To go to war over Danzig, made less sense than the Sudetenland. The Polish Corridor made little sense and was a legitimate grievance. The League had long finished exercising effective control over the city. Unofficially the Nazis already ran the city.

**Is it surprising that Britain and France went to war over Poland, but not over Czechoslovakia?**

Hitler invaded Poland as he suspected the British would again capitulate. Following the Nazi-Soviet agreement, the British ambassador, Neville Henderson, reiterated the British guarantee. Hitler went to the same playbook of alleged Polish provocations, but this time Britain stood firm. Hitler believed that his firmness would sow division within the British cabinet. He had deluded himself.

While Chamberlain issued the Polish guarantee, he struggled to give the impression he would enforce it.

* Signals continued that discussions could take place over Danzig through a Scandinavian mediator.
* He did not renounce the Anglo-Italian naval agreement following Mussolini’s invasion of Albania.
* Britain did nothing when Japan blockaded their concession in Tianjin.

On 26 August Hitler gave the orders to invade. Concurrently, he sent an offer to Britain offering a military alliance and preservation of the British Empire in exchange for ‘limited’ colonial demands. However, his plan failed. Italy informed him they would remain neutral and then an hour later France and Britain informed him they would enforce the Polish guarantee. Chastened he postponed the invasion.

**Why did British-French guarantees to Poland fail to prevent war in 1939? (6)**

1.

2.

While Chamberlain decided the 1 September invasion of Poland would be a cause belli. However, the conveyance of this decision lacked the firmness to convince Hitler that Britain was serious as it lacked an ultimatum. Britain was frustrated as France demanded 48 hours to mobilise and evacuate civilians before declaring war. The French Foreign Minister still worked furiously for a solution other than war. Both Britain and France were determined to follow diplomatic protocols as a counterpoint to German behaviour.

Between 26-30 August there was a discussions conducted by the Swede, Birger Dahlerus. The delay allowed the Germans to bolster their invasion force to three million, along with 400,000 horses and 200,000 vehicles. Meanwhile, the British and French instructed the Poles not to move their forces to the border for fear of provoking the Germans. Consequently, only a third of Poland’s 1.3 million soldiers were in position.

An aversion to the Soviet Union saw Chamberlain over inflate the ability of the Poles to provide a credible second front. It antagonized the Soviets, who believed it was a British attempt to direct German attention towards them.

Shortly after the Czech invasion the Romanian Foreign Minister reported intelligence of an alleged German invasion of his country. Spooked Britain began making military arrangements with France and Poland. Yet, the final agreement never included Romania