbentrop made a shambles of the Foreign Office's administrative structure.
Even though Ribbentrop was a poor foreign minister, many of the professionals of the Foreign Office supported his attempts to protect the Foreign Office from outside interference. The older diplomats of the Foreign Office knew that they were as dependent upon the whims of Hitler for political survival as Ribbentrop, and therefore they decided to assist Ribbentrop in his efforts to safeguard the prerogatives of the Foreign Office. Ribbentrop and his "subordinate officialdom" were bound together in a "tenuous but persistent coalition of fear." Both Ribbentrop and the Foreign Office officials were fearful of Party infiltration, and they worked together to preserve their positions. Ribbentrop wanted complete authority in the Foreign Office, and this included his desire to keep intruders out of his personal organization. In this regard, Party rivalry worked to the advantage of the Foreign Office. According to Seabury, even though they resented him, the bureaucrats of the Foreign Office were willing to put up with Ribbentrop because they "were fully aware of the possible consequences of his replacement by an equally hated, but more powerful figure." However, the tacit agreement between Ribbentrop and the older diplomats to work together in order to preserve the authority of the Foreign Office was essentially meaningless because Ribbentrop did not consider the Foreign Office to be a decision-making organization. As Craig argues, "in Ribbentrop's conception, the Foreign Office was meant to be a technical apparatus and nothing more." Despite their efforts to protect the Foreign Office from outside interference, the older professionals could not compete with Hitler's
determination to force his will upon the Foreign Office through the use of Party interference and through the appointment of individuals such as Ribbentrop to positions of authority. As Seabury states:

"by the use of judicious pressure on civil servants to join the Party, by the infiltration of reliable Party members into important state administrative posts, by the preferment of Party members in civil-service advancement... the Nazis transformed the German Foreign Office into a pliable instrument of their policies."

Under Nazi control, the Foreign Office underwent a profound upheaval in its hierarchical structure which made it of little consequence in terms of policy making under Hitler's rule. The "Foreign Office became little more than a stenographic bureau." Thanks to modern technology, Hitler was able to delegate many of the traditional functions of the Foreign Office professionals to less experienced subordinates. Moreover, personal representatives such as Ribbentrop were able to keep the Foreign Office operating by restructuring the administrative organization of the Foreign Office. Because the older diplomats failed to maintain a monopoly of the traditional instrumentalities of diplomacy, their advice and reports were of minor importance in shaping high-level policy in Hitler's regime.

Role of the Military. In order to understand the role that the German military played in Hitler's regime, one should examine Hitler's personal views concerning the purpose of the army. Only then can one fully understand the manner in which Hitler captured control of the army and how he therefore removed the last vestige of restraint to the implementation of his ideological goals.
According to Robert J. O'Neill, Hitler had an almost unlimited admiration for the German Army. As he argues in his book, The German Army and the Nazi Party, Hitler's views of the army "probably had their origins in his war experiences." To Hitler, the First World War was a glorious "struggle for the existence of the German people," and it convinced him that the German Army was an organization "which could teach men the virtues of sacrifice, devotion to a cause, physical courage, toughness and comradeship." The First World War helped to convince him of the unique value of the German Army in the preservation of everything he admired in the German race.

Hitler was convinced that the German Army formed the basic foundation of German society as a whole. As Hitler himself said: "What the German people owes to the army can be briefly summed up in a single word,... everything." Hitler believed that the German Army imbued the German people with martial attitudes, and he was hopeful that a continuation of this military influence upon the population would make Germany strong enough to avoid defeat in the next war. He described the influence of the German Army in the following manner: "The German Army at the turn of the century was the most magnificent organization in the world and its effect on our German people one that was more than beneficial." 

Hitler knew that he would have to rely upon the army to carry out his ideological goals. For this reason, he was determined to build the army back into the immense fighting machine it had been during the First World War. Hitler needed a strong army in order to carry out
his intended wars of conquest. As he said himself: "No army with a high intrinsic value can be trained, if the preparation for war is not the aim of its existence." In order to accomplish this task, Hitler was aware that he would have to capture control of the German General Staff. Therefore, if one wants to understand the relationship between Hitler and the army, and the consequence of this relationship in regards to Hitler's attempts to mold the army to suit his goals, one must examine the role of the General Staff in Hitler's military affairs. Heinz Guderian described the purpose of the General Staff in the following manner:

During its long existence the object of the General Staff Corps was to select those officers with the finest brains and characters and so to train and educate them that they could lead the German armed forces in any circumstances....

The problem with the General Staff, as far as Hitler was concerned, was that its concept of the purpose and organization of the army did not conform to his visions of what he wished to accomplish. Hitler knew that his vision of total war would require a restructuring of the German Army. Hitler agreed with officers such as Heinz Guderian, who contended that "modern developments required reorganization along the lines of a combined armed forces and, in particular, a unified Supreme Command for all those forces." The problem was that the older officers of the General Staff were blinded to new forms of organization by their strict adherence to military tradition. In addition, the older officers were not as enthusiastic about Hitler or his regime as some
of the younger officers, and they were unwilling to hand over the
army to Hitler's absolute control. The older officers were more de-
termined to hold to the old traditions that kept the army separated
from the state, and Hitler resented this attitude. Moreover, the more
the older officers clung to their sense of tradition, the more Hitler
began to distrust their competence and reliability as leaders of the
armed forces. 71

In order to facilitate his capture of the General Staff and thereby
gain control of the German Army, Hitler encouraged the Nazi Party to
undermine the older traditions of the army and to replace those traditions
with the new National Socialist spirit. Unfortunately for Hitler, the
steady growth of Party intervention in army affairs increased the amount
of interorganizational friction at all levels. The older officers wanted
to avoid the encroachment of political matters into army affairs, and
the Party zealots were concerned that the army was becoming a bastion
for National Socialist opposition.

As successful as Party infiltration might prove to be in capturing
control of the army, Hitler was by no means content to rely upon Party
influence to control the army. Even though Party influence did under-
mine army resistance to outside control, Hitler was determined to make
his control of the army more complete and more personal. Therefore,
"all members of the armed services" were required to "take a new oath
of loyalty" which forced them to swear unconditional obedience to
Adolf Hitler. Hitler wanted the complete control of all three branches
of the armed forces, and he wanted to break the army leadership as a
stronghold of resistance to his goals. He knew that the army was one of the few "institutions in Germany... that represented a serious counterpoise to" his National Socialist philosophy. The new oath of loyalty allowed Hitler to "order the Army to do whatever he liked without fear of any legal or constitutional check." Indeed, the oath "removed any means of legally defying Hitler, as the Armed Forces had promised obedience to Hitler as a person, without any limits."

In addition to the new loyalty oath, Hitler proceeded to restructure the army's organizational basis in order to remove any last vestiges of restraint upon his policies. He created his own personal command organization known as the Office of the High Command of the Armed Forces (Oberkommando der Wehrmacht, or OKW), which was to serve as his personal military staff. The creation of new organizations to fulfill his goals was a typical tactic which Hitler used on numerous occasions. By restructuring the army command structure and by creating new areas of authority, Hitler was able to increase his personal control over policy matters.

Because of the army's failure to perceive the dangers of Hitler's concentration of power into his own hands, and of the ramifications of the new loyalty oath, Hitler was able to restructure the military in such a manner as to place himself in absolute authority. Hitler's restructuring of the military gave him an extraordinary amount of initiative in political-military affairs, and he was determined to exploit his absolute power for the purpose of achieving his goals in both domestic and foreign affairs.
Role of the Party. The role that the National Socialist Party played in diplomatic administrative affairs, was a reflection of Hitler's basic policy of disseminating power among several organizations. Since Hitler was a firm believer in organizational competition, he allowed various organizations to expand the range of their authority beyond their designated areas of expertise. Such tactics enabled the Party and the military to expand their involvement in diplomatic affairs in competition with the Foreign Office. Therefore, to understand Hitler's diplomacy, it is necessary to recognize Hitler's personal views concerning the purpose of the Party and the role that it should play in his regime.

Hitler conceived of the National Socialist Party as an instrument that would unify the people and the government in order to achieve his ideological goals. Moreover, he wanted his followers unified on a basis of faith in himself and National Socialism, rather than on a basis of reason alone. Hitler believed that he would have to inspire his followers with "fanatic enthusiasm" in order to achieve his ideological goals, and he wanted to use the Party to achieve this aim.75

Hitler was more concerned with the spirit of his followers than with the actual structure of any particular organization. He believed that any organization was worthless unless it unified the militant faith of his followers behind his leadership. He was convinced that his goals could only be achieved through the creation of powerful and highly efficient political organizations that were designed to carry out his instructions without delay or compromise.
Hitler forced all party members to swear eternal allegiance to himself. He was willing to grant his subordinates a certain amount of authority within their own fields of competence; however, he made it very clear that all subordinates owed their ultimate loyalty to himself, and that he held supreme authority over all individuals and organizations.

Because of Hitler's reluctance to concentrate authority in the hands of any one organization or individual, there was a great need for the division of responsibility among his subordinates. Lower officials were never certain which authority to follow, and many officials often ignored commands from superiors. Subordinates could oppose the policy of superiors because they could claim that they were following the orders of another higher official.

The role which Hitler planned for the Party in connection with diplomatic administration was to place loyal Party members in governmental positions of authority. He believed that this tactic would allow him both to increase and ensure his personal authority. Hitler believed that the placement of Party officials into key positions, and the control of governmental functions by Party agencies would enable him to maintain a higher degree of control.

The Party's own Foreign Division began to encroach upon the prerogatives of the Foreign Office. This Foreign Division of the National Socialist Party, known as the Auslandorganisation, had been established in 1931 and was originally concerned only with maintaining contact with Party members who resided abroad. However, Hitler encouraged the AO
to expand its activities, and this organization soon began to interfere with many of the traditional duties usually reserved for the Foreign Office. Moreover, the AO played an important role in helping the Nazi Party to gain control over the Foreign Office. Not only did the AO receive "jurisdiction over all Germans residing abroad," but it was also "placed in a position to pass judgment on the loyalty and efficiency of Germany's diplomatic representatives." The National Socialist Party was well prepared to compete with and infiltrate the regular bureaucracy of the Foreign Office.

However, by placing loyal Party members in positions of authority, Hitler was never able to eliminate the friction between the older career officials and the new Party appointees. The "career officials resented the sudden rise of marginal elements of German society to positions of leadership over them." Moreover, Hitler tended to reward Party work over simple length of service. He very often placed Party workers "at the head of promotion lists in front of career officials who had served... years in government positions." 

Hitler's tactics did result in a general penetration of Party members into governmental offices, but the government was not completely taken over by the Party. The "new-style party man" was "not the person with dreams of social change but of personal advance for which party membership was useful." Therefore, the new Party members often joined the older officials in loyal disobedience. They were more interested in advancing their careers than in implementing Hitler's unorthodox schemes.
Hitler's Power in Diplomatic Practice

In order to understand the limits and strengths of Hitler's power in diplomatic practice it is necessary to examine the manner in which Hitler organized his bureaucracy and his personal habits of administrative procedure. Moreover, the limits and strengths of Hitler's rule need to be examined in the context of Hitler's entire governmental apparatus, and should not be limited strictly to his diplomatic affairs. Hitler's personal system of government allowed various organizations, such as the National Socialist Party, to interfere with diplomatic administration. Therefore, one needs to take into consideration the limits of strengths of Hitler's power in auxiliary fields as well as in the diplomatic field. Interference by outside organizations in diplomatic affairs contributed to the strengths and weaknesses of Hitler's diplomacy. Finally, before examining Hitler's weaknesses and strengths in closer detail, the reader should remember that Hitler considered diplomacy useful only as a means of preparing for war.

Limits of Hitler's Power. One of the traits which limited Hitler's effectiveness in the diplomatic field was his habit of choosing incompetent individuals to fill important posts. Moreover, Hitler stuck by his incompetent comrades even when their lack of ability was apparent beyond question. He would even go so far as to suppress entirely correct judgments "in order to justify persons who seemed to him useful and devoted." Hitler never demanded a great deal from his subordinates because he believed that no one could measure up to his own abilities. He had an "extraordinarily high estimation of his own capabilities and consequently measured his fellow men by far more modest
standards.... Since Hitler's priority in choosing associates rested more upon his ability to manipulate people than upon their capabilities, he did not overly concern himself about the competency of his personnel.

Another trait which inhibited Hitler's diplomatic effectiveness was his aversion to administrative paperwork. The day-to-day details of governmental administration bored him so much that he habitually left as much paperwork for his subordinates to handle as possible. Therefore, it is not surprising that Hitler preferred oral orders over written forms of communication. In fact, he "usually signed orders without reading them when they concerned" only "personnel changes or administrative detail." Such practices resulted in a great deal of confusion which Hitler's subordinates were unable to compensate for because Hitler "did not approve of any appreciable interchange of information between departments which might weaken his own position." Hitler was the only person in a position to coordinate administrative policy, but he refused to be tied down to routine or to delegate the necessary authority to other individuals. He was content to let others run the day-to-day tasks of administration, but he was always wary of letting too much power slip out of his own hands.

Hitler's lack of personal experience in governmental administration was another factor which hampered his diplomatic effectiveness. Hitler was completely unfamiliar with the daily workings of government when he assumed power. He had never been employed in an administrative office of government, and his contact with the military bureaucracy during the First World War had been conducted only on the lowest
echelon level. Moreover, Hitler's experiences within the Nazi Party were characterized by unique circumstances which did not prepare him for administrative techniques in the usual fashion. His major concern as leader of the Nazi Party was to avoid any rival claims to his own position. Therefore, even though Hitler believed that he could govern Germany on the basis of his own unique experiences, he was unprepared to construct and lead a governmental bureaucracy.  

Another one of Hitler's traits which limited the effectiveness of his diplomatic administration was his tendency to delay making hard decisions for problems which needed solutions. Hitler was never as sure of himself as he liked others to think, and he would very often "avoid meetings with subordinates who might question" his decisions. As a consequence, his subordinates were very often left in the dark and they could never be entirely certain just exactly what Hitler's wishes entailed or how they should be carried out. His subordinates were left more or less on their own. Hitler liked to hand down general policies from above and let his subordinates sort out the details. He was mainly concerned with maintaining his own position and with increasing the power of Germany, and day-to-day administrative details did not concern him. He simply wanted to make the grandiose decisions that would keep his power intact and would keep Germany moving in the direction that would accomplish his major goals.

Since Hitler did not like to concern himself with administrative details, he left himself open to subordinates who wanted to get his approval for various pet projects and schemes. As long as Hitler
believed that his overall strategies were being carried out, he allowed his administrative bureaucracies a great deal of independence in their own internal affairs. Naturally, by allowing such freedom of action, and by failing to make clear and detailed decisions, he contributed to the ever increasing confusion which permeated his administrative structure. For example, in 1937 Hitler contributed to administrative confusion in the field of economics by granting his subordinate Hermann Goring many of the same powers as his acting minister of economics, Hjalmar Schacht. Even the resignation of Schacht after a year of futile struggle against Goring's encroachments upon his authority failed to restore order to Germany's economic administration.

Another factor which added to the amount of administrative confusion in Hitler's government was the unbridled competition that Hitler encouraged between his subordinates and the various organizations that they represented. Hitler believed that his officials would carry out their assignments more effectively if he gave them a certain amount of authority and freedom of action. However, as soon as Hitler's subordinates were given a position of authority, they inevitably attempted to "build up their own administrative empires and to provide jobs for their personal supporters." As Rich argues, Hitler's "deliberate encouragement of initiative and rivalry among his followers brought to the fore the most power hungry and ruthless" of men who were more concerned with maintaining their own power than with advancing Hitler's goals. The competition which Hitler encouraged among his subordinates allowed him to maintain ultimate authority in all decisions,
however, the lack of a centralized and logical administration made his system inefficient.

The combination of Hitler's tremendous will power and his undomitable sense of mission also limited his diplomatic effectiveness. Hitler believed that there were no limits to his power, and his sense of mission convinced him that he could disregard moral laws and ethical behavior in his quest to accomplish his goals. Hitler based his concept of legality upon what he saw as the eternal laws of nature. He wanted to create a new morality for the future, and he felt no compunction at violating the traditional laws of diplomatic procedure. He was determined to recognize no restraints upon his actions in his quest to accomplish his goals, and he was more than willing to sacrifice moral and ethical behavior in order to achieve tactical successes in his policy aims.89

Hitler's lack of concern for ethics was a reflection of his confidence in his mission and his personal abilities. The more success Hitler achieved in accomplishing his goals, "the more condescendingly he regarded those who actually knew better than he, and the more confirmed he felt in the pseudo-scientific doctrines with which he justified his policies."90 Moreover, Hitler never seemed to profit from his mistakes. He seemed to learn nothing from defeats and refused to question his doctrines, even as they began to fail him with increasing regularity in the face of harsh realities. For example, according to Heinz Guderian, Hitler's military defeats on the Russian front clearly showed the limitations of Germany's strength, however,
Hitler "did not conclude from this that he must either break off the undertaking or at least choose more modest objectives." On the contrary, Hitler became even more reckless in his determination to force defeat upon the Russians. Hitler simply deluded himself into thinking that his will power would carry him through any number of defeats until he was ultimately successful.

**Strengths of Hitler's Power.** One of the traits which contributed to Hitler's personal power in the diplomatic field was the degree of his own personal authority. Even though Hitler's subordinates might implement his orders according to their own inclinations, his major policy aims were never appreciably obstructed. During his rise to power, Hitler had gradually subjected every significant group and organization to his personal authority, and his administrative apparatus was no exception. Therefore, even though "opponents might occasionally sidetrack or sabotage his programs," Hitler retained ultimate authority in the determination of "German policy during the Nazi era."

Since Hitler retained ultimate authority in all decisions, he knew that he could act quickly and even against accepted practices without fear of restraint. In fact, Hitler occasionally changed his course even though his actions "directly contradicted his previous position." Hitler's position of supreme authority enabled him to take advantage of any opportunity in foreign affairs which called for quick and decisive action, and there was nothing that Hitler would not consider doing if the situation presented the slightest opportunity of success.
Another factor which contributed to Hitler's personal power was his charisma. Hitler seemed to possess a "psychological force" which radiated "from him like a magnetic field." By the exercise of his hypnotic will he could compel men to follow him even against their better judgment. Moreover, he capitalized upon his psychological abilities by convincing his opponents that he could not be deterred from pursuing his goals. Hitler's adversaries were more than convinced that he was "not bluffing when he threatened drastic retaliation for any resistance" to his demands, and they were "unwilling to risk the consequences of denying him whatever momentary object he sought." In fact, most of Hitler's antagonists backed down again and again, rather than face the retaliation that Hitler promised to unleash if his demands were not fulfilled to his satisfaction. For example, both Neville Chamberlain and Daladier, the English and French prime ministers who represented the Western democracies at the Munich conference in 1938, agreed to all of Hitler's demands rather than risk fighting a major European war over the disputed Czech territory which Hitler wanted to incorporate into Nazi Germany.

One additional aspect of Hitler's charisma which helped him to achieve his goals was his ability to switch roles from one moment to the next. By changing his stance on any issue without notice, Hitler was able to confuse his antagonists and to put them off balance. Whether Hitler was "driven by reason, by temperament, or by dark instincts," according to Schramm, he "was more enigmatic than anyone in German history had ever been before him," and he was able to use
his mysterious nature to help him advance his diplomatic goals.\textsuperscript{96} Hitler took advantage of any device which helped him to achieve his aims, and he realized very early in his career that he could use his dynamic presence as a weapon in the pursuit of his ideological goals.

Another factor which played a positive role in Hitler's diplomatic technique was the combination of his knowledge of technical matters, especially in the military field, and his outstanding memory. Hitler's remarkable memory, according to Schramm, together with his "iron diligence and a strong power of concentration," enabled him "to acquire knowledge of a scope and detail that again and again amazed persons talking with him, and earned him sincere admiration." And partly as a consequence of his memory, Hitler was able to assume the dominant role in almost all situations. His memory proved especially useful when dealing with large numbers of subordinates and huge amounts of paperwork. His subordinates "had to be meticulously careful that what they said agreed completely with whatever they had told him earlier." Hitler was always on the alert for insubordination among his officials, and the slightest inconsistency would arouse his suspicions.\textsuperscript{97}

Hitler's knowledge of military technology, in combination with his excellent memory, contributed to his personal power because he was able to remain on a par with his alleged experts. His technological knowledge and understanding of the procedures of modern warfare placed him on solid ground in his discussions with General Staff officers.\textsuperscript{98} Moreover, Hitler was especially adept at recognizing the diplomatic potential of Germany's armed forces. For example, Hitler recognized that
he could achieve many of his political objectives by threatening to use Germany's armed forces to start a major European war if his opponents failed to agree to his demands. Such tactics as Hitler's march into the Rhineland in 1936, the Anschluss with Austria in 1938, and the incorporation of the Czech territory known as the Sudetenland into Nazi Germany in 1938, were all examples of Hitler's successful use of military force to achieve diplomatic objectives. His detailed knowledge of what was feasible in the military sphere, contributed to his confidence of what was possible in the diplomatic sphere. Moreover, Hitler's knowledge of military potential was especially important since he fully intended to back up his threats with military force. Hitler's foreign policy aims were based almost entirely upon what could be achieved through the use of force, and his military knowledge provided him with an insight into what could be achieved in the diplomatic field through the use of military force.

Another factor which contributed to Hitler's power was the willingness of many of his administrative officials to put up with his unorthodox procedures, as long as he kept improving Germany's position in European affairs. The German people were more than ready to accept a strong leader who promised to remove the humiliation of Versailles and make Germany strong once again. "In the chaos and despair of a defeated country, it was easier... to put one's faith in one man who would take care of everything than assume a share of the responsibility for the agonizing choices" that had to be made. Therefore, after Hitler reestablished the German Army in 1935, almost the entire nation
supported him because he successfully defied the Versailles peace settlement which the Western democracies had imposed upon Germany.

Hitler had a profound impact upon international diplomacy while he was the ruler of Nazi Germany. His character traits, his ideological framework, and his unique position of authority were all aspects which contributed to the manner in which he reshaped traditional diplomacy according to totalitarian concepts.

By comparing Hitler's diplomacy with Mussolini's, especially in regard to the different approaches to the conduct of international relations which each dictator introduced into the field of diplomacy, it is possible to gain a better understanding of the differences between the traditional diplomacy of the past, where the Great European powers essentially agreed upon the necessity of preserving a peaceful status quo while allowing for minor changes to occur through diplomatic negotiation, and totalitarian diplomacy, which denied the necessity of preserving a peaceful status quo and indeed promoted the use of force to bring about significant changes in the European nation-state system. The new procedures which each dictator introduced into the field of diplomatic affairs dramatically changed the manner in which nation states conducted their diplomacy. Therefore, in order to point out how each dictator contributed to the establishment of this new form of diplomacy, it is necessary to examine Mussolini's diplomacy in the same manner as Hitler's diplomacy.
III. MUSSOLINI'S DIPLOMACY

In order to understand the manner in which Mussolini conducted his diplomacy it is necessary to examine both his personal habits and his ideological framework. Before examining Mussolini's personal traits in closer detail, however, it is necessary to consider the argument that Mussolini did not possess a long-term plan for world domination. Unlike Hitler, who had a long-term plan which he pursued with unwavering persistence, Mussolini possessed no concrete plans for world domination. In fact, as Laurence Lafore argues in his book, The End of Glory, Mussolini's foreign policy was "mostly a matter of impulse and expediency wholly undisciplined by the slightest regard for traditional rules of diplomacy or by principles or long-run objectives." It is true that Mussolini wanted to establish a new "Roman Empire" for Fascist Italy, but he did not possess a coherent plan for achieving this goal. He was more concerned about his own power and the prestige of his rule than about vague plans for the future of his country. In his book, Mussolini, Denis Mack Smith maintains that Mussolini was "an improviser who invented his policy anew each day." Mussolini was willing to take advantage of opportunities which might increase his power or the prestige of Italy, but he had no specific plans for a great war or for conquering the world.

It is true that Mussolini knew how to consolidate and maintain his own power in Italy, but in the realm of foreign affairs he was
strictly an amateur. Mussolini wanted to increase his own power and prestige by creating a new colonial empire which would make Italy the dominant power in the Mediterranean basin; however, he lacked the necessary expertise in foreign affairs to achieve his goals.

Mussolini as Leader

Mussolini's complex personal character and his ideological framework are factors which must be taken into consideration in order to understand the workings of his leadership. One of Mussolini's dominant personal traits was his constant concern about image. Consequently, as Max Gallo affirms in his book, Mussolini's Italy, Mussolini "placed the greatest importance in the slightest portrayal of himself," and he would personally "examine every photograph in which he appeared" to see if it should be "published by the newspapers." In fact, he was so preoccupied with his great sense of showmanship that the efficiency of his administration suffered as a result. Mussolini rarely made the effort to see if his policies were carried out because he was more interested in their propaganda value than in their actual application. Mussolini wanted to maintain the appearance that he was a strong leader, but in reality he avoided making difficult decisions whenever possible and relied upon his omniscient facade to carry him through difficult situations.

Mussolini's subordinates actually helped him to maintain his image because they realized that their own future depended upon Mussolini's position. His subordinates knew that the more powerful their dictator appeared, the more secure their own positions would be.
Therefore, they intentionally encouraged the belief that Mussolini could do no wrong and that all Italians should obey his commands without question. Consequently, as one might expect, Mussolini started to believe in his own infallibility and decided that he needed servants rather than capable subordinates. He was convinced that he could simply issue orders and dispense with any kind of advice because he believed that he needed none.

Mussolini was so concerned about images that he wanted his Fascist state to appear as infallible as himself. As Ivone Kirkpatrick affirms in his book, *Mussolini: A Study in Power*, the Duce wanted to maintain the facade that "in Fascist Italy no one in authority ever failed, and if men disappeared from public life, it was only because in the natural order of things one guard was replaced by another." Whenever Mussolini discovered that he could not rely upon a particular subordinate he usually tried to avoid any public scandal. He preferred simply to replace the individual in question and dismiss the change in personnel as routine procedure. Moreover, Mussolini's concern about image extended to all facets of his regime. For example, according to Mack Smith, he was so concerned about projecting the proper image abroad that he often treated his foreign office as simply "a ministry of propaganda." In addition, not only would Mussolini grant numerous interviews to foreign correspondents, but he would also give them privileged information that not even ambassadors were told so that he could ensure flattering comments about himself abroad. Mussolini's extraordinary concern about his image had a
profound effect upon the manner in which he conducted his diplomacy.

Another one of Mussolini's traits which affected his leadership technique was his dynamic charisma. In a manner similar to that of Hitler, Mussolini had the ability to convince people to follow him. As Mack Smith maintains, Mussolini was aware of the benefits of switching roles at will, and he could change "his role from hour to hour to suit the occasion." He liked to use this technique to keep his adversaries off balance and to project the image of a leader who was in complete control and who could change tack without notice and without concern for the consequences. Unfortunately, Mussolini became so adept at changing his character that he lost the ability to stick to a decided course of action for an extended period of time. According to Mack Smith, Mussolini often moved from resolution to indecision. "It was as though he never knew his genuine self and was always striving after some counterfeit impersonation."106 By fostering a mysterious image and by changing his position without notice, Mussolini believed that he could maintain personal control over events. He was convinced that his rapidly changing character would prevent anyone from anticipating his moves, and that therefore he could remain one step ahead of his opponents.

One positive feature of Mussolini's character was his ability to charm his opponents. Much like Hitler, Mussolini had a personal magnetism which he could use to impress people and to bend them towards his way of thinking. In fact, Mussolini was so adept at changing his character in order to manipulate people and control situations that it
became almost impossible to determine when he was serious or when he was simply playing a part. Mussolini could play any role, and he used this ability to convince the Italian people that he was a great leader. He created "the image of an iron, indomitable Duce, who knew exactly what he wanted and where he was going."\textsuperscript{107}

Mussolini's oratorical ability was another feature which influenced his leadership technique. Mussolini "liked to pretend that he disapproved of making speeches as something essentially unfascist, yet in practice they were one of his chief preoccupations."\textsuperscript{108} Mussolini knew that mass politics in the twentieth century would dominate affairs, and that effective leaders must guide the masses in the direction they desire, and that his oratorical ability could help him accomplish this goal. Kirkpatrick described Mussolini's oratorical power as follows:

As an orator he was a master of every trick with which the demagogue binds his audience. His style, and he prided himself on the fact, was peculiar to himself and essentially un-Italian... but he could, when required, dramatize himself... and... whip up the enthusiasm of the crowd.\textsuperscript{109}

Mussolini was a very effective speaker who could manipulate his audiences with relative ease. He could sense what they wanted to hear and just how far he could push them in his direction. In fact, as Macgregor Knox notes in his study, \textit{Mussolini Unleached}, "no less an expert than Hitler testified to the genuineness of the emotions" that Mussolini could rouse "in the masses."\textsuperscript{110}

Mussolini knew that he would have to capture as much popular support as possible in order to maintain his position, and therefore
he was determined to maintain his hold over the masses. Mussolini believed that the essential art of government was the effective use of propaganda, and he was convinced that the masses would be easy to deceive and dominate. Mussolini was convinced that the Italian people were unable to make their own decisions and that they preferred to be commanded. Therefore, he believed that it was only natural that he should be the sole ruler of Italy.

Another one of Mussolini's personal traits which influenced his leadership ability was his lack of practical experience in governmental affairs. Like Hitler, he knew very little about governmental administration or about foreign affairs when he assumed power. In fact, as Laura Fermi points out in her book, Mussolini, most of the Duce's "political ideas were shallow or objectionable, or both." Moreover, an important "consequence of Mussolini's superficiality was that he almost never spent time or energy delving deeply into the details of governmental administration." Much like Hitler, Mussolini also hated the daily routine of administrative paperwork. He used to leave as much work as possible in the hands of his subordinates, for he was not concerned about daily routine as long as the major policy decisions were left to him, and as long as he maintained the right to intervene whenever he felt it was necessary. As one might expect, Mussolini's lack of experience in governmental affairs coupled with his ignorance of administrative details severely crippled his conduct of foreign affairs.
The combination of Mussolini's ignorance and his unwillingness to delegate any substantive authority to his subordinates hampered his ability to achieve his goals. Mussolini was determined to handle all aspects of his regime personally, whether he was capable of such a task or not. He liked to appear as the indispensable leader who was in charge of everything. Unfortunately, Mussolini did not have the experience to fulfill such a role, even if it had been possible to do so.

Another one of Mussolini's personal traits which helped to shape his leadership techniques was his aversion to cooperating with others. He liked to avoid contact with other people and to play the part of the loner. According to Mack Smith, not only did Mussolini distrust almost everyone, but he also respected very few of his subordinates. Mussolini "assumed that everyone was utterly selfish and nearly everyone incompetent and untrustworthy." Moreover, Mussolini considered himself superior to the common man, and he believed that he did not require the advice of others. Mussolini was convinced that a strong leader should have no equals and that he should at least appear to make all important decisions without consultation. Mussolini justified "his solitude by claiming that he did not need advice and rarely felt the need even to discuss policy with anyone."

As Kirkpatrick argues, Mussolini's "failure to establish any basis of trust between himself" and his subordinates "was exceedingly damaging to the orderly conduct of affairs." His determination to intervene in all aspects of policy, coupled with his tendency to change tack at the slightest whim, destroyed any semblance of consistency in his policies.
Mussolini's "decisions were often taken suddenly without knowledge of the facts or time to give them the necessary consideration."\textsuperscript{114}

Mussolini's fancy for ignoring regular administrative channels and suddenly announcing major policy changes might have bolstered his image as the omniscient dictator, but his tactics also left his subordinates with no real responsibility, and they became wary of acting upon their own initiative. Therefore, virtually none of Mussolini's subordinates had the power or the desire to mitigate his irresponsible actions.

According to Macgregor Knox, "Mussolini had a hidden weakness in dealing with individuals, and was incapable of choosing or retaining competent subordinates."\textsuperscript{115} Moreover, he did not like to surround himself with subordinates who showed more than moderate ability because he was always anxious to appear superior. Also like Hitler, he believed that loyal incompetents were better suited to his personal style of government than people of character who might be brave enough to disagree with him and cause internal dissension. It is not surprising therefore that the majority of the men Mussolini appointed to office were unintelligent and incompetent. However, Mussolini was always on guard to maintain his facade of infallibility, and whenever someone complained about the quality of a particular subordinate, Mussolini would "ignore the accusation whenever possible as he could not afford to let the public know that he had made a bad choice."\textsuperscript{116}

Even Mussolini's concern for public appearances, however, did not prevent him from changing his subordinates at frequent intervals.
Mussolini was determined that no one with genuine talent would remain in the same position of authority for an extended period of time. He believed that such tactics would prevent potential rivals from gaining too much power. Mussolini had a "deep-seated distrust of his subordinates" and he delighted in dismissing them "without warning or explanation," even if it meant replacing "experienced administrators with unqualified nonentities."\(^{117}\)

Mussolini's tendency to surround himself with incompetent subordinates was in part a reflection of his desire to assume all the credit for any successes, and to assign blame to others for any failures. Of course, Mussolini could not possibly run the entire state apparatus alone, and this meant that an army of temporary subordinates, most without any real authority, were expected to carry out state policies and make up for Mussolini's deficiencies. As Denis Mack Smith points out in his book, *Italy*, Mussolini disliked taking responsibility for policy decisions, and he therefore placed the burden of responsibility upon his incompetent and powerless subordinates.\(^{118}\) In the same manner as Hitler, Mussolini disliked arguments and confrontations, and he preferred to ignore problems rather than face the difficult decisions that had to be made. Unfortunately, Mussolini structured his administrative system in such a manner that his incompetent and powerless subordinates were unable to compensate for his lack of leadership.

In almost all matters of policy, Mussolini allowed himself to drift in any direction that looked advantageous. Mussolini placed a great value on the ability to change course rapidly whenever expediency
required it. He had little faith in consistency, for he had learned the value of alternating his stance to fit different circumstances. He considered everything legitimate that might increase his power, and he never followed a set program. According to Kirkpatrick, Mussolini was a man who "relied on faith, will power, and intuition rather than on intellect," and "if he enunciated a principle, it was only to justify a particular policy to which he was momentarily attached." The longer Mussolini remained in power, the more he came to rely upon his own judgments in making foreign policy decisions. In a manner similar to that of Hitler, Mussolini refused to accept the reality of his situation, and he believed that forceful action would compensate for his policies, even if they were misguided. In fact, Mussolini even "admitted that he instinctively resorted to action in moments when he did not know what to do." Mussolini was anxious to maintain his image as a decisive leader, and he would rather take inappropriate action, than appear indecisive. He wanted to be remembered as a great leader who was master of his own destiny, and he was willing to follow any course which might bolster this image.

Mussolini looked back fondly to the days of the old Roman Empire, and he wanted his regime to emulate and even surpass it. He was determined not only to expand Italy's colonial possessions, but also to make his Fascist system the new inspiration of the revisionist powers of Eastern Europe who were dissatisfied with the Versailles peace settlement. However, Italy could not compete with the increasing power of Hitler's Germany, and Mussolini was forced to follow in Hitler's footsteps. As Hitler's Germany became more powerful
Mussolini became more jealous. According to Nolte, Hitler's power and "style of foreign policy appealed to Mussolini's temperament as nothing had ever done before," and without a second thought he committed Fascist Italy's future to the success of Hitler's Germany. Mussolini was so anxious to follow in Hitler's path and gain glory and prestige for himself and Italy that he pushed his country into the Second World War without considering the real dangers of his actions. Indeed, as Deakin points out, "the Duce in person bore the historical responsibility for the entry of Italy into the war." 

Aggravated by his natural egotism, Mussolini's jealousy drove him to attempt to match Hitler's power and prestige. As Deakin argues, Mussolini's jealousy of Germany's power never abated even in the face of total defeat. Even when the Germans made unjustified aspersions as to the quality of Italian troops fighting in Russia, and blamed them for recent defeats, "Mussolini could not, for reasons of prestige, bring himself to recall the whole Italian armed expeditionary corps." Mussolini believed that if he recalled Italian troops, then the Germans would be justified in proclaiming the superiority of their troops. Mussolini recognized Hitler's brutality and his indifference to Italy's interests, but he was so fascinated by Hitler's strength of purpose and immense power that he could not bring himself to disagree with him. As Hitler became more powerful, Mussolini became more wary of thwarting Hitler's wishes. In a sense, Mussolini feared Hitler as much as he admired him. He was anxious to capitalize on Hitler's growing strength, even though he knew that his own position would grow
weaker as Hitler became stronger. As William Halperin maintains in his book, Mussolini and Italian Fascism, "Mussolini could not have been altogether blind to" the dangers of forming an alliance with Hitler, "but he refused to change his course."124 As with Mussolini's other personal traits, his jealous nature drastically influenced his actions in foreign policy.

Territorial Expansion

In dealing with Mussolini's ideological framework, one must remember that Mussolini was always more concerned about his personal image and prestige than about obscure and long-term policies. He was particularly anxious to make his mark upon Italian history by restoring Italy to her former greatness. In Mussolini's view, the creation of an Italian colonial empire would dramatically improve his own personal image. Therefore, he decided to exploit international "rivalries among nations for the satisfaction of Italy's territorial and colonial ambitions...."125

Mussolini believed that colonial expansion would be very beneficial for himself and his country. In fact, the following excerpt from Mussolini's own political essay, The Doctrine of Fascism, underscores his desire for colonial expansion: "For Fascism the growth of empire, that is to say the expansion of the nation, is an essential manifestation of vitality, and its opposite a sign of decadence."126 He believed that the creation of a new Italian Empire would not only regenerate the Italian people, but would also bring added glory and prestige to himself as the new "modern Caesar" of Italy. Therefore,
he extolled all of the virtues of "classical" imperialism in order to convince the Italian people that colonial expansion was the only possible answer to all of Italy's problems. Mussolini promised his people that colonial expansion would improve the economy, provide new living space for Italy's growing population, and make Italy a powerful nation once again. In reality, Mussolini's colonial aspirations actually amounted to "no more than a collection of deserts." However, Mussolini was determined to pursue a colonial policy, and he was relatively unconcerned about the actual consequences of his expansionist aims as long as his foreign wars appeared successful.  

In his quest for colonial expansion, it was Mussolini's intention to impart a military style to his foreign policy. Mussolini was determined to increase Italy's military strength and to teach his people to consider themselves in a permanent state of war as preparation for territorial expansion. He was convinced that Italy was destined to be the new leader of Europe, and he wanted to increase Italy's territorial size and military strength in order to fulfill this role. Therefore, Mussolini "decided to speed the equipment of the armed forces" and to increase the frequency of military maneuvers in order to prepare for colonial expansion.  

Ironically, Mussolini the radical socialist had once ridiculed the Italian government for wasting national resources on colonial adventures, but once he came to power he became trapped by his own Fascist propaganda. Because Fascism was intended to represent action, power, and growth, it became more and more necessary for Mussolini to secure
territorial successes abroad. The maintenance of Fascism and his own power and position became more important to Mussolini than socialist ideology. Therefore, he began to press for a colonial empire with increased earnestness, and he claimed that he was willing to use force if necessary. In addition, when his officials explained to him that Italy lacked the economic and financial capability for colonial expansion, he simply dismissed their arguments as being "irrelevant." Mussolini was so concerned about prestige and conquest that he tended to ignore any evidence that might contradict his plans. In fact, Mussolini never seriously questioned the feasibility of his plans. He simply wanted to make trouble abroad in the expectation that Italy might prosper as a result. His aim was to keep various regions in a continuous state of flux and to increase all potential conflicts whenever possible. He believed that such actions would weaken his opponents and leave the way open for a stronger Italian presence.

One of the major factors which contributed to Mussolini's desire to create an Italian Empire was his overpowering and insatiable ambition. Once firmly established in power, Mussolini "could not resist the temptation to cut a figure...." He wanted to accomplish something dramatic in foreign affairs in order to prove that his leadership was resulting in great things for Italy. Because of Mussolini's continual boasting that he would make Italy a Great Power, he finally began to feel "obliged to find an easily beaten opponent in order to practice what he had preached." Therefore, in order to justify his regime, Mussolini began to look towards Africa as the "logical" area for colonial expansion.
As Mussolini examined Africa for potential areas of conquest, it soon became apparent that Abyssinia was a likely area for his imperialistic ambitions. Not only did Abyssinia border "upon the Italian colonies of Eritrea to the north and Somaliland to the south-east," but it had also been recognized as belonging "in the Italian sphere of influence by" the other "European colonial powers." In addition, an attack upon Abyssinia would afford Mussolini an opportunity to "avenge" Italy's defeat at Adowa during the late nineteenth century. Consequently, Mussolini hoped that his planned invasion of Abyssinia would meet with little direct resistance from the other European powers. Moreover, Mussolini confidently expected that Abyssinia could be conquered quickly so as to avoid a costly war, and to demonstrate the invincibility of Italy's new military machine.

One aspect which helped Mussolini in his quest for colonial expansion was his ability to convince the Italian people to support him. He convinced the Italian people they had a right to demand equal status with the other Great Powers. He stepped up his propaganda campaign against the Western Powers, blaming them for opposing Italian colonial aspirations solely for the purpose of protecting their own foreign possessions. He was assisted in this regard by the actions taken by the League of Nations after he invaded Abyssinia. When the Italian people learned about the economic sanctions which the League of Nations had imposed upon Italy in order to punish Italian aggression they rallied behind him. Even though the sanctions proved to be largely ineffectual, "to the Italian people, ignorant of the intrigue behind the scenes," and "exposed only to the Fascist viewpoint, the very idea
of sanctions," seemed not only unfair but also an injustice.  

Mussolini was quick to recognize the advantage of using his propaganda machine to capitalize upon Italian discontent for his own purposes. Years of Fascist rule "had left most Italians too confused for honest self-criticism," and Mussolini persuaded the Italian people that the Abyssinian war was a defensive war, "fought against a savage and brutal aggressor...." Mussolini claimed that the Abyssinians were savage people who had failed to conform to international law and that Italy had a right to protect its legitimate interests.

The Abyssinian war proved to be a disaster for Mussolini and his country in the long run. The added burden of preparing for a costly war which Mussolini insisted must be won as quickly as possible eroded the caliber of Mussolini's administration. Corruption among government officials began to spread dramatically as those who were responsible for military preparations began to practice favoritism and allowed dishonesty to flourish. Moreover, Mussolini's "parade of an empire... gave many Italians a wholly false impression of their country's potential strength and their leader's abilities." The Italian people failed to recognize the true costs of the Abyssinian campaign. Instead, they clung to the illusion that Italy had emerged as a great power and that Mussolini could accomplish any task he cared to set for himself and Italy. The tragedy of these misconceptions was that Mussolini began to believe in his own infallibility. Consequently, Mussolini continued his aggressive moves in foreign affairs and pushed Italy into an increasingly isolated position. He had no choice but to turn to Hitler's Germany in order to avoid complete isolation.
It seemed only natural to Mussolini that Germany and Italy should be allies. Not only did Mussolini believe that Germany would win the future war, but he was also flattered by the manner in which the Nazi regime copied many aspects of his own Fascist system. Mussolini liked to think of himself as the model for the new Fascist bloc which would control Europe after the war. In addition, Germany and Italy shared the same desire to expand by territorial conquest. For all of these reasons, Mussolini convinced himself that he should move closer to Hitler's Germany in order to gain more support for his own plans of conquest.

As Robert Herzstein points out in his book, *Adolf Hitler and The German Trauma*, "Mussolini was impressed by German might, and like a jackal he wished to pick up the crumbs that might fall from the German table." Therefore, when it appeared that Germany was about to achieve a total victory over the French in 1940, Mussolini quickly took advantage of the opportunity to join in the attack in order to present his claims for territorial compensation at the expected armistice talks. It soon became apparent, however, that Mussolini's "Fascism never possessed the ruthless drive, let alone the material strength, of National Socialism." Indeed, as the relationship between Mussolini and Hitler continued, Mussolini became more and more the student instead of the teacher. Unlike Hitler, Mussolini failed to appreciate that his revisionist and colonial policies, if carried to their logical extreme, would upset the traditional balance of power on the European continent. Mussolini might have been able to avoid the destruction
of Fascist Italy, however, he was so anxious to gain glory and prestige for himself and his country that he allowed Italy to become "a camp follower in the march of German expansion, and whether victorious or defeated she thus stood to lose all."\textsuperscript{138} Because Mussolini was able to follow his own whims in foreign affairs, any semblance of rational policy was thrown over in favor of his quest for glory and colonial empire.

**Mussolini as Diplomat**

In order to understand Mussolini's concept of diplomacy it is necessary to acknowledge that Mussolini considered diplomacy as simply a tool which one could use to acquire grandeur and prestige. It is true that he wanted Italy to take its place alongside the Great Powers of Europe, but he was concerned about his country's national interests mostly because of the personal prestige which would fall to himself if he improved Italy's position in the world. As far as Mussolini was concerned, international agreements were simply tools to be used to enhance his own image wherever and whenever possible regardless of the details or consequences involved. As Gordon Craig maintains in his essay, "Totalitarian Diplomacy", Mussolini disliked the hesitant and conventional "forms of diplomacy which sought... to solve European problems" by means of "collective agreements" and "multilateral negotiation." Mussolini was convinced "that the satisfactions to be gained from collaborative diplomacy... were not worthy of Fascist Italy, which" should "dazzle the world with spectacular triumphs of its own."\textsuperscript{139}
Like Hitler, Mussolini did not consider diplomacy as a means of securing peace through compromise. Instead, diplomacy was to be used to increase his own position at the expense of weaker powers. In the same manner as Hitler, Mussolini considered all international agreements as temporary arrangements which could be violated at any time in order to promote his own interests. Mussolini "was ready... to sign a treaty just for its effect on the public and without bothering too much about Italian interests or the details of what it contained..." Like most dictators, Mussolini did not consider diplomatic treaties to be binding agreements, and he was more than willing to ignore such "pieces of paper" if circumstances changed.\textsuperscript{140} Mussolini was proud of the menacing posture which his style of diplomacy presented to the world, and he was determined to let nothing hold him back from the pursuit of his goals. As far as Mussolini was concerned, no international agreements could be considered binding if they hampered his desire for power and prestige.

Mussolini did differ from Hitler however, in that he did not consider diplomacy simply as a means of preparing for war. It is true that Mussolini wanted to use diplomacy to gain glory and prestige, but he did not want to enter into any ventures where his ultimate victory might be in doubt. In fact, Mussolini entered the Second World War only after he became "convinced that Germany had won the war," and only because he did not want "to be left out when it came to sharing the spoils."\textsuperscript{141}
Mussolini's overriding concern in the field of foreign affairs was his obsession with image and prestige. He was more concerned about style than substance. Mussolini "was forever talking about the Fascist style which he equated with courage, resolution, action, forcefulness," and "dynamism." He wanted to present the image of a strong dictator who was always reluctant to negotiate and then only on his own terms. Moreover, Mussolini wanted to appear strong at home as well as abroad. Mussolini knew that a strong image could distract attention from internal problems, and therefore he wanted to impress the Italian people with foreign successes, no matter how trivial, in order to bolster his regime. Mussolini was always looking for grand gestures that would prove to the Italian people that he was an indispensable and infallible leader.

Mussolini was anxious to appear as the new champion of Italian interests. He wanted his Fascist system to represent a break from the old stale policies of the past. Therefore, even though Mussolini was quite capable of using "traditional methods of diplomacy," he would often ignore traditional diplomatic channels in an effort to accomplish a grand gesture without the aid of his established Foreign Office. For example, Mussolini liked to use private envoys behind the backs of his own ambassadors in order to pursue policies that were often contrary to established procedure in the Foreign Office. He believed that such tactics would lend credence to the claim that Italian foreign policy had abandoned the stale policies of the past.

Mussolini believed that it was more important to present an active and forceful foreign policy to the world than to worry about conforming
to old traditional procedures. It was more important to Mussolini that Italy be feared than respected, and he did not concern himself with the possibility that his belligerent attitude might hamper his ability to reach any type of mutual accommodation with other powers. Mussolini's "basic principle in fascist foreign policy was to make trouble and thus threaten world peace," and he conducted his policy under the assumption that the more trouble he caused, the more opportunity he would create for Italy to gain prestige. Therefore, Mussolini believed that his belligerent policy would more than make up for any international hostility that might result from his new forceful policy.

Mussolini's contempt for the weaker nations of Europe and the traditional procedures that they represented was a natural complement to his willingness to indulge in personal whims and intutive fantasies in foreign affairs. Moreover, Mussolini's extensive use of propaganda and showmanship in foreign affairs meant that his opponents could never tell when he was deadly serious about a particular issue or simply striking a pose for internal consumption. It was Mussolini's "deliberate policy to confuse and soften up opponents by alternating suddenly between... fierceness and sweet reasonableness." The other European statesmen were forced to determine on their own exactly where Mussolini stood on any particular issue at any given time. He believed that his apparent ability to change course at will would convince the world that his word alone was the decisive factor in Italian foreign policy.
Even though Mussolini was able to maintain an authoritative image in foreign affairs, such cosmetics failed to compensate for his lack of governmental expertise and for the absence of any long-term planning. In his book, Mussolini and Italy, C. C. Bayne-Jardine points out that "Mussolini's foreign policy... had no general purpose." Unlike Hitler, Mussolini did not possess a long-term plan for achieving his goals. Instead, Mussolini relied upon his intuition and bluster to achieve political gains in the diplomatic field wherever and whenever possible. In fact, Mussolini very often had no idea what course he should follow and simply directed his policies according to the whims of his own personal vanity, regardless of what consequences his actions might produce. Mussolini had little patience for "slow negotiations or the search for compromise," and he was "ready to sign almost any international agreement" so long as it demonstrated that he was a "strong man of decisive action." 

Mussolini was so concerned about his personal prestige that he would sacrifice Italian national interests if he could bolster his own image as a result. He took no interest in learning about the realities of foreign events and desired only to secure diplomatic successes abroad no matter how trivial or insignificant they might prove to be. His chief concern was always to maintain a state of tension abroad so that he could make political gains from the other European powers as his price for maintaining the peace.

Unfortunately, as Mussolini applied his unorthodox tactics to foreign affairs, the overall quality of Italian diplomacy declined as
Mussolini's entire diplomatic strategy was "dangerously muddled between" his "thinking that he could convince foreign admirers that Italy was a safe and stabilizing force in Europe," and his insistence that the Versailles peace statement had to "be smashed in order to allow" for "further Italian expansion."\(^{148}\) Mussolini's attempt to carry on territorial expansion under the cover of peaceful propaganda was an example of his haphazard and unprofessional method of conducting Italian diplomacy. Moreover, Mussolini's insistence upon an expansionist foreign policy also damaged Italian diplomacy in that his constant threatening of Italy's neighbors greatly increased the possibility of interference by outside Powers in the Mediterranean area. As Felix Gilbert argues in his essay, "Ciano and his Ambassadors," the ultimate result of Mussolini's conduct of Italian diplomacy was that Italy became the prisoner of her own foreign policy:

> By replacing a policy of clearly limited aims with a policy of unrestricted use of power within the whole of the Mediterranean area, Italy was in fact more deeply drawn into the vortex of European power politics and lost much of her freedom of action in her relations with the Great European Powers.

Regardless of the consequences of Mussolini's unprofessional methods of conducting Italian diplomacy, his policies represented a profound break from the traditional procedures of the past. His concern over prestige and image, his lack of any long-term planning, and his lack of any professional experience all contributed to a decline in the quality of Italian diplomacy.
Delegation of Authority

The manner in which Mussolini delegated authority among his subordinates, and the various organizations that they represented, had a profound effect upon the conduct of his diplomacy. In order to understand how Mussolini's delegation of power affected his policies, then as with Hitler, it is necessary to examine the role played by the Foreign Office, the military, and the Party in administrative affairs. Before examining these separate organizations in closer detail, however, one should first take into account Mussolini's basic attitudes towards the delegation of power and responsibility among his subordinates and the various organizations that they represented.

Like Hitler, Mussolini considered his personal authority over his governmental organizations more important than the establishment of a completely uniform administrative structure. When he first started to consolidate his own position, Mussolini set out early to gather as much power as possible into his own hands. Mussolini considered any independence on the part of his subordinates as both disloyal and dangerous. He knew that his leadership was far from secure, and that "existing political institutions would have to be abolished or drastically altered if he was to avoid being voted out of power." Moreover, Mussolini also knew that he would need the support of many different factions on his road to complete power, and he developed the skill of balancing one group against another very early in his career. Mussolini became very skillful at placating several groups at once, and he was always careful never to make "changes so fast as to destroy
the balance between" each group. "His ultimate intention was to maximize power in his own hands, but he had to proceed gradually" with the help of others. Mussolini realized that any immediate purge of the state bureaucracy would have to "be on a small scale."
His program called for an increase in state control, and this would require a larger bureaucracy rather than a smaller one.\textsuperscript{151}

Mussolini was determined to increase his personal authority by bringing every possible aspect of Italian life under his central direction. His goal was to entrench his authority so completely throughout the Fascist system that he could only be removed by force. In addition, he hoped that his Fascist system would become so dependent upon his personal authority that it could not function without him. Like Hitler, Mussolini was always looking for ways to secure his own position, even at the cost of administrative efficiency. As Mack Smith maintains, he devised his own system for maintaining the security of his position:

By using party officials and the state bureaucracy to oversee each other, he created a system of checks and balances that deprived other people of effective responsibility, leaving himself with the substance of power. \textsuperscript{152}

Mussolini justified the establishment of his dictatorship by arguing that the centralization of all authority under his personal control would be more efficient and therefore better suited for Italy. In fact, Mussolini made it a constant practice to promote his personal infallibility in all fields. By convincing the Italian people that he
was infallible, Mussolini hoped not only to secure his own position, but also to gain the freedom of action necessary to carry out his personal whims regardless of any possible criticism which might be voiced from within his own bureaucracy. The danger was that, like Hitler, Mussolini began to believe in his own propaganda. Mussolini "persuaded himself that he was governed by a mystic force and would always reach the right answers as long as he refused to be deterred by criticism or advice." 153

The establishment of Mussolini's personal dictatorship was a gradual process which took many years to accomplish. Mussolini simply could not match the speed at which Hitler consolidated his power in Germany. Indeed, as Nolte points out, the "process of unrestricted political seizure of power, which took seven years in Italy, was accomplished in Germany in ten months." 154 Nevertheless, Mussolini did eventually consolidate his personal dictatorship, and he began to rule by decree without parliamentary consent. Mussolini considered parliamentary government unsuitable for his needs. He believed that such a system would hamper his efforts to remake Italy according to his personal vision. As Deakin argues, under Mussolini's guidance the "administrative and executive organs of the state, apart from working technical committees, ceased to function." Mussolini's conception of government was such that, "in moments of panic or in an atmosphere of pessimism," each governmental body would act merely as a potential forum of criticism which he could ignore with impunity. 155 According to Mack Smith, Mussolini did feel compelled to allow the Italian parliament to remain in existence, but he did this only for propaganda
purposes. Mussolini believed that foreign powers would look upon his regime with greater favor if he retained Italy's parliament. However, he expected parliament to show a sense of discipline, and to impress outside opinion by making it appear that everyone in Italy was behind him.  

Mussolini was so anxious to present a united image to foreign powers that he would not retain anyone in a governmental position who openly disagreed with him. Moreover, Mussolini feared that competent functionaries might detract from his own personal image as supreme leader. He was so anxious to be seen as the sole leader of Fascist Italy that he surrounded himself with incompetent but loyal followers who would present no danger to his leadership image. Mussolini would not allow powerful subordinates to retain positions in his administration. Indeed, it can be argued that "almost none of Mussolini's chosen apostles had any admirable qualities even of a purely technical order."

By surrounding himself with loyal followers and by refusing to allow even a small number of competent individuals to remain in office, Mussolini seriously degraded the caliber of his bureaucracy. His subordinates discovered very quickly that he was more concerned with diplomatic style than with competent diplomacy. Consequently, they concentrated on flattering Mussolini's ego rather than on attempting to improve the efficiency of the bureaucracy. Unfortunately, the constant praise which Mussolini received from his subordinates "inflated his own opinion of himself." He became more convinced that he alone knew what was best for Italy and that his judgment was indeed infallible,
and those subordinates who still knew the difference between propaganda and reality were not about to risk their positions by forcing Mussolini to acknowledge the truth. He refused to recognize the reality of his situation, and his subordinates lacked both the will and the power to compensate for Mussolini's delusions. Like Hitler, he considered his own authority too precious to disseminate among his followers. In addition, Mussolini considered his own judgment so superior to that of his subordinates that he closed his mind to all forms of criticism and advice. For all of these reasons, Mussolini only delegated as much authority to his subordinates as absolutely necessary in order to keep his regime functioning.

Role of the Foreign Office. The role that the Italian Foreign Office (also known as the Palazzo Chigi), played in Mussolini's diplomatic affairs was conditioned by the uneasy relationship between Mussolini and the career diplomats. In his book, Mussolini's Early Diplomacy, Alan Cassels maintains that this relationship could not help but be distant because Mussolini was considered "an upstart," while the diplomatic corps "belonged to an aristocracy which cooperated with Fascism only to save itself."159 The career diplomats at the Palazzo Chigi believed that they should remain in power and protect Italian national interests regardless of what political system they represented. In his work "The Early Diplomacy of Italian Fascism," H. Stuart Hughes points out that the career diplomats supported many of the same goals as Mussolini. Not only did they want "to see Italy great and respected," but also "substantially enlarged in territory
and influence." Where they differed from Mussolini was in their conception of the proper methods for achieving these goals.

According to Hughes, Mussolini was always ready to engage in the wildest schemes without bothering to consider the reality of his position or the probability of success, while the career diplomats recognized "that the inadequacy of Italy's financial and military resources made it impossible for her to compete with the more prosperous powers in the game of building up clients...." The career diplomats did agree that a Fascist government would give them more "leverage for negotiation abroad" and that "they could use it to further the permanent aims of Italian policy," but they absolutely opposed Mussolini's unconventional and wild schemes in diplomatic affairs.¹⁶¹

The permanent officials of the Foreign Office were hopeful that they could guide Mussolini along moderate lines. However, if an opportunity arose to make a big display, Mussolini would rush in without regard for the consequences. Mussolini took advantage of any opportunity which would allow him "to show his own people that he had a unique talent for chalking up points for Italy on the international scorecard."¹⁶² In order to accomplish his goal, Mussolini began to advocate a policy which called for Italian expansion and revision of the Versailles Peace Treaty. He had no specific policy objectives in mind, but was determined to improve Italy's status and his own position by whatever means he could find. Mussolini's main goal seems to have been to keep Europe in a constant state of uncertainty whereby he could obtain some sort of advantage.¹⁶³
Although Mussolini desired strict obedience from the Foreign Office in order to carry out his personal schemes without undue interference, he was nevertheless very cautious in his attempts to take over complete control of the Foreign Office. Like Hitler, Mussolini recognized the utility of retaining the older diplomatic structure for his own purposes. Mussolini knew that "the continued presence of well-known career diplomats in the Palazzo Chigi helped to allay disquiet in foreign capitals." Moreover, there was no reason for Mussolini to alienate these influential and useful officials by a clearcut campaign to make the foreign Ministry unimpeachably Fascist. It would be much safer and just as easy for Mussolini to simply ignore the career diplomats whenever it suited his purpose. Therefore, Mussolini made it a common practice to disregard the advice of his career diplomats. In fact, Mussolini did not even inform his ministers about decisions that concerned them. He preferred to use other means of carrying out his policies. Whenever Mussolini "entertained designs which might offend the professionals' moral scruples or diplomatic convictions," he could always turn "to his own private and sometimes secret agents" to accomplish his goals. Quite understandably, many of the career diplomats resented the insignificant role which Mussolini intended them to fulfill, and many of the career diplomats "left of their own accord, finding for one reason or another Mussolini's indifference to their views to be insupportable."

The departure of many of the career diplomats made it easier for Mussolini to control the Foreign Office. While many of the older
diplomats who retained their positions in the Foreign Office had doubts about Mussolini's conduct of diplomacy, they nevertheless remained strong nationalists and supported a great part of Mussolini's program for national aggrandizement. These diplomats agreed with Mussolini that it was very important "to restore Italian prestige, even if it involved occasional vulgar and ridiculous boasting,..." and other such unconventional diplomatic practices. Moreover, the nationalist oriented career diplomats applauded Mussolini's quest for empire. His "nationalist spirit" kept "the bulk of Italy's foreign service loyal to the Fascist regime until the dangers inherent in its foreign policy became too obvious to ignore." Unfortunately, by the time the career diplomats realized the probable consequences of Mussolini's foreign policy, nothing could be done to save Italy from the destruction of the Second World War.

In order to facilitate his personal control, Mussolini encouraged the Fascist Party to infiltrate and control the Foreign Office as much as possible. Much like Hitler, he hoped that Party infiltration of the Foreign Office would destroy the traditional nonpolitical and "neutral" character of its administration. Mussolini was determined to dismiss many of the older officials and to replace them with loyal Fascists. He wanted the Foreign Office to "become the most fascist of all government departments," and he placed "more than a hundred party stalwarts" into "diplomatic posts" in the mistaken belief that they would "increase respect for Italy abroad."
One might assume that the entire Foreign Office administration resented Mussolini's attempt to reform diplomatic procedure according to his personal wishes, but this was not the case. According to Cassels, "Mussolini's reformist spirit was welcomed by some of the younger members of the Palazzo Chigi." Many of Mussolini's reforms actually helped to modernize the Foreign Office and made it more efficient in many respects. In fact, Mussolini's reforms actually increased "the element of competition for entrance into the foreign service" and helped to provide for "quicker promotions on merit...." However, Mussolini's reform "measures were far from radical and did little to facilitate infiltration by party representatives." 170

Those Party stalwarts which Mussolini did manage to place within the Foreign Office were generally of such poor quality that they proved to be more of a hindrance to Mussolini than an asset. The Party men that Mussolini placed there lacked not only intelligence and honesty, but even the most elementary knowledge of the outside world. It is not surprising therefore that very little within the Foreign Office was actually changed by direct Party interference. Most of the remaining individuals thus "continued to be men of the old type, career diplomats and frequently aristocrats." 171

In addition to using the Fascist Party to help him control the Foreign Office, Mussolini also appointed his loyal follower and son-in-law Galeazzo Ciano to the position of Foreign Minister. Ciano was just as determined as Mussolini to reform Italian diplomacy along Fascist lines, and he did an excellent job of imprinting Mussolini's
Fascist style upon Italian diplomacy. Moreover, as Felix Gilbert maintains in his essay, "Ciano and his Ambassadors," this Fascist style, or tono-fascista, was more than simply window dressing. It had a profound influence upon Italian diplomacy:

The tono fascista of Italian diplomacy in itself did not represent a new course of action but it was important in determining and restricting the framework within which Italian policy could and would take action. Slow proceedings and cautious legal formulas were considered as contradictory to the emphasis on decisive action which was supposed to be characteristic of Fascism and to animate its diplomacy.

By appointing such men as Ciano to the Foreign Office, Mussolini hoped to replace the older career officials upon whom he was forced to depend with a younger group of activist officials who would be more amenable to his personal authority and to the new Fascist style of forceful diplomacy. Much like Hitler, Mussolini wanted his new diplomats to be compliant tools under his personal command. In Mussolini's view, the Foreign Office was not to be a major policy-making organization. According to him, the purpose of the Foreign Office was simply to carry out the major policy decisions handed down by himself and few close but amateur advisers such as Ciano.

However, according to Gilbert, Ciano was not particularly suited for the task of accomplishing the Fascization of the Palazzo Chigi, for he was far from being a typical representative of the Fascist party. Not only was Ciano an outsider, but he was also resented by the older members of the Fascist Party who considered him "a spoiled child of
fortune, raised to prominence because he was the son of one of Mussolini's chief assistants and the Duce's son-in-law." Moreover, "Ciano fully reciprocated these feelings," for he considered the older leaders of the Party to be "unbearably dull and loquacious fools...." 173

Since Ciano had few allies among the older diplomats and Party members, he knew that he would have to bring his own new personnel into the administration with him if he expected to capture control of the Foreign Office for Mussolini. The prospect of creating a new supply of administrative personnel did not bother Ciano however, for he regarded himself as a representative of the new Fascist generation, and he was anxious to surround himself with subordinates who would complement the new Fascist image. Ciano believed that only individuals such as himself, who "had grown up in an atmosphere entirely unencumbered by the heritage of the past could fully" represent "the new attitude." 174

Ciano decided to create his own separate organization within the Foreign Office structure in order to bypass the older diplomats and their traditional procedures. This new organization, called the Gabinetto, "became Ciano's chief instrument for directing the course of Italian foreign policy, and... in a relatively short time, reduced the traditional apparatus to an empty shell." Ciano was anxious to increase his personal control in the Foreign Office, and by filling the Gabinetto "with young men who shared his general attitude towards life and looked up to him admiringly as" their "future leader," he hoped to consolidate his control by simply bypassing the traditional Foreign Office apparatus. 175
The *Gabinetto* was able to take control away from the traditional diplomatic corps by gaining a monopoly over all important information. Ciano's subordinates in the *Gabinetto* were given the authority to decide if important information should be distributed to the career diplomats or if important information should be kept secret for Ciano's personal use. It became a clearinghouse for all important information, and this gave Ciano a decided advantage in his bid to take control of the Foreign Office. Unfortunately, the arbitrary actions of his functionaries caused a great deal of confusion. By failing to distribute important information to many career officials, the *Gabinetto* left the diplomatic corps in the dark with no idea of what particular policy they should attempt to follow. Such lack of coordination was characteristic of Italian diplomacy under the influence of Ciano and his *Gabinetto* organization.

By expanding the *Gabinetto*, Ciano was able to gain control over the Foreign Office for Mussolini without having to insert subordinates directly into the existing diplomatic bureaucracy. Ciano was more than content to leave the existing bureaucracy alone, because not only did Ciano detest professional diplomats, but like Mussolini, Ciano also "liked to work outside... regular diplomatic channels." Consequently, Ciano not only created his own system of confidants through which he could carry out Mussolini's policies, but he also made it a practice to meet directly with foreign statesmen himself and bypass the diplomatic corps. Ciano was completely "uninhibited by the traditions of the diplomatic profession," and "the range of his activities went far beyond" what was considered to be the proper "sphere of action of a Foreign Minister."
The imposition of the *tono fascista* style of diplomacy, under the guidance of Ciano and his *Gabinetto* organization, "made it virtually impossible for envoys abroad to perform effectively their duties of representation, reporting and negotiation." Instead of representing Italian interests abroad, the Fascist diplomats were expected merely to protest "against criticisms of Fascism" abroad, and to conform to the new "Fascist style." Moreover, according to Craig, the *tono fascista* style of diplomacy was particularly damaging in relation to Ciano's personal negotiations with foreign representatives:

The subordination of diplomacy to the *tono fascista* was even more patent in the negotiations that Ciano carried on personally at Mussolini's orders. In these he appears to have been more interested in the speed with which an agreement could be reached and the publicity that could be garnered from it than in anything else. In general, his negotiations were amateurish in technique and dangerous in result.

In an effort to enhance his *tono fascista* style, Ciano shunned collective agreements and multilateral commitments. He wanted Italy to portray the image of a leader in the diplomatic field, and he wanted to be seen as the new dynamic Foreign Minister of his age who could advance Italian interests on his own without the help of the older professionals. Like Mussolini, Ciano was more interested in his own image and the Fascist style than in protecting and advancing Italian national interests through the intelligent conduct of diplomacy. Therefore, Ciano was perfectly suited to carry out Mussolini's wishes, for when it came to conducting Italian diplomacy, "Ciano was little
inclined to base his policy on considerations of permanent and underlying forces and interests." Instead, Ciano preferred to approach foreign "policy in terms of personality, relying heavily upon his judgment of the leading figures of other countries."¹⁷⁹

In many respects, Ciano was perfectly suited for the role that Mussolini intended for him to play in Fascist diplomacy.

Mussolini's style of foreign policy alienated the Western Powers and helped to complete Italy's diplomatic isolation in European affairs. By the late 1930s it became apparent that the only course left for Italy to follow in order to maintain her status and avoid complete isolation was to form an alliance with Hitler's Germany. Mussolini was convinced, like Hitler, that a new world war was inevitable, and that Italy and Germany were destined to be allies. However, as Roy Macgregor-Hastie points out in his book, The Day of The Lion, Hitler had nothing to offer Italy except a reiteration that he would support any Italian move in the Mediterranean.¹⁸⁰ Such promises were small compensation considering the ultimate costs that Italy would be forced to pay by forming an alliance with Germany. However, regardless of the possible costs, Mussolini was determined to create a new Italian empire in alliance with Germany, and he intended to use both the Fascist Party and the assistance of Ciano in order to eliminate any possible opposition from the Foreign Office. Therefore, it is not surprising that the Italian Foreign Office became nothing more than a compliant tool which Mussolini used to further his own personal designs. In Mussolini's view, the purpose of the Foreign Office
was not to make policy decisions, but simply to carry out his own personal wishes as efficiently as possible.

Role of the Military. The role that the Italian military played in the diplomatic affairs of Mussolini's regime was a reflection of Mussolini's personal foreign policy goals. The military was especially important to Mussolini because he wanted to bolster his own personal image by pursuing wars of territorial conquest. He intended for the Italian military to serve as the driving force behind his policy aims. Mussolini "announced that he wanted an army of five million men with a forest of bayonets, an air force so large that it would blot out the sun over Italy, and a navy that other countries would see as a real threat to their security." He was determined to pursue an active foreign policy and he wanted as much military capability as possible in order to fulfill his plans. In fact, Mussolini believed that the possession of a powerful military would allow him to achieve most of his foreign policy goals through bluff and bluster. Although he usually avoided armed conflict, Mussolini nevertheless encouraged a combative attitude in foreign affairs, especially when he was assured of an easy victory.

Mussolini pursued an active foreign policy based upon the threat of force, and he continued to promote the creation of a strong Italian military capability in order to achieve his goals. He wanted to militarize the Italian nation so that whenever the right opportunity to advance Italian interests might present itself, he would be able to mobilize every Italian in order to bolster his position in relation
to the other European powers. Mussolini's primary objective was to improve Italy's capacity for war, and he boasted that his Fascist government was making great progress in its efforts to improve Italy's military strength. In fact, not only did Mussolini claim that he would make Italy a militarist nation, but also the only nation "with the courage to risk a major war and seek military glory." Mussolini was determined to capture military glory for himself and Italy, and he expected all Italians to adopt a military bearing and to support his new forceful policy in foreign affairs.

According to Knox, Mussolini's interference in Italian military affairs made the "intelligent coordination of the armed forces" almost impossible. He was so concerned about maintaining the security of his own position that he was willing to sacrifice any genuine coordination and efficiency in military affairs. Mussolini refused to allow the creation of a "genuine tri-service general staff capable of coordinating the services" because he believed that such an organization would challenge his own authority. Not only would a general staff of the armed forces "give the service chiefs a collegial voice in defense matters," but it would also "give the monarchy an opportunity to exercise its military prerogatives, which in theory included the supreme command in war, exercised... through a chief of general staff." Moreover, Mussolini feared that the "chief of any tri-service staff" might gain enough power and prestige to become a serious rival to his own position. He wanted to protect his own position as sole dictator of Fascist Italy, and he quickly eliminated any individuals,
organizations, or governmental and military positions which might possibly encroach upon his own personal power.

Mussolini wanted "to run the military establishment himself with a minimum of technical assistance." Moreover, even though many of his subordinate officers were very impressed with the new German tactics of Blitzkrieg and rapid movement, he believed that such tactics would not effect the long-term outcome of the war. Mussolini remained convinced that the next war would be a long war of enforced immobility. In addition, Mussolini believed that the next war would be won not in the traditional European theatre of operations, but in the Mediterranean area. Therefore, Mussolini assigned top priority to the creation of a "first-rate Navy and a powerful Air Force" in order to "dominate the Mediterranean." However, neither the Navy nor the Air Force had a war plan which would fulfill Mussolini's ambitions. Therefore, Italy entered the Second World War "without a coherent war plan." Such lack of preparation helps to explain the poor performance of the Italian military during the Second World War. 184

Mussolini's efforts to gain control over the Italian military were mostly ineffective. He had to accept the existing structure of the Italian military basically intact. He found it almost impossible to alter the basic structure of the military establishment and maintain an acceptable degree of competence at the same time. The "rigidity of the armed forces' seniority system ensured that replacements could come only from the topmost ranks, and nothing guaranteed such men would improve on the incumbents." Unlike Hitler, Mussolini
could not take advantage of a true national military tradition. The Italian military had "distinguished itself by the absence of the study, planning, and attention to detail that characterized the Germans" in the art of warfare. In short, he had to depend upon an unimpressive and weak military machine in order to achieve his goals. Unlike Hitler, Mussolini lacked the basic military structure which was necessary to support an active foreign policy. Nevertheless, he wanted to pursue an active foreign policy with the support of what military strength he did possess.

Because of its weak position in Mussolini's regime, the Italian military failed to restrain Mussolini. He was able to exert an extraordinary amount of initiative in political-military affairs, and he was determined to exploit his absolute power for the purpose of achieving his goals. Like Hitler, he used the military to achieve his foreign policy aims, free from all restraints.

**Role of the Party.** The role that the Fascist Party played in the diplomatic administrative affairs of Mussolini's regime was a reflection of Mussolini's desire to maintain absolute and personal control over his various organizations. Like Hitler, Mussolini was always on guard to protect his own authority, and he would not allow any one group or individual to gain too much power. Therefore, he used the Fascist Party as a tool to help him prevent any possible rivals from gaining too much power. As long as his own position was secure, Mussolini would put up with the inefficiency which might result by allowing the Party to oversee and interfere with organizations outside its designated
area of expertise. Such practices help to explain why the Party was able to expand its involvement in diplomatic affairs in competition with the Foreign Office. Therefore, an examination of the role of the Fascist Party in governmental affairs is very important in order to understand Mussolini's diplomacy. Before examining the role that the Party played in governmental affairs, however, it is necessary to examine Mussolini's personal views concerning the purpose of the Party and what role it should play in his regime.

In his book, *Europe 1914-1939*, E. Lipson argues that Mussolini conceived of the Fascist Party as the "coercive instrument" of his Fascist regime. He was determined to control the political, military, and economic institutions of Fascist Italy, and he intended to use the Party to help him achieve this goal. Mussolini planned for the Party to intervene in all aspects of Italian life. It was his intention that every organization which received any sort of official recognition from the state would eventually come under some degree of Party control or interference. The Party rapidly became the "dynamic element in the State machinery" and brought all "activities... within its orbit and under its discipline." Mussolini wanted all aspects of Italian society to be "placed under the supervision of the Fascist Party," and he was determined that all Italians should be made to follow the "conception of Fascism in theory and in practice."^{186}

Mussolini was particularly proud of the way in which he fitted the Fascist party into the State. However, his system created nothing but confusion. According to Bayne-Jardine, "all to often one branch of the government issued orders which were opposite to those issued by
another branch." In addition, Mussolini contributed to this confusion himself by his constant practice of contradicting "his own orders shortly after they had been issued." Mussolini was so concerned about maintaining his own authority that he refused to recognize the need for an adequate system of responsibility within the Party itself. Instead, like Hitler, Mussolini simply appointed loyal followers to key positions within the Party and trusted that these individuals would appoint their own loyal subordinates in turn. As long as he retained ultimate authority over key members of the Party, Mussolini remained relatively unconcerned about the rank and file. This uncoordinated system, where departments were not clearly defined, allowed Mussolini to play groups off against each other, and thereby helped to prevent possible rivals from gaining too much power. Because he was so anxious to preserve his own position, Mussolini was willing to dispense with both talented individuals and efficiency within the Party structure.

In order to tighten his control over Italian society, Mussolini encouraged the Party to replace the traditional governmental administration. He wanted the Party to set up a bureaucratic structure which would allow it to absorb the state. Entirely separate organizations were created which were designed to replace governmental offices and which were strictly controlled by the Party. In his book, The Fascist Government of Italy, Herbert W. Schneider maintains that Mussolini wanted the Party to be a "training ground for the governing class, and a vital bond between the government and the masses, animating and
educating the nation.\textsuperscript{189} Mussolini intended for the Party to control the state, while he controlled the Party.

As the Party began to assume more and more power within the state, its members and officials began to develop a vested interest in maintaining the Fascist system. Because the Fascist system provided "as many as a hundred thousand jobs for secretaries and organizers," the Party was able "to satisfy that deep-rooted desire among Italians to find a respectable post in government service, poorly paid but easy work and a sure pension."\textsuperscript{190} By providing this type of security on such a vast scale, Mussolini was able to secure the loyalty of his administrative personnel. His subordinates might abuse the Fascist system in order to advance their own personal positions, but they remained loyal to the Party that guaranteed their jobs. In fact, Party membership "soon became essential for the acquisition or retention of any job that was directly or remotely connected with the state," and "party members" were to be "given priority whenever jobs were available." Therefore, since Party membership was essential if one wanted to improve one's position, especially in governmental affairs, it is not surprising that almost the "whole body" of Italian officialdom "rushed frenetically into the embrace" of the Fascist Party.\textsuperscript{191}

Even though Mussolini was anxious for the Fascist Party to expand its role in governmental affairs, he also was determined not to allow the Party to become too powerful. Like Hitler, Mussolini was always
concerned about protecting himself from possible rivals. Therefore, Mussolini's view of the Party tended to oscillate between admiration and fear. He would often condone large expulsions of Party members whenever the "party was suddenly thought to be unwieldy or ridden with factions." Moreover, the older Party members very often supported such purges because they considered the mass of newer members to be a threat to their own privileged positions. Therefore, the "hooligan element" tended to retain the top positions in the Fascist Party.

Party membership "was supposed to be confined to... authentic Fascists" whom the older Party leaders had imbued with the proper "Fascist virtues." Unfortunately, this limited screening of new members failed to guarantee an improvement in the quality of the new personnel. Mussolini was relatively unconcerned about the competency of his personnel however, because he wanted to protect his own position from powerful rivals. Moreover, since Mussolini frequently replaced nearly all of his "ministers and party leaders" in sweeping changes of the guard, the competency of his personnel seemed relatively unimportant. Because he was afraid that powerful individuals might challenge his own authority, Mussolini changed his personnel very frequently, even if he had to settle for incompetence and inefficiency as a result.

In addition to inefficiency and incompetence, the new Party members also brought a great deal of corruption into Mussolini's regime. Almost every Party member could easily turn into a petty tyrant, secure in the knowledge that the Party would protect him from
any type of legal prosecution. Mussolini, always cautious about his public image, believed that he could not afford to admit in public that the Party might be tarnished, even though he was well aware of acts of insubordination among Party members. He knew that many Fascists were "no better than common delinquents" who were "using fascism as a cover for crime." However, as long as these individuals did not seriously damage his own authority, or hamper the overall achievement of his goals, Mussolini was content to let his subordinates pursue their own private schemes.

Like Hitler, Mussolini attempted to use the Party to enforce his will upon the governmental bureaucracy. This tactic was not very successful, however, because Mussolini's subordinates were more interested in advancing and protecting their own positions than in carrying out Mussolini's unorthodox schemes. His tactics allowed him to maintain a great deal of personal control, but they also created unwieldy organizations and rivalries that hampered the achievement of his ideological goals. The main impact that the Party had upon diplomatic administration was to increase the amount of confusion that already pervaded governmental administration.

Mussolini's Power in Diplomatic Practice

In order to understand the limits and strengths of Mussolini's power in diplomatic practice it is necessary to consider both the manner in which Mussolini organized his bureaucracy and Mussolini's habits of administrative procedure. Moreover, the limits and strengths of
Mussolini's rule need to be examined in the context of Mussolini's entire governmental apparatus, and should not be limited strictly to his diplomatic affairs. As with Hitler, Mussolini's personal system allowed various organizations, such as the Italian Fascist Party, to interfere with diplomatic administration. Therefore, the limits and strengths of Mussolini's power in auxiliary fields had an indirect effect upon his diplomacy, and such factors need to be considered in understanding the strengths and weaknesses of Mussolini's diplomacy.

Another factor which one should keep in mind is that many of Mussolini's diplomatic techniques could be considered both weaknesses and strengths. For example, Mussolini's absolute control over major policy decisions could be viewed as a positive factor in that it allowed him to change course very rapidly with little concern for the consequences. This same trait, however, could also be viewed as a negative factor in that Mussolini's absolute control over major policy decisions tended to exclude the input of professional advice and Italian diplomacy deteriorated as a result. For example, Mussolini's disastrous alliance with Hitler's Germany might have been avoided if he had been more willing to listen to the advice of his older professional diplomats.

Limits of Mussolini's Power. One of the most obvious factors which limited Mussolini's effectiveness in the diplomatic field was his inordinate concern for his own personal image. His preoccupation with image encouraged him to sacrifice genuine national interests for the chance to win a personal propaganda triumph. In fact, Mussolini rarely even made the effort to see if his policies were carried out because he
was more interested in their propaganda value than in their actual application. He wanted to avoid any situation which might damage his personal image of infallibility. He wanted to maintain the appearance of being a strong leader, and therefore he avoided making difficult decisions whenever possible and relied upon his reputation to carry him through difficult situations. He cared more about his diplomatic style than about the successful conduct of his diplomacy.

Mussolini placed so much emphasis upon his image at the expense of professional diplomacy that he failed to establish any type of workable diplomatic system. His "failure to establish any basis of trust between himself on the one hand and his ministers and the bureaucracy on the other was exceedingly damaging to the orderly conduct of affairs." Even though he could maintain his own position as dictator of Fascist Italy, he failed to conduct his foreign policy in a consistent and logical manner. He began to believe in his own infallibility and decided that he could conduct his foreign policy without professional advice. "His conception of government was personal rule," and "this was particularly the case in his treatment of international affairs." There was no one capable of forcing him to face the reality of his bankrupt policies, for according to Gallo, "Mussolini lived in the sealed-off, pompous world of his own glory, imprisoned in his own postures, his arrogance, and the adulation of those around him." Such an atmosphere coupled with Mussolini's own warped sense of personal importance tended to limit the effectiveness of Fascist diplomacy.
Like Hitler, Mussolini knew very little about governmental administration or about foreign affairs when he assumed power. Moreover, much like Hitler, Mussolini also hated the daily routine of administrative paperwork. He rarely spent time or energy trying to understand the details of governmental administration. Like most dictators, Mussolini left as much paperwork as possible in the hands of his subordinates, for he was not concerned about daily routine as long as he maintained his right to determine the ultimate course of major policy initiatives. Mussolini's lack of concern for administrative detail and his lack of diplomatic experience severely hampered the conduct of his diplomacy.

Moreover, Mussolini's unwillingness to delegate any substantive authority to his subordinates prevented the Italian career diplomats from shoring up his policies by compensating for his lack of experience. Mussolini suffered from a "false assurance that he had vast knowledge and great ability." Consequently, he was determined to handle all aspects of his regime personally, no matter if he was capable of such a task or not.

Another trait which limited Mussolini's diplomatic effectiveness was the manner in which he dealt with his subordinates. Mussolini's fancy for playing the part of the indispensable leader was in part a reflection of his aversion to cooperating with others. He liked to avoid contact with other people and to play the part of the loner. Mussolini had a "profound contempt for mankind," and "he enjoyed
exercising his talent to degrade men and bring out their worst
qualities." As far as Mussolini was concerned, his "men were only the
material with which to build the structure of his own personal domi­
nation." 200

Like Hitler, Mussolini considered himself superior to the common
man, and he believed that he did not require the advice of others. He
was convinced that a strong leader should have no equals and that he
should at least appear to make all important decisions without consul­
tation. For this reason, Mussolini would "never act as a member of a
team, disliked being crossed, and was only happy when he was in a
position to impose his will." 201 Mussolini's determination to inter­
vene in all aspects of policy, coupled with his tendency to change
course at the slightest whim, destroyed any semblance of consistency
in his policies. His fancy for ignoring regular administrative channels
and suddenly announcing major policy changes might have bolstered his
image as the omniscient dictator, but his tactics left his sub­
ordinates uninformed, and they became wary of acting upon their own
initiative. Besides, if one of Mussolini's subordinates did question
the conduct of Italian policy, Mussolini would simply reject any advice
which might "keep him within the bounds of prudence." 202 Mussolini
was determined to follow his own unique road in the conduct of his
diplomacy. Consequently, no one was left to mitigate Mussolini's
irresponsible actions.

However, since Mussolini could not possibly run the entire state
apparatus alone, he was forced to depend upon his subordinates to
carry out at least the bare essentials of administrative routine. Unfortunately, he "often agreed with the last of his advisers spoken to," and "frequent administrative paralysis" was the natural result. Like Hitler, Mussolini disliked arguments and confrontations, and he preferred to ignore problems rather than face the difficult decisions that had to be made. Moreover, like Hitler, he structured his administrative system in such a manner that his incompetent and powerless subordinates were unable to compensate for his lack of leadership.

Mussolini wanted to be remembered as a great leader who was master of his own destiny, and he would follow any course which might bolster his image. He refused to accept the reality of his situation, and he believed that forceful action would compensate for his policies, even if they were misguided. Mussolini seemed to believe that with the sheer force of his will he could be successful where all others had failed. Therefore, he was determined not to recognize any restraints upon his actions in his quest to accomplish his goals. Unfortunately, Mussolini never seemed to profit from his mistakes, and as a result, his diplomatic effectiveness deteriorated as he became more and more set in his concepts of appropriate procedure in administrative affairs.

Strengths of Mussolini's Power. One factor which contributed to Mussolini's personal power in the diplomatic field was his ability to alter his stance in relation to any given circumstance. According to Mack Smith, Mussolini set little store by coherence of ideas or opinions, and he could move quickly from "cynicism to idealism, from impulsiveness to caution, generosity to cruelty, resolution to indecision,
moderation to intransigence." In a similar manner to Hitler, Mussolini had the ability to control his emotions and to impress other people with his personal charisma. He possessed a "marvelous facility for playing the most diverse and contradictory parts one after the other," and he quickly became aware of the political benefits of switching roles at will. Mussolini had learned the "effectiveness of alternating menace and conciliation" in foreign affairs, and he liked to use this technique to keep his adversaries off balance and to project the image of a leader who was in complete control and who could change tack without notice and without concern for the consequences.

By fostering a mysterious image and by changing his position without notice, Mussolini believed that he could maintain personal control over events. In addition, Mussolini believed that his rapid changes would prevent anyone from anticipating his moves and allow him to remain one step ahead of his opponents. For example, he would make every effort to convince foreign journalists that he was essentially a man of peace in order to place doubt in the minds of foreign leaders as to his real intentions. Mussolini's ability to switch his personality on command helped him to confuse his opponents and put them off balance. Like Hitler, Mussolini was able to use his charisma to help him advance his diplomatic goals.

Mussolini also had the capacity to charm opponents. Like Hitler, he had a personal magnetism which he used to impress people and to bend them towards his way of thinking. Mussolini "could charm whenever he wished," and "he could always impress a visitor" when it suited
his purpose. In fact, Mussolini was so adept at changing his character in order to manipulate people and control situations that it became almost impossible to determine when Mussolini was serious or when he was simply playing a part. Mussolini's ability to charm and to change his character became a constant trademark of his conduct of diplomacy.

Moreover, much like Hitler, Mussolini used his ability to charm those around him to capture the obedience of a large section of the diplomatic corps. As in Germany, the Italian people were more than willing to accept a strong leader who promised to remove the alleged humiliation of Italy's role in the First World War, and who promised to make Italy strong once again. "To a population that had lost sight of its aims and will, that lacked faith in itself and was affected by a mass inferiority complex," writes Fermi, "the idea of a savior capable of bringing well-being to all... was a last hope." The combination of his personal magnetism and the willingness of the Italian people to follow a great leader contributed to his ability to retain absolute authority over diplomatic affairs. Many officials in Mussolini's diplomatic corps were willing to put up with his unorthodox procedures, as long as he seemed to improve Italy's position in European affairs. The "nationalist temper of Mussolini's diplomacy gratified many of the career diplomats and more than made up for Mussolini's neglect" of the Foreign Office. His ability to charm those around him contributed to his diplomatic effectiveness.

An additional factor which contributed to Mussolini's limited effectiveness in the diplomatic field was the degree of his own
personal authority. Despite the extent of confusion which permeated his administrative system, Mussolini did manage to retain ultimate authority in his own hands. Mussolini's subordinates might implement his policies according to their own inclinations, but his major policy aims were never appreciably obstructed. As with almost every aspect of Fascist society, he had gradually subjected his administrative apparatus to his personal control. Therefore, even though Mussolini's diplomatic system was permeated by rival organizations and by confusion, this state of affairs did not hinder his ability to maintain his own personal control.

Since Mussolini retained ultimate authority in all decisions, he knew that he could act quickly and even against accepted practices without fear of restraint. In his book, The Seizure of Power, Adrian Lyttelton maintains that "Mussolini's personal dictatorship was absolutely secure so long as his luck held and he could claim successes in foreign policy." By securing a high degree of personal authority, Mussolini, like Hitler, was able to maintain a great deal of flexibility and freedom of action in his diplomatic maneuvers. His personal domination over the conduct of Italian diplomacy allowed him to act quickly and without restraints. The high degree of Mussolini's personal authority contributed to his limited effectiveness in diplomatic affairs.

Mussolini had a profound impact upon international diplomacy while he was ruler of Fascist Italy. Like Hitler, Mussolini's character traits, his ideological framework, and his unique position of authority
all contributed to the manner in which he reshaped traditional diplomacy. By comparing Mussolini's and Hitler's diplomatic practices, and the strengths and weaknesses of the methods used by both dictators, it is possible to identify certain aspects of each dictator's system which acted as guideposts for their new approach to diplomacy. The new procedures which each dictator introduced into the field of diplomatic affairs drastically changed the conduct of diplomacy between nation states.

In both Hitler's and Mussolini's view, diplomacy no longer represented a method of preserving peaceful relations, but became a tool that one should use to further one's own political ambitions. Hitler only wanted to prepare for war, and Mussolini mainly wanted to bolster his own image. Whether Hitler and Mussolini achieved their personal aims through their unorthodox methods is difficult to answer. It is true that Hitler's diplomatic tactics helped him to prepare for war, and that Mussolini's diplomacy did bolster his image, however, the end result of each dictator's diplomacy was completely opposite to what they supposedly intended to achieve. In order to understand how both Hitler's and Mussolini's conduct of diplomacy could bring them both success and failure simultaneously, it is necessary to examine both Hitler's and Mussolini's diplomatic activity in one particular test case. By examining what each dictator hoped to achieve in this case, and by comparing what actually resulted because of each dictator's particular diplomatic procedures, one should be able to fully grasp the significance of the new unorthodox procedures that each dictator introduced into the diplomatic field.
IV. GERMAN AND ITALIAN INTERVENTION IN THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR

The Spanish Civil War of 1936-1939, acquired a special significance in European affairs because it represented a testing ground for the forces that would soon face each other in the Second World War. Both sides in the conflict presented the civil war as a battle between the ideologies that divided Europe. The Nationalists, who followed General Francisco Franco, presented themselves as crusaders defending European civilization against a Communist plot rather than as defenders of Spanish conservative interests. The Republicans presented themselves as defenders of democracy against the evils of Fascism rather than as ordinary supporters of Spanish liberal interests. Therefore, it is easy to see why foreign intervention in the Spanish Civil war played such an important part in European diplomacy during the early years of Fascist diplomacy conducted by Mussolini and National Socialist diplomacy conducted by Hitler.

The major Western Powers, Britain and France, tried not to intervene in the Spanish conflict because of their fear of an armaments race and eventual war with Germany and Italy. Unfortunately, their reluctance was seen as a sign of weakness by the totalitarian powers of Italy and Germany. Their failure to maintain a united and firm front against Italian and German intervention in the Spanish conflict had profound consequences. The League of Nations lost its prestige and Germany was encouraged by the weakness of the democratic powers to
commit further aggression in other areas. In short, as P.A.M. van der Esch argues in his book, *Prelude to War*, "the inadequate response of the democratic nations to the cynical game of power politics played by Germany and Italy throughout the Spanish civil war... heightened the contempt of the Axis powers for the strength of the democratic world" and contributed to the willingness of the totalitarian powers to launch a general European war. In addition to Mussolini's involvement in the Ethiopian war, the common policy of Italy and Germany towards Spain created one of the main foundations on which the Rome-Berlin Axis was built. The Spanish Civil War played an important role in shaping the foreign policies of both Italy and Germany.

**Hitler's Intervention Policies**

In order to understand the significance of Hitler's intervention in the Spanish Civil War, it is necessary to take note of the objectives Hitler hoped to accomplish, the procedures he followed to achieve these ends, and finally, the results of his intervention. Moreover, a comparison should be made between Hitler's intervention in the Spanish conflict and Mussolini's, which was less calculated and shrewd than Hitler's. By comparing the actions of each dictator against the other, it is possible to gain a better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of each dictator's approach to foreign policy.

**Hitler's Objectives.** The objectives that Hitler wished to accomplish by intervening in the Spanish Civil War, of course, were varied and often overlapped. Certain major concerns did take
precedence, however, over others. One of the main objectives which Hitler wished to accomplish by intervening in the Spanish conflict, for example, was to encourage dissension between Italy and the Western Allies. Italian involvement in the Ethiopian war had already soured relations between Italy and the Western democracies, and Hitler knew that if he could keep Italy at odds with the Western Powers, then Mussolini would be forced into forming an alliance with Germany as the only means of escaping complete isolation in European affairs. As William L. Shirer maintains in his book, The Rise and Fall of The Third Reich, Hitler was determined to "prolong the Spanish Civil War in order to keep the Western democracies and Italy at loggerheads and draw Mussolini toward him."211

Moreover, in Hitler's view, the prolongation of the Spanish Civil War would allow him to maintain a tighter hold over Franco as well as Mussolini. Hitler was never comfortable with equal partnerships and always sought some type of extra hold over his potential allies. Therefore, he questioned the desirability of a complete Franco victory in the Spanish Civil War because he feared that a victorious Franco might "attempt to play off Germany and Italy against Britain and France."212 In Hitler's view, Franco's value as a potential ally would be diminished if he achieved complete independence from Germany by defeating the Republicans and establishing his own dictatorship.

In addition to gaining a tighter hold over Mussolini and Franco, the Spanish Civil War also afforded Hitler the opportunity of presenting Nazi Germany as a major world power which the other European
nations would be forced to respect if not admire. Hitler was convinced that involvement in the Spanish conflict would present very little risk to Germany because Franco's initial opposition seemed very slight, and the possibility of serious military setbacks seemed remote. Therefore, the possible gains of German intervention in the Spanish war seemed to outweigh any possible risks.

Hitler also decided to intervene in the Spanish Civil War because of Spain's strategic importance. The "geographical position of Spain gave it a strategic importance which was quite out of proportion to her internal strength." Spain's geographical position could prove vital to either the Axis or the Western Allies in any future European war. Spain's control of Gibraltar and her potential naval and air force bases could help either side control the entire Mediterranean and the Northern coast of Africa. Therefore, Hitler was naturally interested in keeping Spain under German influence. However, Franco's eventual victory in the Spanish war proved to be of little benefit to Hitler. He could not convince Franco to take an active part in the Second World War. Franco was determined to maintain Spanish neutrality and to consolidate his own position rather than to risk involvement in a major European war. Therefore, Franco's contribution to the German war effort proved to be very minimal and failed to measure up to Hitler's expectations.

Hitler wanted to intervene in the Spanish conflict because of his concern over raw materials which he needed to meet his future war needs. Spain had an abundance of raw materials which the Germans needed in
order to build up their armaments. Consequently, he insisted upon German priority over Spanish mining interests in exchange for German military assistance during the civil war.

Finally, Hitler agreed to support Franco in the Spanish Civil War because such an alliance offered him the opportunity to present Nazi Germany as the greatest anti-Communist force in Western Europe. He wanted to appear as the great "savior" of Western civilization who would protect Western Europe from the Communist menace. Moreover, he actually believed that the extension of Communism in Europe would strengthen the hands of Russia, his mortal enemy on the east, and of France, Germany's traditional enemy on the west.\textsuperscript{214} Hitler's genuine concern over the dangers of Communism was evident in the telegram that his Foreign Minister Baron von Neurath sent to the German Embassy in Italy on the 5th of December in 1936. Neurath stated that:

\begin{quote}
In the Spanish conflict Germany has predominantly the negative goal of not permitting the Iberian Peninsula to come under Bolshevist domination, which would involve the danger of its spreading to the rest of western Europe.
\end{quote}

Hitler liked to prepare for future wars, and he wanted to keep Russia as weak as possible by keeping Communism out of Western Europe. Moreover, he always tried to augment Germany's strength by gathering potential allies to his side, and he believed that if he supported Franco in Spain, then he would be increasing his chances of winning a future war against the Soviet Union. As Nolte maintains, Hitler's overriding goal was to attack Russia and destroy the Bolshevik menace.
He wanted very much to be "the pioneer in the fight against bolshevism." 216

Hitler's Procedures. In addition to examining the objectives which Hitler wished to accomplish by intervening in the Spanish Civil War, it is also necessary to examine the implementation of his policies in order to gain a better understanding of the manner in which Hitler conducted his diplomacy. As with his objectives, Hitler's methods of implementation were also varied and often overlapped. However, once again, certain major policy practices did take precedence over others and were implemented with a fair degree of consistency.

One such policy which Hitler followed in Spain was the practice of keeping his plans and actions as secret as possible. In his book, Half of Spain Died, Herbert Matthews argues that Hitler "took great pains to conceal the extent" of his involvement in the Spanish Civil War. Mussolini, on the other hand, "boasted openly about Italian intervention and permitted the Italian press to publish gloating accounts of the Fascist deeds in Spain." 217 Instead of following Mussolini's example, Hitler tried to keep the extent of his involvement in Spain as secret as possible because he wanted to keep the scale of his involvement as limited as possible. Unlike Mussolini, Hitler appeared to realize that he could avoid becoming trapped in an endless war in Spain if he kept his involvement in the civil war both limited and secret.

As Laurence Lafore maintains, "Hitler was much wiser" than Mussolini in the manner in which he intervened in Spain. "He limited
his contribution" much more than Mussolini, "and he avoided associating himself with the fate of the Franquist cause." Hitler knew that the Spanish Civil War would become a "drain on the strength of all who became engaged in it."\(^{218}\) His judgment was not as clouded as Mussolini's, who was blinded to the realities of the Spanish conflict by his inordinate desire for prestige. Therefore, unlike Mussolini, Hitler wisely limited his involvement in the Spanish conflict and gathered what dividends he could from the ensuing situation.

However, Hitler was more than willing to use Spain as a convenient testing ground for the new weapons of the Wehrmacht.\(^{219}\) In fact, not all of the military supplies which Hitler sent to Spain were intended for Franco's forces. Many of the weapons which Hitler sent to Spain were entirely in addition to the arms furnished to the Spanish Insurgent army for use by Spaniards. Hitler preferred to keep as much distance as possible between his own forces and Franco's because he wanted to maintain as much personal control over German involvement as possible. This policy was especially evident in connection with the special German air unit known as the Condor Legion. This air unit was at all times under German command, and the soldiers' wages were paid by Germany.\(^{220}\)

Hitler believed that if he supplied his own troops with special weapons, and if he diversified German involvement in Spain instead of limiting his intervention to any one specific area, then he would be in a better position to maintain his own personal control. He therefore encouraged a wide diversification of German assistance in order
to augment his own authority. German personnel were responsible for such diverse projects as building field fortifications, training Spanish officers, and keeping the sea lanes open for war material and troop shipments.  

Hitler also was more careful than Mussolini when it came to maintaining his personal control over events in Spain. In addition to keeping his military forces separated from Franco's Spanish troops and of diversifying his involvement to include several areas of importance, he maintained a distinct German organization in Spain known as the Auslandorganization which he used to further his own motives. As Esch maintains, the Auslandorganization, which was the National Socialist Party's Foreign Organization, was a section of the Nazi Party which became deeply involved in internal Spanish affairs through the use of German nationals living in Spain. German nationals provided the Nazi Party with the basis for a vast network of unofficial commercial and political agents who worked secretly to further German interests in Spain. The Auslandorganization gave Hitler an extra advantage over Mussolini in achieving his motives in Spain.  

Even though Mussolini was a capable leader when it came to maintaining his personal authority at home, he was not very effective in the field of foreign affairs. Mussolini's political intelligence seemed to fail him when he turned to international affairs. His preoccupation with glory and prestige in international affairs encouraged him to ignore the possible dangers of his policies. Moreover, once he found himself irreversibly committed to a particular course of action, he
lacked the military capability to compensate for his diplomatic blunders. Therefore, it is not surprising that Hitler gained more from Spanish intervention than Mussolini.

**Hitler's Results.** Hitler's main objective, which was to force Mussolini into an alliance with Germany, proved remarkably successful. Franco's victory in the Spanish Civil War "rendered impossible a reapproachement of Britain and France with Italy, which the Paris and London governments had hoped for after the termination of the Abyssinian War." Therefore, Mussolini was driven "into the arms of Hitler."\(^{223}\) Hitler knew that it would be to his advantage to keep Mussolini pre-occupied with the Spanish conflict. Hitler knew that Italian involvement in the Spanish Civil War would prevent Mussolini from establishing better relations with France and England. He knew that an isolated Mussolini would have to turn to Germany.

Moreover, Germany's involvement in the Spanish conflict gave Hitler some additional benefits. Not only was Hitler able to capture Mussolini as an ally and prolong the Spanish Civil War in order to accomplish his own personal motives, but he was also able to test new military weapons and tactics in actual combat situations, to secure Spanish neutrality if not outright assistance in the Second World War, to secure a ready source of raw materials which he needed for his future war plans, and finally, to use the Spanish conflict to draw the world's attention away from his preparations for war and his tentative plans for world conquest.
Mussolini's Intervention Policies

In order to understand the significance of Mussolini's intervention in the Spanish Civil War note should be taken of more than Mussolini's bankrupt policies in their general context. Instead, one should follow the same method used to examine Hitler's intervention policies. It is necessary to take note of the objectives that Mussolini hoped to accomplish, the procedures he followed to achieve his ends, and finally, the results of his intervention policies. Then, by comparing the actions of each dictator against the other, it will be possible to gain a better understanding of how each dictator conducted diplomacy, and to determine the strengths and weaknesses of each dictator's approach to foreign policy.

Mussolini's Objectives. As with Hitler, the objectives that Mussolini wished to accomplish by intervening in the Spanish Civil War were varied and often overlapped. However, as with Hitler, certain major concerns did take precedence over others. The difference between the two dictators was that Hitler's motives for intervening in the Spanish conflict were generally based upon realistic expectations, while Mussolini's motives for intervening in the Spanish conflict were generally based upon personal dreams of prestige and glory that had no basis in reality and little chance of success. As Lafore maintains:

The real reasons for Mussolini's meddling in Spain were (like most of Mussolini's policies) a mixture of impetuosity and a sort of cynicism which was as often as not based on unrealities.
Nevertheless, it is necessary to examine Mussolini's intended objectives in order to understand the full significance of Mussolini's involvement in the Spanish Civil War.

One of the main objectives which Mussolini hoped to accomplish by intervening in the Spanish conflict was to boost his own prestige by creating a dominant role for Italy in the Mediterranean. He had dreams of creating a new Roman Empire which would eventually control the whole Mediterranean, and Spain was a key link in his plans because of its strategically valuable position in the Western Mediterranean. Mussolini believed that if he intervened in the Spanish Civil War and ensured Franco's victory, then he would be able to dominate Franco's Spain as the price for Italian assistance in the civil war. As Richard Massock maintains in his book, *Italy From Within*, it had "always been one of Mussolini's tenets that you get nothing out of the fighting unless you take part in it." Therefore, Mussolini was determined to intervene in the Spanish war in order to improve his own position.

Despite his dreams of forming a new Roman Empire, Mussolini was also fully aware of the more practical benefits which he could reap from assisting Franco. As Renzo de Felice observes in his study, *Mussolini*, the Italian dictator was well aware of the politico-strategic importance of Spain in relation to the defense of the Mediterranean. Like Hitler, Mussolini recognized the value of numbers, and he reasoned that Spanish friendship would help to offset the relative strength of the British in the Mediterranean and greatly improve Italy's position. Moreover, according to Gallo, Mussolini also
believed that "Franco's victory would leave France exposed at the rear and facilitate Italy's Mediterranean expansion." Therefore, Mussolini "committed himself firmly to intervention."²²⁷

Mussolini placed much more importance upon the propaganda value of intervening in the Spanish conflict than Hitler, who did not want to draw undue attention to the extent of German involvement in the Spanish conflict. In fact, Mussolini actually encouraged the Italian press to report on the events in Spain in great detail. He wanted to glorify the achievements of the Italian Fascist military for propaganda purposes. Mussolini knew that such measures were necessary in order to maintain the Fascist myth of invincibility. As Denis Mack Smith maintains, "the ruinous search for prestige and reputation had to be continued" because the "Italians had been told to expect success after success, and any failure to repeat the prescription might expose the whole sham upon which fascism was built."²²⁸

Moreover, as with Hitler, Mussolini wanted to intervene in the Spanish conflict because of his desire to maintain his image as the guardian of Western civilization against the spread of Communism into Western Europe. Obviously, he was more concerned about his dreams of glory and conquest than about the spread of Communist influence in Western Europe. However, Mussolini's Fascist policies were originally based upon an anti-Communist theme, and intervention in the Spanish conflict would afford him the opportunity to appear as the great anti-Communist champion of the Western Powers. Therefore, his concern about the spread of Communism did play a role in convincing him to take
an active part in the struggle in Spain. The "Spanish republicans had sinned in Mussolini's eyes by restoring free speech and more democratic government at a time when fascism was supposed to be winning everywhere." Therefore, not only would "intervention in Spain disguised before the world as a campaign against communism" punish the Spanish republicans, but it would also provide the opportunity to bring other political and material benefits to Italy as a bonus.229

Mussolini's Procedures. In addition to examining the objectives which Mussolini wished to accomplish by intervening in the Spanish conflict, it is also necessary to examine the implementation of his policies in order to gain a better understanding of the manner in which Mussolini conducted his diplomacy. Moreover, it is also necessary to remember that Mussolini's policies were not as shrewd as Hitler's, and that Mussoulini demonstrated very little strategic foresight and common sense in the conduct of his diplomacy during the Spanish Civil War. However, Mussolini's methods of implementation were similar to Hitler's, in that his policies were also varied and often overlapped. Moreover, as with Hitler, a number of Mussolini's major policy practices did take precedence over others and were implemented with a fair degree of consistency.

One procedure which Mussolini attempted to follow in Spain with a fair degree of consistency was the practice of trying to win as quick a victory as possible. Therefore, Mussolini sent comparatively more assistance to Franco than Hitler in the hopes that Franco could win a quick victory. Mussolini was willing to become more directly
involved in the Spanish conflict than Hitler because he was most anxious to bring the Spanish Civil war to a satisfactory conclusion. Mussolini surpassed the other powers who were involved in the Spanish conflict in his efforts to build "up a true expeditionary force in Nationalist Spain." Mussolini was willing to send Franco whatever military assistance he could possibly spare in order to win a quick victory in Spain.

In fact, Mussolini became so obsessed with gaining a quick victory and with adding to his prestige that he "became more and more reckless in his search for military success in the Spanish Civil War." He actually "went against Franco's wishes by encouraging his Italian expeditionary force to push ahead too fast" during an advance on Madrid. The resulting defeat of the Italian forces at Guadalajara was a serious blow to Mussolini's prestige. He had undertaken so much effort to build up the myth of Fascist superiority on the battlefield that the military reverse which the Italians suffered at Guadalajara seriously damaged Fascist morale. In addition, the Italian defeat was particularly depressing because the forces which defeated the Fascists "were not even trained soldiers but simply an improvised multinational army of amateurs."

As a consequence of the Italian defeat, Mussolini became even more determined to assist Franco in his battle against the Loyalist government. The "humiliating defeat at Guadalajara made it all the more necessary to ensure a Franco victory and redeem the damaged reputation of Italian arms." Fortunately for Mussolini, Italy was in a much
better position than the other European powers to give assistance to
Franco. Italy's geographical position placed Mussolini in a com-
paratively good position to send men and supplies to Spain through
the Mediterranean.

Another procedure to which Mussolini adheared with a great deal
of consistency during his intervention in Spain was the practice of
portraying the Spanish conflict as a battle against Communism.
Mussolini hoped to drum up support for his intervention policy both
at home and abroad by painting the Spanish Civil War as a crusade
against the spread of Communism into Western Europe. He claimed that
he was "not prepared to see the establishment of a Communist state in
Spain."234 He shrewdly used his anti-Communist stance as an extra
justification for intervening in the Spanish war. Even though
Mussolini's anti-Communist stance was not the main reason why he in-
tervened in Spain, Mussolini did nevertheless support the anti-Communist
cause, and intervention in Spain provided him with an opportunity not
only to demonstrate his earnestness in fighting Communism, but also
with an opportunity to advance his own position as well. Mussolini
demonstrated a great deal of political skill by using his anti-
Communist stance to help justify his intervention in Spain.

Mussolini's Results. The results that Mussolini achieved by
intervening in the Spanish Civil War fell far short of the goals that
he intended to achieve. Unlike Hitler, Mussolini was not shrewd enough
to limit the extent of his involvement in the Spanish conflict in
accordance with the possible gains that he might achieve if Franco
won the war. Mussolini's objective of gaining prestige for himself and Italy and of improving Italy's diplomatic standing in respect to Hitler's Germany proved remarkably unsuccessful. In fact, not only did his involvement in the Spanish conflict damage Italy's prestige, it also placed Italy firmly under the influence of Hitler. Mussolini's policies actually made Italy more dependent upon Germany for support than she had ever been in the past. Italian involvement in the Spanish war helped to complete what the Ethiopian War had only started. In fact, as Robert Herzstein points out:

Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia,... and parallel German-Italian intervention in the Spanish Civil War were milestones on the road to Mussolini's loss of political independence to his German ally.  

Moreover, by failing to keep his involvement in Spain limited, and by placing Italian prestige on the line, Mussolini had to forsake Italian interests in other parts of Europe. Tied to Hitler and weakened by the military and economic drains of Ethiopia and Spain, he had to co-operate with the Germans in central Europe, and co-operation meant, in the words of Lafore, "abdication." Mussolini's intervention in Spain had made the breach with the Western democracies so wide that Italy was left with little freedom of action in foreign policy. Mussolini had been so caught up in his search for prestige that, unlike Hitler he failed to accurately weigh the consequences of Italian intervention in Spain. Mussolini entered the Spanish Civil War without any careful calculation as to possible gains, but merely out of a desire
for adventure and a vague hope that destabilizing Europe would be to his advantage. 237

Mussolini had hoped that Italian intervention in the Spanish Civil War would increase his prestige and improve his bargaining position with the other European Powers, however, Mussolini's involvement in Spain had just the opposite effect. Instead of increasing Fascist prestige, the poor performance of the Italian Army in Spain actually diminished Mussolini's bargaining position. After watching the poor performance of the Italian forces in Spain, the other European powers found it easier to disregard Mussolini's bluffing tactics. They knew that he did not possess the necessary force to back up his threats.

Mussolini had to pay a high price for intervening in the Spanish Civil War. According to Esch, "Italian intervention in the civil war" was bound to reach "larger proportions than that of any other country" because Mussolini's policies set the stage for unlimited involvement. Mussolini found it increasingly difficult to disengage himself from Spain because the danger of being involved in a major European war made it vital for him to keep control of the important Italian military supplies which he had already sent to Spain. 238 Mussolini's initial promise of arms had led by degrees to an inextricable involvement in Spanish affairs.

Mussolini had made a political mistake by intervening in Spain, and he could not find a way to withdraw from Spain without incurring
serious damage to his own position and to that of Italy as well. He had no one to blame for this mistake but himself. It was Mussolini's own policies and his personal decisions which placed Italy in such a disastrous position in Spain. "Like most of Mussolini's adventures," the decision to intervene in Spain "was taken without the advice or approval of the king or other important Italians." Moreover, according to Lafore, like most of Mussolini's mistakes in foreign policy, his decision to intervene in the Spanish Civil War rested solely upon his "ill-judged whimsy." Therefore, it is not surprising that Mussolini's intervention in Spain became a "serious liability" for Italy. Even though Mussolini was not committed to Franco by a formal alliance, he nevertheless felt compelled to support Franco until he was victorious because Fascist prestige was on the line. Consequently, Mussolini allowed Spain to become a "bottomless pit for Italian men, money and equipment."239

Mussolini knew that he had to gain at least a certain amount of influence over Spain in order to justify Italian intervention to his people, however, "all that Italy got out of the war" was "a display of gratitude and Franco's promise to pay, in a long-term funding arrangement, his war debt to Rome."240. In fact, the costs of intervention in the Spanish conflict were so high that ordinarily Mussolini would have taken great pains to keep this information secret. However, he gradually became trapped by his own propaganda and, according to Mack Smith, was forced not only to admit the scale of his involvement, but also to proclaim his intervention policy a "huge success." He
found himself with no choice but to continue his involvement in Spain and hope that a Nationalist victory would eventually compensate for his extensive assistance. Mussolini naively expected that Franco, in gratitude for Italian assistance, "would side with him in a more extensive European war." However, "Franco made it abundantly clear that Spanish national interests... demanded a long period of recuperative peace," and he refused to involve Spain in a major European war. 241

When Mussolini finally began to realize just what a mistake intervention in Spain was for Italian interests, he made every attempt to win the war quickly. He hoped that German assistance could help him to end the war, but Hitler could not be persuaded to increase the extent of his involvement in Spain. Unlike Mussolini, Hitler could afford to extend the civil war in Spain indefinitely without seriously damaging his own position. Mussolini on the other hand, continued to assist Franco only because he had no alternative but to remain in Spain until Fascism was victorious. 242 Therefore, the end result of Mussolini's intervention in the Spanish Civil War proved to be disastrous for Italy. Mussolini followed his personal whimsy rather than sound reasoning in conducting his foreign affairs, and consequently, Italy ended up trapped in a costly civil war where the possible benefits of victory could never justify the enormous costs of intervention.

Diplomatic Practice in the Spanish Civil War

The Spanish Civil War had a direct influence upon the course of European diplomacy because it helped to set the stage for the Second
World War. It held a special importance in European affairs because it took "place in a time when great ideological and national forces faced one another in the rest of Europe." Spain was destined to become a "cockpit and a microcosm" of the Second World War.

More than any other event in European affairs, the Spanish Civil War cemented the alliance of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy against the Western Powers. The friendship between Hitler's Germany and Mussolini's Italy had never been very solid, but the Spanish Civil War provided an opportunity for both countries to draw closer together in a common cause. Hitler saw an opportunity, by intervening in the Spanish war, to weaken the Western Powers and to draw Mussolini into an alliance with Germany. Mussolini, on the other hand, saw an opportunity, by intervening in the Spanish war, to increase his own prestige and to acquire some spoils for Italy at the same time. Moreover, Mussolini was particularly anxious to join in alliance with Hitler after he witnessed the power of Nazi Germany in comparison with the apparent weakness of the Western Powers. As Matthews maintains:

The course which the Spanish Civil War took understandably led the Duce to believe that Nazi Germany was invincible and the democracies weak and contemptible. In Spain, the two dictators found a common task, and it was natural for the Duce to hitch his rickety Roman chariot to the bright Nazi star.

Unlike Hitler and Mussolini, the Western Powers were reluctant to become involved in the Spanish Civil War and desperately tried to keep
the Spanish war from sparking a larger European war. Both Hitler
and Mussolini saw the weak response of the Western Powers as a sign
that they could continue to pursue their aggressive policies at will.
The Western Powers did not seem to realize that their appeasement
policy only encouraged Mussolini and Hitler to commit further acts of
aggression. They accomplished nothing by appeasing Mussolini and Hitler
in Spain. "The great war came anyway." writes Matthews, "with Spain
in the hands of a dictator friendly to the Axis and with Nazi Germany
stronger than she should have been." 245

It is clear that the Spanish Civil War had a great influence upon
the diplomacy of all of the European Powers that became involved in
the conflict. This is why it is possible to gain a better understanding
of the strengths and weaknesses of the diplomacy of both Hitler and
Mussolini by examining their intervention policies in the Spanish
Civil War.
If one desires to understand the nature of diplomacy as practiced by Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini, it is necessary to examine not only each dictator's personal conception of the purpose of diplomacy and the manner in which each dictator actually conducted his diplomacy, but also such additional factors as the role that the Party, the military, and the Foreign Office played in the conduct of each dictator's foreign policy.

Moreover, it is also necessary to examine the personal tactics which each dictator used in order to conduct his diplomacy, for both Hitler and Mussolini introduced a number of new factors into the conduct of foreign affairs which were dramatically different from the "traditional" norms of diplomatic behavior as practiced by the Western powers. For example, unlike the Western leaders, both dictators liked to bluff their opponents whenever possible, take unexpected and unorthodox actions, and conduct their diplomacy on a personal level rather than through subordinates and professional diplomats. Clearly, it is necessary to examine each dictator's personal conduct of foreign affairs in order to understand the impact of totalitarian diplomacy upon the conduct of international affairs.

Hitler's Diplomacy in Practice

In his book, *Hitler*, Joachim C. Fest maintains that Hitler's conception of imperial expansion and alliance policy differed from
traditional lines in that he wanted to pursue his policies far beyond anything that the older members of the conservative ruling class had ever envisioned. Hitler actually "despised his halfhearted partners because they stopped short of reaching out for world power as he did." He wanted to achieve complete world domination. In addition, Hitler's notions of imperial expansion differed from that of former traditional imperialist schemes in that his expansionist policies were based upon a new ideological foundation. The "notions of selection, racial bloc, and eschatological mission" made Hitler's imperialism qualitatively different from the imperialism of the past. Hitler's goals went beyond the traditional expansionist policies of the past. It is true that he was able to use traditional revisionism to further his plans, however, he merely used revisionist sentiments as a temporary link with the past in order to persuade his followers that his goals were compatible with traditional expansionist policies. In fact, Hitler was determined that his program would represent a declaration of war against more than just the established order of nation states. He wanted to create a new order based upon the ideal of a superior man, and in his view, only Germany had the power to make his dreams a reality.

In Hitler's view, as previously discussed, diplomacy alone could not achieve his ultimate goals. Only wars of conquest could fulfill his desired objectives. Hitler believed that war was the ultimate goal of politics, and this reasoning shaped his entire conception of the uses of diplomacy. As Gordon A. Craig points out in his book, Europe Since 1915, Hitler's preference for the use of military force over the use of diplomacy was a product of his war experiences. The
First World War made Hitler a "convinced militarist with a preference, which never left him, for military solutions to political problems." Consequently, Hitler based his foreign policy on the assumption that Germany would eventually be involved in a major war with the other European powers.

Hitler was constantly impatient with the progress of conventional diplomacy and he was always anxious to press forward into a conflict. By the time Hitler launched the German invasion of Poland in 1939, it was very evident that he had lost all patience with diplomatic procedures. "It was as if he were at last tired of having to adapt himself to circumstances, tired of the eternal talking, dissimulation, and diplomatic wirepulling." In fact, Hitler's distaste for traditional politics had been a constant part of his character from the very beginning of his quest for power. Political maneuvering seemed almost insignificant to him when compared to the possible advantages to be gained through war.

However, Hitler was shrewd enough to realize that he would have to be content with diplomatic maneuver until Germany possessed the necessary military might to engage in armed conflict. Therefore, he retained most of the older Foreign Ministry staff and relied upon diplomats who were known abroad in order to reassure foreign powers that he would not seriously disturb the existing status quo. Moreover, unlike Mussolini, Hitler did not complicate the task of his foreign diplomats by constantly attacking the international status quo. During his early years as dictator of Nazi Germany, Hitler went out of
his way to disarm foreign opposition to his plans by presenting a very conciliatory figure. Clearly, Hitler understood the value of diplomacy and propaganda.

Hitler's personal style of diplomacy was clear in its ends, but entirely flexible in its means and instruments. He considered any means legitimate so long as it helped him to achieve his goals. "What counted most in Hitler's eyes was the rearmament of Germany which would enable it to move forward by threat or by force." Hitler was determined to build up Germany's strength to the point where other powers could no longer contemplate war as an answer to German aggression. He wanted to be able to advance his plans unhampered by any type of restraint until he was ready to launch his planned wars of conquest. As R.A.C. Parker points out in his book, Europe 1919-45, "the evidence of German rearmament clearly suggests that Hitler was deliberately preparing to fight some kinds of wars or, at least, to be able to risk some."  

In order to facilitate his diplomatic opportunism, Hitler also tended to avoid international collaboration in favor of bilateral agreements in the conduct of his diplomacy. In addition, as Craig points out in his book, Germany 1866-1945, the Allies were slow to recognize the weakness of forming bilateral agreements with Hitler:

The other Powers were so anxious to believe that his intentions were peaceful that they made the mistake... of dropping their more comprehensive projects and making the kind of agreement he preferred, forgetting in doing so that bilateral agreements are the easiest kind to break.
In the early years of Nazi rule, Hitler and the Foreign Ministry were in fundamental agreement as to the nature and goals of German foreign policy. Both the Foreign Ministry and Hitler advocated a basically traditional revisionist line, and both supported the achievement of military equality with the other Powers. During these early years, Hitler gave the Foreign Ministry "no reason to disapprove of his policy, which was, at least superficially, congruent with their own." However, this appearance of common goals and agreed upon procedures was merely an illusion. Hitler simply took advantage of the Foreign Office to advance his own plans. Hitler had only "allowed the old diplomatic establishment to remain in power in order to mask his intentions from the rest of the world." He actually had no confidence in the ability of the Foreign Office to achieve his goals. He believed that the older diplomatic officials "were incapable of understanding, let alone carrying out, the policy he had projected which far exceeded in its scope the limits of their narrow revisionism." 252

Hitler's lack of confidence in the Foreign Office and his preference for the use of force over the slow processes of diplomacy helps to explain his apparent shift away from diplomacy towards military solutions to political problems. Hitler had always placed more faith in force than in negotiation, and once Germany possessed the military power to back up his aggressive style, he naturally began to dispense with negotiation and instead began to develop a tendency to rely more and more upon military pressure instead of negotiating skill to achieve his aims. The tone of Hitler's diplomacy became menacing and arrogant.
Hitler lost interest in negotiation and the benefits it might bring. He was only interested in triumphs that could be won by war, and negotiation became less and less important as the Second World War began in earnest.

When Hitler renounced politics in favor of war, he also returned to his standard ideological positions. His intellectual rigidity once more began to manifest itself as the war progressed. Hitler believed that he was entering upon a final conflict which would determine his ultimate success or failure, and this sense of urgency colored the manner in which he conducted his foreign policy. He was convinced that he was running out of time and that he had to launch his war while the opportunity was still propitious. The "effortless victories of the early period strengthened his conviction that after the fame of demagogue and politician he would also win glory as the supreme commander."253 As the war continued and as the expected glory failed to appear, Hitler grew more and more determined to follow mistaken policies in the belief that sheer determination would win the day. He failed to realize that his policies were bankrupt and that they needed to be changed in order to meet new and unforeseen circumstances.

Hitler did realize that Germany could not win a major protracted war against a united coalition of major European powers, but he believed that his Blitzkrieg tactics could overcome this obstacle. Since Germany did not have the capability to win a protracted war against an enemy coalition, Hitler decided to counter this problem by concentrating as much power as possible in short and spaced blows against selected
individual opponents. By following this tactic of short concentrated wars, Hitler hoped to enlarge Germany's power base in a step by step process until his country was prepared for a major world war. This was the essence of his strategic concept which became popularly known by the term *Blitzkrieg*.

The concept of *Blitzkrieg* warfare was a concept "which took account of the specific weaknesses and strengths of the German situation and ingeniously combined them in a novel method of conquest." However, even though the *Blitzkrieg* concept corresponded quite naturally to the nature of Hitler's improvising style, it nevertheless could not achieve Hitler's ultimate aims because it represented tactics which were designed as temporary measures and which could not supply the ultimate victory which Hitler desired. Hitler failed to understand that short-term measures designed to meet immediate shortcomings could not produce an ultimate victory against a united coalition which was determined to defeat him. Unfortunately, Hitler would let nothing hold back his quest for new triumphs. He was determined to achieve his objectives, and he considered war the only possible solution to the attainment of his plans.

**Mussolini's Diplomacy in Practice**

Like Hitler, Mussolini was determined to expand his state through limited wars of conquest. Moreover, Mussolini was determined not only to raise Italy's status to equal that of the other European powers, but he was also determined to create a new Roman Empire in the process. However, even granting the excesses of his motives, Mussolini's attempts to
realize his expansionist goals were actually remarkably consistent and tenacious, and his frequent changes of mood in no way obscured the course of his policies. In fact, Mussolini was clever enough, like Hitler, to avoid diplomatic entanglements with foreign powers in order to leave his options open so that he could launch Italy into a new war of conquest whenever he chose to do so. "Mussolini refused all commitments, such as leadership of a neutral bloc, that might inhibit entry into war."  

Mussolini's policies were based upon the necessity of war, and all of his diplomatic maneuvers were designed to prepare Italy for war. Mussolini did his best to make Italy independent of foreign resources, and he tried to prepare the Italian people for the sacrifices that they would have to make in the coming war. Much like Hitler, Mussolini was determined to participate in wars of conquest, and would not be satisfied with what could be accomplished by diplomacy alone. He wanted to restore military glory to Italy, and to raise his own status as the new leader of a new Roman Empire.

Moreover, in keeping with his emphasis upon glory and empire, Mussolini sought to distinguish his diplomacy from that of the other European states. He wanted his diplomacy to exhibit a new sense of forcefulness which would set it apart from the hesitant and conventional forms of diplomacy practiced by the Western powers. Mussolini considered the usual modes of diplomatic conduct unworthy of Italy's power and prestige. However, like Hitler, Mussolini had to secure his own position and build up the strength of his state before he could consider dispensing
entirely with the accepted rules of diplomatic conduct. Therefore, during his early years in power Mussolini continued to negotiate with other powers in order to strengthen his position as much as possible for the day when he would be able to dispense with diplomacy and launch his wars of conquest. Naturally, Mussolini realized that the other European powers would never allow Italy to create a new colonial empire at their own expense, and that he could never win a colonial empire through diplomatic channels alone. He knew that he would have to depend upon military force to secure his ultimate aims. However, Mussolini did believe that he would be able to achieve many of his goals in the early years of his rule with little interference from the Western powers because he was convinced that they would be too distracted by the economic depression and by the problem of the new Germany to interfere with his plans until it was too late to change the outcome.\textsuperscript{256}

Even though Mussolini was always anxious to improve his own status and the status of Italy through military conquests, what he wanted most of all was glory for himself. Therefore, even though Mussolini agreed with Hitler that the only solution to Germany's and Italy's aspirations involved a war with the Western democracies, he nevertheless tried to restrain Hitler from launching a major war against the Western powers until he could participate on an equal basis and capture his own share of the spoils and of the glory. Unfortunately for Mussolini, Hitler was unwilling to wait for Italian preparedness, and Mussolini was forced to join the war earlier than was practicable for Italy in order not to
miss out on the division of the spoils. Mussolini's only comfort was the hope that German victories and especially a French armistice would enable Italy to assert its supremacy in the Mediterranean by force of arms.

Like Hitler, Mussolini was content to let the older professionals handle the day to day affairs of the Foreign Office during the early years of his rule. Consequently, the older professionals soon found that by making concessions to Mussolini's vanity, they were able to moderate his ambitions and to carry on the normal aspects of day to day diplomacy with the other European powers. However, this situation began to change once the economic depression of the 1930s and the corresponding "disruption of European power relationships" began to present Mussolini with new opportunities to increase his power. 257

Mussolini became increasingly determined to follow a new policy of all-out revisionism, and he brought the Italian Foreign Ministry under his personal control in order to facilitate the style of diplomacy which he wished to follow. Consequently, the practice of negotiation became almost a forgotten art in Italian diplomacy because Mussolini believed that his goals could only be attained through war and not through diplomatic means. Therefore, it is not surprising that Mussolini ordered his diplomats to reflect a more militant attitude in the conduct of Italian diplomacy. The practical effect of this new style of diplomacy was that negotiation with other powers became almost impossible to conduct with any reasonable hope of reaching solid agreements. Italian diplomats became more interested in style than in substance, and they
became little more than propaganda representatives of Italian interests abroad. They were more concerned with demonstrating their loyalty to the Fascist regime than with advancing Italy's national interests.

The shortcomings of this militant or tono fascist style of diplomacy were especially apparent in the negotiations that Ciano carried on under Mussolini's orders. Like Mussolini, Ciano was more interested in the style of Italian diplomacy than with the substance. Consequently, Ciano's conduct of Italian diplomacy contributed to the decline of professionalism in Italian diplomacy. According to Craig, the essential weakness of Italian diplomacy "arose from the essential frivolity of the officials charged with the task of conducting it." For example, Ciano's shocked protest, upon learning that Germany fully intended to go to war in 1939, despite verbal assurances to the contrary in the German-Italian military alliance known as the Pact of Steel, was a "pathetic admission that he had not mastered the art of negotiating even with his own allies." The older professionals were quite capable of conducting rational policies, however, Mussolini and his cohorts were not interested in conducting Italian diplomacy along traditional lines.

Mussolini was determined to follow an expansionist course and to create a new colonial empire according to his own personal tastes. However, Mussolini was forced to follow in Hitler's path because Italy was too weak to advance his goals without substantial assistance from other powers. The best that Mussolini could hope for was that he would be able to capitalize upon the unrest between the other European powers. Consequently, Mussolini was especially anxious to promote unrest between Germany and the Western Allies because he knew that he would have
the best chance of achieving his goals "when the other powers were quarrelling and ready to appeal to Italy for support." In this respect, Mussolini's policy left him in a position to capitalize upon any opportunity which might advance his aims. As long as Mussolini was convinced that his actions would not damage the prestige of his country or of his personal rule, then he would take advantage of every opportunity to improve Italy's position in the Mediterranean. Mussolini was convinced that if he could hold the balance of power on the continent, then he would be able to attain relative freedom of maneuver for Italy. Mussolini believed that if he could make Italy the determining factor in any change of the status quo on the European continent, then he would be in the perfect position to demand his share of the spoils.

It is true that in the beginning of his rule Mussolini did have some doubts as to how far he could safely push the Western powers in his pursuit of a colonial empire. However, once Mussolini tasted the fruits of success in his bid to conquer Abyssinia his "apprehensions gave way to a new excess of confidence." His plans to make the Mediterranean an Italian lake seemed to be more and more feasible as events progressed. Therefore, it is not surprising that when the Spanish Civil War erupted in July 1936, he saw in it an opportunity to increase his power. The Spanish Civil War seemed like the perfect opportunity to advance his plans, and Mussolini became more and more anxious to intervene in the Spanish war and to draw closer to Hitler's Germany in order to ensure a Fascist victory in Spain. Mussolini saw the Spanish conflict as another step which would ultimately add to his new Roman Empire. What he failed
to recognize was that Hitler did not share his motives and did not
desire a quick victory in Spain. Consequently, Mussolini found himself
involved in a protracted war of attrition which became a costly burden
to his regime.

Mussolini was so intent upon creating his new empire that he often
misjudged the value of what could be gained by involving Italy in
questionable adventures abroad. Collaboration with Germany encouraged
Mussolini to make a major investment of strength in Spain, which drew
him away from other areas where Italian interests were actually more
vital and where Italian intervention actually might have proved beneficial.
The manner in which Mussolini conducted his diplomacy often damaged
Italian interests instead of increasing the status of Italy in relation
to the other European powers. Mussolini's diplomacy was characterized
by an emphasis upon the sensational, and was totally lacking in any
kind of professionalism. Therefore, Mussolini's diplomacy was bound to
fail in its intended objectives.

Conclusion: The Nature of Totalitarian Diplomacy as Practiced by
Adolph Hitler and Benito Mussolini

In order to understand the nature of totalitarian diplomacy as
practiced by Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini it is necessary to con­
sider not only the dictators themselves, but also such factors as the
role which the Party, the military, and the Foreign Office played in
each dictator's regime. All aspects of a totalitarian system influence
the ultimate conduct of that particular state's foreign policy. The
foreign policies of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy were dominated by
several predominant characteristics which set them apart from the traditional style of diplomacy practiced by the Western democracies.

Both Hitler and Mussolini conducted their diplomacy differently from the Western powers because of the extraordinary amount of independence which each dictator possessed within his own state. Unlike the Western leaders and diplomats who were forced to consider various restraints such as parliamentary approval whenever they contemplated making foreign policy decisions, both Hitler and Mussolini were relatively free to pursue their own whims in foreign policy.

It is not surprising that Hitler enjoyed a great deal of freedom in making foreign policy decisions while he was dictator of Nazi Germany. The first thing that Hitler did when he came to power was to eliminate all possible sources of opposition to his rule. In fact, one of the most remarkable features of the history of Germany under National Socialism was the extent to which Hitler imposed his personal authority on the German people and state. Hitler's authority was absolute and he was master of every aspect of German administration and society. After having come to power, Hitler subjected business and labor, the army and the police, and indeed every significant group and organization to his control. Hitler was determined to maintain absolute control over every segment of German society which might place even the slightest restraint upon his freedom to pursue his foreign policy goals. Hitler knew that his goals could only be achieved if his own position was unassailable. Therefore, he made certain that his control over governmental institutions and party organizations was as
complete and as solidly entrenched as possible. Hitler made certain that his policy making powers would be free from all possible restraints by ordering a "totalitarian penetration of all social structures by means of a close-knit system of supervision, regimentation, and guidance."262

Hitler's ability to conduct his diplomacy unrestricted by conventional restraints was enhanced by the personal style of government which he created in terms of administrative detail. His style of government was very flexible, and it made little difference to Hitler if his diplomacy was conducted by amateurs or if it followed unorthodox procedures. Hitler was satisfied with his diplomacy as long as his personal goals were achieved and as long as he could claim credit for any positive results.

Hitler used the same tactics to subdue his governmental institutions as he used to control the Nazi Party. He encouraged competition within the various executive offices of the government so that he could maintain his own position as the ultimate authority in all matters of foreign policy.263 Ironically, the resulting bureaucratic chaos such a governmental style created added to Hitler's personal authority. With so many institutions fighting between themselves for his favor and appealing to him for his final decision, it is not surprising that Hitler was able to maintain such absolute authority within his own hands. Moreover, Hitler made it a practice when dealing with his governmental apparatus to keep his subordinates in the dark as much as possible. This tactic provided him with a very effective means of exercising his
own authority over administrative policy. By refusing to depend upon competing organizations to carry out his policy decisions, and by maintaining absolute authority over all aspects of governmental administration, Hitler was able to conduct his foreign policy relatively free from all restraints. Therefore, Hitler possessed a great deal of freedom of maneuver in his diplomatic practice with the other European powers.

In a manner similar to that of Hitler, Mussolini also enjoyed a great deal of freedom in making foreign policy decisions when compared to the more restricted atmosphere under which the Western leaders and diplomats had to conduct their diplomacy. Like Hitler, Mussolini wanted his personal authority to be as absolute as possible so that he could conduct his policies as he wished. Mussolini quickly replaced all unreliable governmental officials with his own personally nominated subordinates. His position as head of state allowed him to "choose his own ministers without reference to anybody."264 It is not surprising therefore, that Mussolini was able to dominate the Italian government and could conduct his policies as he wished.

One factor which helped Mussolini to maintain such absolute control over policy making decisions was that he was head of the Fascist Party as well as head of the Italian state government. Such a position allowed Mussolini to act as umpire between government and Party, and this helped him to exercise his personal authority over both institutions. By playing rival factions off against each other, Mussolini could maintain his own personal authority over his subordinates and leave himself free to conduct his diplomacy with little regard for
internal restraints. Mussolini's tactics of playing competing power
groups off against each other, even within his own governmental
structure, demonstrated his "determination to preserve his own freedom
of action," even "at the cost of institutional stability." 265

Mussolini was determined to maintain his unassailable position and
to carry out his plans as he saw fit regardless of what his subordinates
might consider the proper course for Italy to take in foreign affairs.
In fact, not only did Mussolini discourage advice from his subordinates,
he actually believed that he did not need any advice. He was more in­
clined to give orders and simply would not accept advice from sub­
ordinates. Mussolini liked to appear infallible, and if he were to
accept advice from subordinates then his image would be tarnished and
his authority would ultimately be diminished. Consequently, Mussolini
was careful to protect his image in order to maintain as high a degree
of authority as possible. He was convinced that if his plans were to
have any chance of succeeding then "one person alone should command,
and even in insignificant matters his fiat must not be questioned." 266
Like Hitler, Mussolini wanted complete freedom of action in making
foreign policy decisions because he was convinced that if any restrictions
whatsoever were placed upon his authority then he would not be able to
conduct his diplomacy with the forcefulness necessary to achieve his
aims.

Mussolini placed as much of his administration under his personal
control as possible. He made decisions without bothering to consult with
his subordinates, and he took pleasure in bypassing bureaucratic
institutions whenever it suited his purposes. Naturally, this style of government "meant that his ministers were often left with no real feeling of responsibility and became timid about acting on their own initiative." However, Mussolini was more than willing to put up with this type of administrative weakness as long as he could pursue the policies that he wished with little or no concern for internal restraints.

Another factor which made the manner in which both Hitler and Mussolini conducted their diplomacy different from the manner in which the Western powers conducted their diplomacy was that both Hitler and Mussolini suffered from a lack of professionals in their diplomatic corps.

Since Hitler was determined to keep his personal authority as absolute as possible he was careful not to encourage the growth of potential rivals within his administration. He appointed officials who were often less than competent because he was wary of appointing individuals who might possess sufficient talent to amass enough power to challenge his own authority. Hitler was determined to maintain his personal authority in decision making even at the cost of keeping incompetent individuals in his administrative apparatus. He was more than content to put up with this type of inefficient administration as long as he was free to conduct his diplomacy unrestricted by internal administrative restraints.

In a similar manner to Hitler, Mussolini also suffered from a lack of professionals in his diplomatic corps. In fact, many individuals were given positions of authority in Mussolini's government who possessed
little or no qualifications for their jobs. He continued to appoint older Party members instead of talented individuals to administer his policies. As a result, incompetent individuals became entrenched within his governmental apparatus, and like most leaders, Mussolini discovered that his diplomacy could only achieve a limited degree of success even if his leadership was inspired and even if his goals conformed to realistic expectations.

Mussolini was fully aware that a large majority of his colleagues were less than competent, however, he preferred to rely upon disreputable individuals instead of persons who exhibited merit because he believed that he could maintain a higher degree of authority over individuals who owed their position to his beneficence. Mussolini was convinced that most individuals were stupid and dishonest and he believed that his own superior abilities would more than make up for the low quality of his subordinates. Moreover, since he fully intended to conduct his diplomacy himself, he therefore saw no need to surround himself with talented individuals who would only interfere with his plans and who might steal the credit for foreign policy successes. It is no wonder therefore, that Mussolini "disliked people of character and culture who were brave enough to disagree with him," and that he refused to appoint such people to important positions within his administration.  

There is no doubt that Mussolini's selection of his administrative subordinates weakened his regime. However, he did not want anyone to interfere with his conduct of foreign policy, especially if they exhibited any talent for conducting diplomatic affairs. As Mack Smith
maintains, "no one with genuine talent lasted long in authority" or was given more than the smallest degree of responsibility. Moreover, Mussolini would frequently change his ministers in order to "prevent potential rivals learning the ropes and building an independent power base." Mussolini wanted to protect his own position so that he could conduct his diplomacy free from internal restraints, and he would take any action that would maintain the subservience of his subordinates. Mussolini even encouraged squabbles between his subordinates so that he could remain the final arbitrator in the decision making process. Mussolini was willing to support any action that would keep his subordinates subservient and would allow him to conduct his diplomacy according to his personal whims.

Another factor that made Nazi and Fascist diplomacy different from that of the Western powers was this: neither dictator had to consider the impact of public opinion upon his diplomacy to the same degree as the Western diplomats. Naturally, both dictators had to take public opinion into consideration, and they made every effort to manipulate it whenever they contemplated foreign policy decisions, however, neither dictator had to consider the impact of public opinion as seriously as the Western diplomats.

Hitler was fortunate as far as public opinion was concerned because a large majority of the German population supported his regime long before it became necessary to control public opinion through governmental pressures. As Joachim Fest observes:
If the Germans did not share Hitler's hunger for space, his anti-Semitism, his vulgar and brutal qualities, they applauded him and followed him because he had once more restored passion to politics, and overlaid it with a note of dire significance.

The German people saw Hitler as an effective and strong leader, and after twelve years of parliamentary democracy which appeared incapable of mastering Germany's innumerable problems they were willing to return to some type of authoritarian regime which promised active and forceful leadership.

Hitler understood the best manner in which to motivate people and to win their allegiance, an understanding which helped him to control public opinion. Hitler capitalized upon the widespread craving for social participation among his people. He realized that most people desired to fit into an organized whole, and that a large majority of the German populace would follow his orders without question if only they could be convinced that they were fulfilling some grand historic design which would benefit the entire German nation. There is no doubt that Hitler's ability to manage German public opinion so effectively allowed him "considerable room for maneuvering," and "enabled him to adjust his plans to changing requirements." Mussolini was very successful at making sure that the impact of public opinion would not interfere with the conduct of his diplomacy.

Mussolini similarly attempted to control the impact of public opinion upon the conduct of his diplomacy. In fact, Mussolini was so successful at instilling public enthusiasm for his policies that he
actually ran the danger of raising the expectations of his people to the point where he would be forced to act prematurely in order to avoid endangering the stability of his regime. As Adrian Lyttelton points out, "Mussolini could not for years go on indefinitely whipping up enthusiasm without taking action." However, like Hitler, Mussolini enjoyed the support of a large majority of his people during most of his dictatorship, and as long as he appeared to be successful in foreign affairs he did not have to worry too much about the pressures of public opinion.

Both Hitler and Mussolini conducted their diplomacy differently from the Western powers because they held different views as to the purpose of diplomacy in foreign affairs. Neither Hitler nor Mussolini agreed with the traditional Western diplomatic view that the purpose of diplomacy should be the preservation of peace. The only purpose which Hitler accorded to diplomacy was preparation for war, and the only purpose which Mussolini accorded to diplomacy was enhancement of his own prestige and power.

Hitler was determined to conduct his diplomacy in a unique and unpredictable fashion, and in this respect he was very successful. The "unpredictability of Hitler's manner must be counted among his prime tricks as a negotiator." Hitler proved to be a very capable negotiator who could adapt his policies in order to make allowances for changing circumstances. He was a master at adapting his policies whenever necessary so that he could accomplish his goals. Moreover, since Hitler only valued diplomacy as a means of preparing for war he could
afford to conduct his foreign policy in a brash and forceful manner. There was no need for Hitler to consult with his experts or to worry about the possible consequences of his actions. In his view, even if he failed to accomplish his goals through diplomatic means, this was relatively unimportant because he fully intended to launch a war of conquest whether his diplomacy proved successful or not. Hitler was firmly convinced of the necessity and benefits of armed struggle, and his sights were aimed at goals that went far beyond what diplomacy alone could accomplish.

There is little doubt that Mussolini shared Hitler's misguided conceptions concerning the purpose of diplomacy. It is true that Mussolini was more concerned about his personal prestige than about launching wars of conquest; however, in Mussolini's view, wars of conquest provided the perfect opportunity for increasing his own personal prestige. Mussolini, like Hitler, regarded diplomacy solely as a means of advancing his own designs and did not consider the preservation of peace as the ultimate goal of foreign policy. In fact, he preferred a continual state of conflict in international affairs over a peaceful status quo because active international disputes would be more likely to open up opportunities for him to advance his own plans. Mussolini suffered from an "uncontrollable restlessness" which compelled him to take advantage of any situation which might "dramatize the dynamic character of his policy." He was more concerned with prestige and with scoring dramatic foreign policy successes which would enhance his own personal regime than with promoting peaceful relations between Italy and the other European powers.
Since Mussolini was primarily concerned with the propaganda value of his foreign policy he lost sight of the realities of Italy's position in the international arena. He was so determined to demonstrate the dynamic character of his foreign policy that he pushed his country into costly foreign adventures which it could not afford. Mussolini wanted an ambitious foreign policy, regardless of the costs, and he refused to be restrained by the guidelines of traditional behavior in the conduct of his foreign policy. Mussolini valued his diplomacy as a means by which he could increase his own power and prestige, however, like Hitler, Mussolini was totally opposed to the Western conception that diplomacy should be used to promote peaceful relations between nations. He wanted to capitalize upon international conflict for his own benefit, and he was determined to conduct his diplomacy in a manner that would allow him to achieve his aims regardless of the unorthodox nature of his diplomacy.

Another aspect which made both Hitler's and Mussolini's diplomacy different from the diplomacy practiced by the Western powers was that neither dictator shared the same ideological beliefs as the Western leaders. Both dictators based their political systems upon a new ideological framework, and they were determined that the manner in which they conducted their diplomacy should reflect their new ideological beliefs. In short, the aspirations of both dictators went far beyond the understanding of the Western statesmen because their goals were based upon premises which did not conform to the accepted moral standards of traditional European civilization. Even Mussolini, who did not place
as much importance upon ideological factors as Hitler, would not be content with simple revisionism. Both dictators presented the Western powers with a challenge that traditional diplomacy could not resolve in a peaceful manner and the statesmen representing the Western powers were too reluctant to accept this fact.

There is no doubt that Hitler's ambitions went far beyond anything the European world had ever seen before. Hitler envisioned an empire that would stretch "from the Atlantic to the Urals and from Narvik to Suez." In Hitler's view, the German nation had the right to secure an empire that would encompass the entire European continent at the expense of the other Powers, and he was willing to take any action that would help him to accomplish this goal. Hitler "was always thinking the un-thinkable," and he was determined to do whatever was necessary in order to make reality conform to his ideological conceptions.

Hitler was a masterful politician, and he quickly capitalized upon the dynamism of nationalistic motivation in order to convince the German people to support his ideological goals. In addition, a nationalistic approach in foreign affairs proved to be a very successful policy to employ because the former victors of the First World War were in disagreement as to how they should treat Nazi Germany in order to avoid another world war, and Hitler was able to use this rift between former allies as a means to advance his own designs. By exploiting France's fears and by appealing to England's scruples, Hitler was able to improve Germany's position in relation to the other European powers. Hitler "succeeded in overturning the entire European system of alliances,
in uniting Germany, and in preparing the ground for his Lebensraum policy.²⁷⁶

Hitler was able to use his nationalistic approach to foreign policy to great benefit; however, he thought differently about nationalism than the democratic leaders of the West. In Hitler's view, nationalism was only valid in a racial context. Hitler believed that "it was impossible to Germanize peoples of another race." Therefore, Hitler maintained that "non-German races could never be truly Germanized, and all efforts to do so could only lead to the bastardization and degradation of the Germanic race."²⁷⁷ In short, Hitler's concept of nationalism went far beyond simple geographical expansion. Not only did Hitler want to conquer new German territory, but he also wanted to ensure the predominance of the Aryan race in the process. In Hitler's mind, both of these objectives were part of one comprehensive plan, and neither objective could be accomplished separately. Preservation of the Aryan race and territorial expansion were both part of one ideological concept.

Hitler's insane sense of logic and his strict adherence to ideological concepts were both factors which influenced his diplomacy. His ideological beliefs combined with his sense of logic encouraged him to pursue any ambition, no matter how unrealistic, to its ultimate conclusion. Mussolini, on the other hand, was not as concerned about ideological factors as Hitler. According to Nolte, Hitler's ideas remained almost unchanged from 1924 on and were not "dependent upon the vicissitudes of the political history of National Socialism."
Mussolini's ideas, however, were "simultaneously cause and effect of the history of Italian Fascism." For example, as Rich points out, Mussolini was content to allow "inferior" races to maintain a position inside his proposed empire as long as they recognized the superiority of their Italian masters. Hitler, however, was determined to adhere to the dictates of his ideological beliefs. He was determined to settle for nothing less than the "enslavement and eventual annihilation of rival races in territories conquered by the Germans." Hitler's concept of nationalism was quite different from anything that his predecessors or adversaries might imagine, and he was obviously willing to take whatever measures he considered necessary in order to fulfill his ideological vision.

One of the reasons why Hitler exploited the nationalist emotions of the German people was because he believed that a grandiose cause such as establishing a new racial order would elicit more support than a mere drive for political power. Therefore, Hitler was more than willing to make his Lebensraum policy the foundation of his entire ideological program. Since his Lebensraum policy was based upon the assumption that only the German Aryan race had the moral right to prosper and to survive, such a policy, once put into practice, would give him the moral force he would need to implement his unorthodox plans. "Hitler did not dwell at length on the mortality of German territorial expansion" according to Rich. "After his many years of patriotic brooding on the subject, this was something he... took for granted."
Hitler was determined to achieve his ideological goals and would follow any course that looked promising no matter what the consequences might involve. Consequently, Hitler was more than willing to launch a world war in order to achieve his plans, and this aspect of his diplomacy set his system completely apart from the more traditional and peaceful diplomacy practiced by the Western powers.

Like Hitler, Mussolini presented the Western powers with a challenge that traditional diplomacy could not resolve in a peaceful manner. He was determined to launch wars of conquest and to build an Italian empire, and he would follow any course which promised to advance his aims. Consequently, Mussolini conducted his diplomacy solely for the purpose of adding to his own power, and he totally disregarded the Western concept that the purpose of diplomacy should be to maintain peaceful relations between nation states. It is true, that, like most leaders, Mussolini was willing to conduct "traditional" diplomacy with other nation states, however, he did so only as a means of furthering his own personal designs.

In manner similar to that of Hitler, Mussolini also capitalized upon the nationalistic emotions of his people in order to consolidate support for his foreign policy. Mussolini exploited the opinion of many Italians that Italy had been betrayed by her allies in the Versailles peace settlement, and he encouraged his people to support his plans for a general revision of the European status quo. Mussolini believed that "Italy should detach herself from the plutocratic nations and force a revision of the peace treaties through a reapproachment
Mussolini knew that such a policy would be very popular with many Italians, and he was more than willing to follow such a course because it promised to fulfill his own personal designs for armed conquest.

Both Hitler and Mussolini placed a great deal of importance upon the issue of overpopulation and the need to conquer new territory in order to ensure the survival of the state. Of course, as Lyttelton points out, it seemed remarkably inconsistent for Mussolini to insist upon the "absolute necessity" of creating an "outlet for surplus population" at the same time that he was also encouraging an increase in the birth rate in order to provide Italy with more soldiers. However, as inconsistent as this conduct might appear, Mussolini was remarkably successful at convincing Italians and foreigners alike that his expansionist policy was actually necessary for the survival of the Italian state. Moreover, in Mussolini's view, an alliance with Hitler, who shared his contempt for Western concepts of appropriate diplomatic behavior, seemed to promise the best opportunity for advancing his ideological concepts.

As with Hitler, Mussolini's ideological goals went far beyond the mere expansion of Italian territory. It is true that Mussolini was not as successful as Hitler in advancing his ideological goals, for Mussolini simply did not possess the power he needed in order to match Hitler's performance. According to Nolte, it was "merely the accident of inferior means of power and a consequent lesser effectiveness" that put Mussolini in second place behind Hitler. Nevertheless, Mussolini wanted to create a new society based upon his Fascist principles, and as Lowe and Marzari point out in their book, *Italian Foreign Policy*
1870-1940, the Italian "nation became at once the vehicle and the
objective" of Mussolini's proposed "social regeneration." Moreover,
since Mussolini based his goal of social regeneration upon Italian
nationalism, it is not surprising that his policies took the form of
traditional revisionism. Mussolini gradually came to regard re-
visionism "as the unifying theme of his foreign policy...." However,
Mussolini only regarded his revisionist policy as a means to
remodel the Italian nation according to his Fascist principles.
Mussolini's plans for social regeneration went far beyond any com-
parable ideological concepts which the Western powers might regard as
acceptable behavior in international affairs.

The manner in which both Hitler and Mussolini conducted their
diplomacy was a radical departure from the accepted norms of diplo-
matic behavior as practiced by the Western powers. The characteristics
which set both Hitler's and Mussolini's diplomacy apart from the
diplomacy of the Western powers, as mentioned above, were all mani-
festations of the general change which took place in the character of
diplomatic behavior after the close of the First World War. As Gordon
Craig points out in, The Revolution in War and Diplomacy, the First
World War dramatically changed the character of international diplomacy:

Before 1914, the states which were active in
international affairs were in general agreement
about basic things. After 1918, all that was
changed. The nations no longer accepted the same
norms of international behavior, and it was often
ture that their representatives used the same
words in ways quite different from their colleagues from other lands.
Both Hitler and Mussolini capitalized upon the slowness with which the Western powers accepted this change in the character of international diplomacy. Both dictators were convinced that they could further their aims to a greater extent by violating accepted customs and by promoting outrageous falsehoods than by remaining true to the traditional norms of diplomatic behavior. In short, unlike the Western diplomats, neither Hitler nor Mussolini were concerned about preserving the peace, and both dictators were quite willing to use military force in order to achieve their aims. Gordon Craig describes the state of diplomatic relations between both totalitarian dictators and the Western powers in the following manner:

In a sense, the whole period between the two world wars was a dialogue des sourds between these governments attempting to construct a genuine comity of nations... and those revolutionary powers that preferred to recognize no rules at all or desired to retain the freedom to determine when they would obey rules and when they would break them.

The inability of the Western diplomats to decide upon an appropriate response to the new demands placed upon them by totalitarian diplomacy contributed to the relative ease with which Hitler and Mussolini took advantage of the Western powers. The Western diplomats were hampered in the conduct of their diplomacy by the backlash of the revolution in diplomacy which occurred after the First World War. The professional diplomats of the Western powers lost their former prestige and public support, and they had to relinquish a great deal of their responsibilities to incompetent politicians who were anxious to take
over the conduct of foreign affairs. Moreover, the older professionals were powerless to stop this encroachment of politicians upon their field of expertise because the politicians had the support of the general public.

The revolution in diplomatic practice which followed the First World War hampered the ability of the Western diplomats to maintain the peace and helped Hitler and Mussolini to further their expansionist plans. The "Second World War was, to a very large degree", writes Craig, "the direct result of the revolution in diplomacy that had been set in motion in the years between 1914 and 1918." The diplomatic tactics which Hitler and Mussolini used in the pursuit of their goals were entirely different from the traditional methods of the past and called for an entirely new approach to the conduct of foreign affairs.

The differences between Hitler's and Mussolini's diplomacy and the traditional diplomacy of the Western powers can be summarized as follows: (1) both Hitler and Mussolini possessed an extraordinary amount of independence in the conduct of their foreign affairs as compared to the Western leaders, (2) both dictator's regimes suffered from a lack of professionals in their diplomatic corps, (3) neither dictator had to consider the impact of public opinion upon his diplomacy to the same degree as the Western diplomats, (4) both Hitler and Mussolini held different views from the Western diplomats as to the purpose of diplomacy in foreign affairs, and (5) neither dictator shared the same ideological beliefs as the Western leaders.
The nature of totalitarian diplomacy as practiced by Hitler and Mussolini presented a direct challenge to the traditional methods of diplomacy as practiced by the Western democracies. Not only were the Western diplomats forced to adapt to the changes in diplomatic method introduced by such modern pressures as new elaborate departments, expanded staffs, enlarged budgets, new personnel policies, and sophisticated inventions, but they were also forced to confront a direct challenge to the very purpose of diplomacy which formed the universal basis for all international negotiations. Both Hitler and Mussolini accepted warfare as a necessary ingredient of national policy, and they were both confident that they could achieve their goals by the proper exercise of military force.

The failure of the Western diplomats to recognize Hitler's and Mussolini's contempt for the values of traditional diplomatic practice gave both dictators an advantage over their Western counterparts. Moreover, the failure to counter the challenges which both Hitler and Mussolini presented to traditional diplomacy by adopting suitable countermeasures clearly demonstrated the inability of traditional diplomacy to cope with the unique problems which totalitarian diplomacy introduced to international relations.
END NOTES


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44. Nolte, Three Faces of Fascism, p. 455.

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