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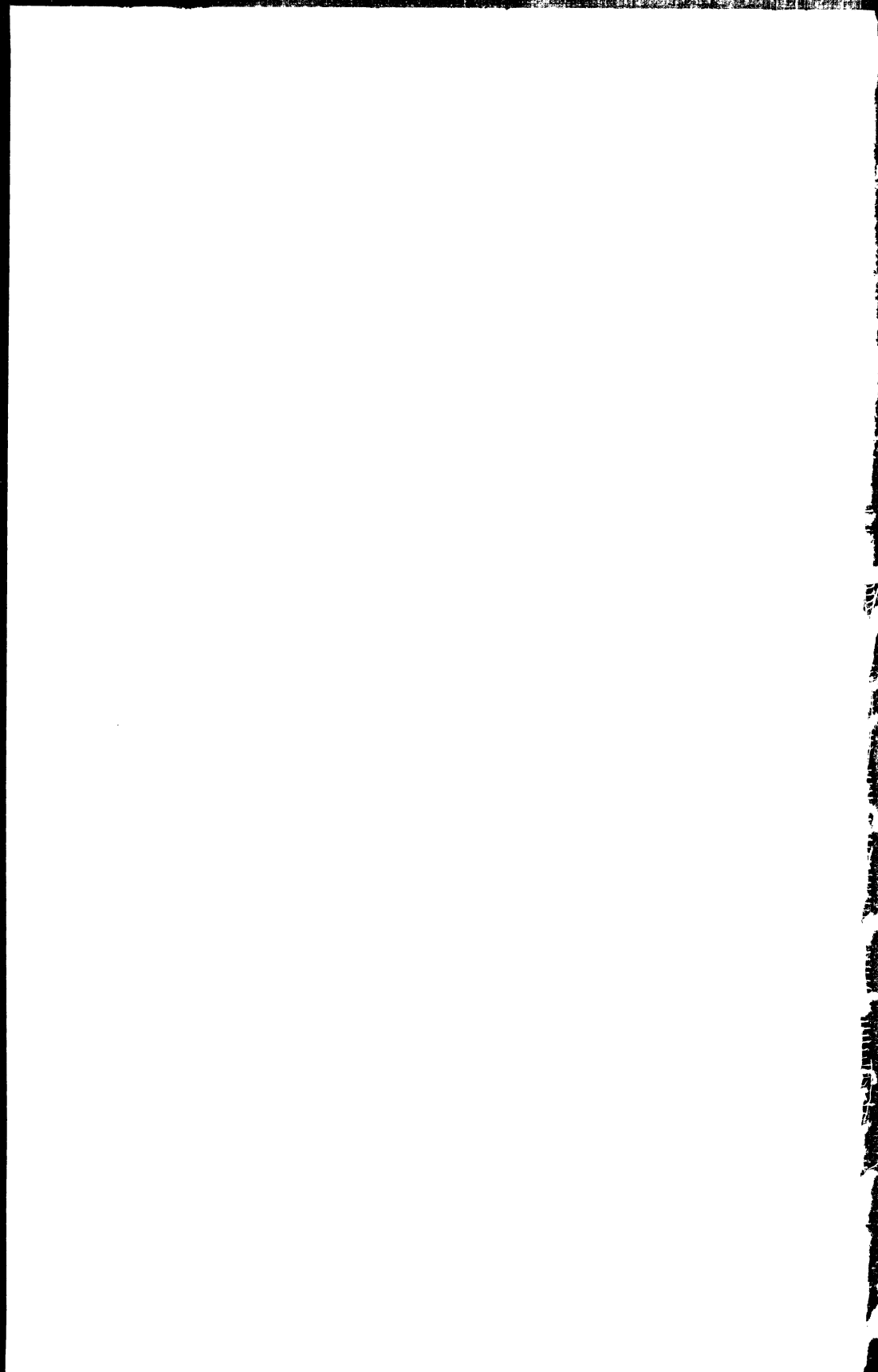


1939

Volume I

GENERAL

Department of State
Washington



Foreign Relations of the United States

Diplomatic Papers

1939

(In Five Volumes)

Volume I
General



United States
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PREFACE

The *Foreign Relations* volumes have been compiled on an annual basis since the publication of diplomatic correspondence which accompanied President Lincoln's first annual message to Congress (December 3, 1861). Originally entitled *Papers Relating to Foreign Affairs Accompanying the Annual Message of the President*, the name of this series was changed in 1870 to *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States*, and in 1947 to the present title.

Publication of these volumes, except for the year 1869, has been continuous. In addition to the annual volumes, supplements have also been published, among them the World War Supplements, the Lansing Papers, the special 1918-1919 Russia volumes, the Paris Peace Conference, 1919, series, Japan, 1931-1941, and The Soviet Union, 1933-1939.

The principles which guide the compilation and editing of *Foreign Relations* are stated in Department of State Regulation 045 of October 31, 1955, a revision of the order approved on March 26, 1925, by Mr. Frank B. Kellogg, then Secretary of State. The text of the current regulation is printed below:

045 DOCUMENTARY RECORD OF AMERICAN DIPLOMACY

045.1 *Scope of Documentation*

The publication *Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers*, constitutes the official record of the Foreign policy of the United States. These volumes include, subject to necessary security considerations, all documents needed to give a comprehensive record of the major foreign policy decisions within the range of the Department of State's responsibilities, together with appropriate materials concerning the facts which contributed to the formulation of policies. When further material is needed to supplement the documentation in the Department's files for a proper understanding of the relevant policies of the United States, such papers should be obtained from other Government agencies.

045.2 *Editorial Preparation*

The basic documentary diplomatic record to be printed in *Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers*, shall be edited by the Historical Division of the Department of State. The editing of the record shall be guided by the principles of historical objectivity. There shall be no alteration of the text, no deletions without indicating where in the text the deletion is made, and no omission of facts which were of major importance in reaching a decision. Nothing shall be omitted for the purpose of concealing or glossing over what might be

regarded by some as a defect of policy. However, certain omissions of documents or parts of documents are permissible for the following reasons:

- a. To avoid publication of matters which would tend to impede current diplomatic negotiations or other business.
- b. To condense the record and avoid repetition of needless details.
- c. To preserve the confidence reposed in the Department by individuals and by foreign governments.
- d. To avoid giving needless offense to other nationalities or individuals.
- e. To eliminate personal opinions presented in despatches and not acted upon by the Department. To this consideration there is one qualification—in connection with major decisions it is desirable, where possible, to show the alternatives presented to the Department before the decision was made.

045.3 Clearance

To obtain appropriate clearances of material to be published in *Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers*, the Historical Division (HD) shall:

- a. Refer to the appropriate policy offices of the Department and of other agencies of the Government such papers as appear to require policy clearance.
- b. Refer to the appropriate foreign governments requests for permission to print as part of the diplomatic correspondence of the United States those previously unpublished documents which were originated by the foreign governments.

In keeping with the spirit of the above-quoted Department regulation, the research staff is guided in compiling the record by the principles of historical objectivity. In the selection of papers the editors have attempted to give a substantially complete record of American foreign policy as contained in the files of the Department of State together with as much background material as possible, while keeping the volumes within reasonable limits with respect to size and number. In the preparation of *Foreign Relations* for the decade preceding World War II special attention has been given to the inclusion of documents of significance with respect to the origins of that conflict.

The responsibilities of the Historical Division for the preparation of the *Foreign Relations* volumes are entrusted, under the general supervision of the Chief of the Division, G. Bernard Noble, to the Foreign Relations Branch, under the direction of the Chief of that Branch (Editor of *Foreign Relations*), E. R. Perkins, and the Assistant Chief of the Branch, Gustave A. Nuermberger. The research staff of this Branch is organized with a Special Problems Section and area sections for the British Commonwealth and Europe, the Soviet Union, the Near East and Africa, the Far East, and the American Re-

publics. The compilers of the 1939 volumes were Matilda F. Axton, Rogers P. Churchill, Francis C. Prescott, John G. Reid, N. O. Sappington, Louis E. Gates, and Shirley L. Phillips of the present staff and George Verne Blue, Victor J. Farrar, Henry P. Beers, and the late Morrison B. Giffen, former staff members.

The Division of Publishing Services is responsible with respect to *Foreign Relations* for the proofreading and editing of copy, the preparation of indexes, and the distribution of printed copies. Under the general direction of the Chief of the Division, Robert L. Thompson, the editorial functions mentioned above are performed by the Foreign Relations Editing Branch in charge of Elizabeth A. Vary.

For 1939, the arrangement of volumes is as follows: Volume I, General; Volume II, General, The British Commonwealth, and Europe; Volume III, The Far East; Volume IV, The Far East, the Near East and Africa; Volume V, The American Republics.

E. R. PERKINS

Editor of Foreign Relations

DECEMBER 20, 1955.

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EVENTS LEADING TO THE OUTBREAK OF WAR IN EUROPE, SEPTEMBER 1, 1939

I. SPECULATION AS TO AXIS DESIGNS, APART FROM CZECHO- SLOVAKIA, JANUARY-MARCH 15, 1939

760C.62/423 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Poland (Biddle) to the Secretary of State

WARSAW, January 10, 1939—3 p. m.

[Received 4:43 p. m.]

2. For the President and the Secretary. In short confidential conversation with Beck¹ he imparted following.

1. In general, conversations with Hitler and Ribbentrop² proved fairly satisfactory in that Beck had been assured Poland might expect no "surprises" and that all matters bearing on Polish-German relations were negotiable and that Poland might take these negotiations in her stride.

2. While Hitler admittedly had an interest in the Ukraine his interest had thus far been considerably exaggerated. Poland might expect Germany to "lay off" the Polish Ukrainian minority during Hitler's eastward looking program.

3. During *tour d'horizon* Hitler delivered boastful oration on his accomplishments over past year.

4. Hitler was obviously furious and worried by President Roosevelt's address³ and Hitler's subordinates were apprehensive lest effects of this address and Secretary Welles' recent statement⁴ prove disadvantageous to Germany's strategic as well as economic position.

5. Beck, voicing his and Government associates' opinion, was profoundly impressed by President's address.

6. Beck emphasized Poland and France must meet at an early date to clarify their joint and respective positions vis-à-vis Germany. They were now both in the same boat and must face realities.

7. He will discuss all phases fully tonight when I am dining quietly with him and chief-of-staff.

BIDDLE

¹ Józef Beck, Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs.

² Joachim von Ribbentrop, German Minister for Foreign Affairs.

³ Presumably the President's annual message to Congress, January 4, 1939; House Doc. No. 1, 76th Cong., 1st sess., or *Congressional Record*, vol. 84, pt. 1, p. 74.

⁴ Presumably the radio address by the Under Secretary of State on November 6, 1938; see Department of State, *Press Releases*, November 12, 1938, p. 317.

741.65/692 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Italy (Phillips) to the Secretary of State

ROME, January 16, 1939—1 p. m.
[Received January 16—9:05 a. m.]

17. An I. D. communiqué was issued late last night summarizing the results of the Mussolini-Chamberlain conversations.⁵ After underlining "the general cordiality" of the conversations the communiqué pointed out that with regard to Spain the Duce had repeated that the last Italian legionnaires would be withdrawn when the "red" volunteers were withdrawn and when Franco was granted belligerent rights but that if there should be any large scale intervention by governments friendly to Negrin Italy would resume its freedom of action.⁶

With regard to Italo-French relations the Duce stated that the question of Spain had so profoundly separated the two countries that it would only be possible to review the situation when the Spanish war was finished. In the meanwhile there could be no question of arbitration, mediation or three or four power conferences.

The communiqué continued that other questions were examined but not in detail among which were the "so-called Hebrew refugees" and the possibility—in any case a remote one—of the limitation of armaments. A firm conviction to maintain the peace of Europe was expressed by both the Italians and British.

PHILLIPS

740.00/548 : Telegram

The Chargé in the United Kingdom (Johnson) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, January 24, 1939—9 p. m.
[Received 9:08 p. m.]

94. Personal for the Secretary and Under Secretary. Following is text of telegram being sent tonight to British Chargé d'Affaires in Washington which Sir Alexander Cadogan⁷ thinks is doubtful can be received and deciphered in Washington before sometime tomorrow. With his permission I am therefore sending the exact text in non-confidential code over our direct wire. Mallett will be instructed to communicate it to the Department for the "personal and secret information of the President".

⁵The British Prime Minister, accompanied by Lord Halifax, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, paid an official visit to Rome, January 11-14.

⁶For correspondence concerning the Spanish Civil War, see vol. II; Dr. Juan Negrin was at this time Premier and Minister of Defense in Republican Spain.

⁷British Permanent Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

“1. I have received a large number of reports from various reliable sources which throw a most disquieting light on Hitler’s mood and intentions. According to these reports Hitler is bitterly resentful at the Munich Agreement⁸ which balked him of a localized war against Czechoslovakia and demonstrated the will to peace of the German masses in opposition to the warmongering of the Nazi Party. He feels personally humiliated by this demonstration. He regards Great Britain as primarily responsible for this humiliation and his rage is therefore directed principally against this country which he holds to be the chief obstacle now to the fulfillment of his further ambitions.

2. As early as November there were indications which gradually became more definite that Hitler was planning a further foreign adventure for the spring of 1939. At first it appeared—and this was confirmed by persons in Hitler’s entourage—that he was thinking of expansion in the east and in December the prospect of establishing an independent Ukraine under German vassalage was freely spoken of in Germany.

3. Since then reports indicate that Hitler, encouraged by Ribbentrop, Himmler⁹ and others, is considering an attack on the Western powers as a preliminary to subsequent action in the east. Some of these reports emanate from highly placed Germans of undoubted sincerity who are anxious to prevent this crime; others come from foreigners, hitherto Germans, who are in close touch with leading German personalities. They have received some confirmation in the reassurance which Hitler appears to have given to Monsieur Beck concerning his plans in the east, as well as in the support which Germany has recently given to Italy’s claims against France.

4. There is as yet no reason to suppose that Hitler has made up his mind on any particular plan. Our reports show that he may:

(First) Push Italy to advance her claims by force and use his obligations to Italy as a pretext for embarking on war. This course would have the advantage of ensuring the participation of Italy from the outset.

(Second) Begin by launching an attack on Holland. The President will have noticed the recent deterioration of German-Dutch relations and the critical tone adopted towards Holland by the German press. Once in command of Holland and the Dutch coast, Germany would aspire to dictate terms to us and paralyze France. She might at the same time bribe Poland and perhaps other countries with promises of colonial loot; in that event the Dutch East Indies might be allocated to Japan.

(Third) Put forward impossible colonial demands in his speech of January 30th in the form of an ultimatum. This seems the least likely hypothesis.

(Fourth) Make a sudden air attack without pretext on England and follow up this initial surprise by land and sea operations against the western powers. We have received definite in-

⁸ See *Foreign Relations*, 1938, vol. I, pp. 707 ff.; for text of the Munich Agreement, signed September 29, 1938, see Department of State, *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, Series D, vol. II, p. 1014.

⁹ Heinrich Himmler, Reichsführer-SS and Chief of the German Police with rank of State Secretary in the Ministry of the Interior.

formation from a highly placed German that preparations for such a coup are now being made. He has, however, no information to show that Hitler has yet made up his mind to execute this plan.

5. In the last few days we have received reliable information to the effect that the German Government are pressing for the conversion of the Anti-Comintern Pact ¹⁰ into a pact pledging the signatories to give each other military assistance against unprovoked attack by a third power, that the Italian Government have agreed, and that the Japanese Government are considering the matter. Our information is that the German Government wish this pact to be concluded in time for it to be announced by Herr Hitler in the speech he is expected to make on January 30.

6. All the reports are agreed in forecasting that the danger period will begin towards the end of February. This is borne out by independent reports to the effect that orders have been issued for mobilization about the middle of February. We have already received news of preliminary mobilization measures, and the formation of a reserve regiment composed of time-expired conscripts has been recently established in Bavaria. Moreover the economic and financial crisis with which Germany is now faced might well compel Hitler to take some action, and the choice before him is either to slow down his rearmament and to abandon his policy of expansion, or else to launch into some foreign adventure in the hope that it will both distract attention from domestic difficulties and supply him with the material resources which the country urgently requires and can no longer buy abroad. There can be little doubt that a man of Hitler's temperament may be tempted to choose the second alternative. Another motive for his doing so might be that he was not sure of the loyalty of his army, and might feel that the surest way for a dictator to deal with a doubtful army was to give it occupation.

7. It may seem fanciful and even fantastic to attribute such designs to Hitler and it is as yet impossible to speak of them with certainty. His Majesty's Government have no wish to be alarmist, but today, as in July, August and September of last year, it is remarkable that there is one general tendency running through all the reports, and it is impossible to ignore them, particularly in view of the character and proved reliability of many of the informants. Moreover, Hitler's mental condition, his insensate rage against Great Britain and his megalomania, which are alarming the moderates around him, are entirely consistent with the execution of a desperate coup against the Western powers. The removal of moderates such as Schacht ¹¹ and Wiedemann ¹² is symptomatic. It has been suggested in some quarters that the German people would not follow Hitler on such a course and that a revolt would ensue. We have examined this aspect, but the authorities on Germany whom we have consulted including anti-Nazi

¹⁰ Signed by Italy, Germany, and Japan, November 6, 1937; for text, see *Foreign Relations, Japan, 1931-1941*, vol. II, p. 159.

¹¹ Hjalmar Schacht, former President of the Reichsbank, who had been dismissed on January 21, 1939.

¹² Capt. Fritz Wiedemann (ret.), former personal aide-de-camp to Adolf Hitler.

Germans of sound judgment are agreed that Hitler's orders would be carried out and that no revolt can be anticipated at all events during the initial stages of a war.

8. His Majesty's Government have carefully considered the situation in the light of these reports and have decided to accelerate as far as possible the preparation of their defensive and counter-offensive measures. In the meantime they are employing such methods as are available to them for bringing home to the German people the wantonness and folly of embarking on aggressive military adventures. They will lay such public emphasis as they can on the point, in the hope of deterring Herr Hitler from committing himself to something irrevocable in the speech which he is expected to make on January 30th.

9. Finally, in the event of Germany picking a quarrel with Holland, His Majesty's Government are considering the desirability as a matter of tactics and precaution of being ready at once with a proposal to both Governments for the selection by neutral governments of a board of three arbitrators. Such a proposal might not prove effective, but if arbitration were rejected or over-ridden by Germany, the issue would be clear and His Majesty's Government would have *locus standi* for appropriate action.

10. In the next few days His Majesty's Government will be considering carefully what further steps they might take to avert or to meet a situation such as they have cause to apprehend, and I will of course keep the President informed of any decision taken.

11. In view of the relations of confidence which exist between our two Governments and the degree to which we have exchanged information hitherto, His Majesty's Government feel bound to state frankly their apprehensions as to the future and to indicate what measures they feel able to take. It would, of course, be a great help to them if the President had any further suggestions to make.

12. It is impossible as yet for the Prime Minister¹³ to decide whether he will himself utter any public warning to Germany before Hitler makes his speech on January 30th. The Prime Minister is due to speak at Birmingham on January 28th and, if possible, I would let the President know beforehand what line the Prime Minister would propose to take. If the President were disposed to take an occasion for any public announcement, it might be the more valuable if he were to do so before January 30th."

When the Under Secretary, who sent for me at 7 o'clock tonight, handed me a copy of this message he said that the statement was a synthesis of all the information they have from their most confidential and reliable sources. The text was prepared in the Foreign Office but it has undergone careful scrutiny today by the Prime Minister, and approved by him for transmission to Washington, at a meeting with his special advisers in the Cabinet. It is therefore to be regarded not merely as a statement of Foreign Office views but as a statement of the views of the Government.

The Under Secretary said that he could, of course, no more produce concrete proof now to substantiate this report than when he talked to

¹³ Neville Chamberlain.

me on January 6th (my telegram No. 27, January 27 [?], 2 p. m.¹⁴ penultimate paragraph) but he said that the situation was so serious that his Government had to be prepared for any eventuality and he indicated that they have full confidence in the reliability of the sources of this information. They will keep our Government fully and currently advised of any additional information which comes to them and in regard to their own policy.

Referring specifically to numbered paragraph 5 on the Anti-Comintern Pact he said that information had only come to him yesterday and that the Japanese, contrary to their previous stand, were now the ones holding out against the signature of a military pact.

He referred to the Prime Minister's scheduled speech at Birmingham on January 28th and said that the Prime Minister has not yet decided whether he will then make any public warning to Germany. Anything he says on Saturday will have to be correlated with what must be said before Parliament on January 31st. The opening of Parliament, however, takes place the day after Hitler is scheduled to make a speech before the Reichstag.

In my personal opinion the grave anxiety so graphically set forth in this message may be attributed, more than to any other factor, to the acute consciousness that British and French armed forces combined are not equal today to the combined armed forces of Germany and Italy. Moreover anxiety regarding the efficiency of the rearmament program is spreading among all sections of the public and outspoken criticisms are by no means confined to the Government's opponents. The attacks indicate lack of confidence that there is any driving force to spread and coordinate effort, and the Government will have this issue to meet when Parliament reassembles.

JOHNSON

740.00/548: Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Chargé in the United Kingdom
(Johnson)

WASHINGTON, January 29, 1939—2 p. m.

76. Your 94, January 24, 9 p. m. For your confidential information, I am quoting herewith from my memorandum of an oral conversation with the British Chargé d'Affaires, on January 27, 1939, on the subject.

I said I had requested him to call in relation to the recent elaborate note of January 24, 1939¹⁵ "received from his Government, in which many of the rumors and reports as to circumstances and conditions of

¹⁴ Not printed.

¹⁵ See *supra*.

a nature calculated to be the forerunner of a possible military outbreak in Europe were set forth. I said that my Government for a substantial period of time had been visualizing as possibilities such developments as more or less detailed and recited by the British Government in its note; that this Government had accordingly contemplated the possibilities of these developments, both in the utterances of its high officials and in the formulation of its program for national defense and security and its policies pertaining to the promotion and preservation of peace; that this Government was now from week to week steadily and earnestly pursuing and carrying forward its entire program; that I did not deem it necessary or desirable to single out any particular phase or phases of this program and discuss them in this connection; that to undertake to do so would probably result in misinterpretation or distortion by outsiders or critics or commentators. I repeated these statements in order that the Chargé d'Affaires should be able to grasp them in an accurate manner. He said then that he assumed the President would not send any message to the Prime Minister in this connection. I replied in the negative. I added that, of course, the Chargé d'Affaires would, as he doubtless had heretofore, continue to observe the nature of all phases of the program of this Government and the progress being made in carrying each forward, and that naturally he could easily acquire up-to-date and detailed information from members of Congress and others as to the progress of such program or any part of it."

HULL

740.00/561 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

[Extracts]

PARIS, January 30, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received 8:08 p. m.]

165. I discussed the general European situation with Bonnet¹⁶ today. Bonnet said that he believed Germany did not desire war this spring. There was every indication that Hitler wished to employ the coming months to get Hungary and Rumania completely under his control. Hitler practically [controlled?] Hungary already but Rumania would be a more difficult problem. It would probably be necessary for Hitler to eject King Carol and replace him by his son Michael in order to establish full Nazi control over Rumania.

There was, however, great danger that Mussolini would start a war this spring.

¹⁶ Georges Bonnet, French Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Hitler had kept Mussolini quiet during the Austrian and Czechoslovak crises¹⁷ by promising support for his aspirations in the Mediterranean. Mussolini now wished to cash in on this promise and might provoke an incident at any moment which would produce war with France.

Bonnet said that when Ribbentrop had been in Paris Ribbentrop had discussed this eventuality frankly and had said that Hitler was very much afraid of being drawn into war by Mussolini this spring. Ribbentrop had stated that Hitler had no desire whatsoever to have a war with France and England; but that Mussolini could inevitably draw him in by simply making war on France. Hitler could not afford to see Mussolini defeated which would be the inevitable result of a conflict between Italy and France without intervention by Germany.

I had a long talk with the Polish Ambassador today who gave me a full account of Beck's conversation with Hitler at Berchtesgaden. He said that Hitler had convinced Beck that he had no intention of attempting to make war on the Soviet Union this year. He said that Beck had stated to Hitler that as far as Poland was concerned the question of the Ruthenian end of Slovakia was not settled and that Poland might be obliged to settle it by her own military action if Ruthenia should be used in future as a base of propaganda against Poland. He stated that Hitler had not reacted in any way against this statement of Beck's.

Lukasiewicz also said that Hitler and Beck had talked of Danzig and the question of transit for automobiles from Germany across the Polish Corridor to Danzig and East Prussia. Lukasiewicz said that Hitler and Beck had agreed that these questions should be worked out quietly and should not be permitted to interfere in any way with the good relations between the two countries.

Lukasiewicz said that the new Polish-Russian trade agreement which was about to be signed would result in Poland selling to the Soviet Union more than ten times as much next year as had been sold last year.

The Polish Government's view of the general European situation as given me by Lukasiewicz was practically on all fours with the views given me by Bonnet and the British Ambassador. All three men believe that Hitler will not deliberately make war on any country this year. They all feel that there is great danger that Mussolini may start a war into which Hitler in justification will be drawn. All three of course indicated that they felt that fear of ultimate action

¹⁷ For correspondence, see *Foreign Relations*, 1938, vol. I, pp. 483 ff. and 707 ff., respectively.

by the United States might be a large factor in determining the decisions of Mussolini and Hitler.

Both the British and Polish Ambassadors and several French friends with whom I have talked have spoken to me with regard to the growing hostility in France to Bonnet. I have been here too short a time to have formed an independent opinion, but it appears that after Munich Daladier¹⁸ reaped all the thankfulness while Bonnet reaped all the rage.

BULLITT

740.00/560: Telegram

The Chargé in the United Kingdom (Johnson) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, January 30, 1939—7 p. m.

[Received January 30—6:17 p. m.]

126. For the Secretary and the Under Secretary. Your No. 76, January 29, 2 p. m. I saw the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs for a few minutes this afternoon at my own request by appointment made about a week ago. Lord Halifax first referred to the fact that today was the President's birthday and said he would like to offer his congratulations.

He then said that he understood I had been kept fully informed of the views of his Government regarding the international situation which have recently been communicated to Washington and that he had just received a telegram from the British Chargé in Washington reporting his interview with the Secretary of State. Lord Halifax had no comment to make except that in substance the Chargé had reported that in the view of the State Department the British note "had nothing new in it" and that foreign relations were a delicate matter for the administration. The Foreign Secretary said he hoped no one would think that the British Government believed all of these reports were necessary, accurate, or true but that in the face of what might be a very grave situation his Government was necessarily constrained to take account of and examine every possibility. He said that he had no information to communicate in addition to what has already been given us and remarked that wise men in his own Government and also, he was sure, in Washington, were pondering these matters on the basis of such information as could be obtained and endeavoring to reach the right decisions.

JOHNSON

¹⁸ Édouard Daladier, French President of the Council of Ministers and Minister for National Defense.

860M.01 Memel/560 : Telegram (part air)

The Chargé in Germany (Gilbert) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, February 3, 1939—10 a. m.
[Received February 4—10:02 a. m.]

In continuation of my 705 December 9, 10 a. m.²⁰ and from the same source ²¹ I have ascertained the following developments in the (1) Memel and (2) Danzig-Polish questions since December.

1. The present project respecting Memel entertained by the German Government aims at union of the territory with East Prussia presumably some time this spring. Berlin will approach Kaunas with the following proposal to which it is believed here Lithuania will agree: The cession of the area to Germany in exchange for (a) the establishment of Memel as a free port, (b) a trade agreement favorable to Lithuania, (c) a guarantee by Germany of the territorial integrity of Lithuania. Berlin believes that the political legal adjustments with London and Paris can be made without any ill-feeling. In this connection note my number 732, December 16, 11 a. m.²⁰

In discussing this matter with my informant it was brought out that it constitutes the only exception to the German decision to make no political moves to the east in the indeterminate future as described in Embassy's despatch No. 550, January 25.²²

2. In respect of the Danzig-Polish question it is extremely interesting to observe the results of the recent German-Polish conversations ²³ in the light of a knowledge of Hitler's directives for German policy in that area as described in paragraph No. 2 of my 705 already referred to to which attention is particularly invited. It will be recalled that Hitler's basic policy was therein described as that of long term friendship with Poland. It appears that upon the question of Danzig being raised in the Hitler-Beck conversations Hitler broached Germany's prepared proposals. Beck in reply stated the terms upon which he would agree to the cession of the free state to Germany. He would accept in compensation an extension of the German-Polish 10-year agreement ²⁴ to the total of 25 years but Germany must grant Poland as an additional recompense a guarantee in perpetuity of Poland's possession of Corridor. The matter was left open at that point in the discussion. It was tacitly understood that the *status quo*

²⁰ Not printed.

²¹ An officer in the German Foreign Office.

²² Not printed; but see telegram No. 94, February 4, 10 a. m., *infra*.

²³ See pp. 1 and 7-9.

²⁴ Non-aggression agreement signed at Berlin, January 26, 1934, *British and Foreign State Papers*, vol. cxxxvii, p. 495.

of Danzig would be maintained for the present, the general question of Danzig by the same token remaining open.

In this conversation in which it might be said that the general idea of a German-Polish understanding was mutually accepted (although together with a recognition of the existence of each other's positions on certain important points) the settlement of the minorities questions between the two states was advanced by oral agreements not to hinder the assimilation of the respective racial groups and to facilitate exchanges of populations wherever feasible.

GILBERT

762.00/240: Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Gilbert) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, February 4, 1939—10 a. m.

[Received February 6—7:40 a. m.]

94. In respect of German policy vis-à-vis the states to the east and southeast as pre-figured in Embassy's 550, January 25,²⁵ I now learn from an entirely informed confidential German source that the following has been laid down as Germany's long term plan.

The aim gradually to be achieved is the bringing together with Germany into a, so to speak, "autarchic bloc" all of the states lying to the east and the southeast down to and including Turkey. In an exaggerated manner of speech this project might be described as a 4-year plan for the entire area. The plan will be developed without drama or sudden demonstrations primarily on an economic and commercial basis in distinction to a political basis. Such political associations as may occur will flow from economic associations. No particular methods are worked out for the relationship with the several countries concerned; it is contemplated that they will merely take such form as progressive developments may suggest. On this score however a possible move during the relatively initial stages of this general project may be something in the nature of a customs union with Czechoslovakia and Hungary. Italy will be granted wide participation in this scheme especially in the areas where her natural interests lie. An accord in principle and also including certain preliminary details has already been reached with Rome in respect of this matter. Poland will also participate to a degree this being progressively dependent on Poland's general political position toward Germany. The plan in a general sense is already in motion.

GILBERT

²⁵ Not printed.

762.00/242: Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Gilbert) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, February 6, 1939—6 p. m.
 [Received February 7—7:25 a. m.]

100. We have been able to employ the confidential information conveyed in my No. 94, February 4, 10 a. m., for background in conversations with German officials in an endeavor to elicit further information on that subject. Although the informed officials are exceedingly reticent, what they say nevertheless tends to confirm the existence of the general German project which that telegram discussed.

In this connection, I learn that serious study is being given to the project of a customs union with Czechoslovakia and also the study of one with Hungary. The Germans have been expecting the Czechs to broach such a proposition. On the other hand the tentative conclusion of the economic authorities of the Government is that the erection of a thoroughgoing customs union would be a most difficult and long drawn out process which could not be effected without an arrangement in the nature of a currency union which raises still further problems.

Repeat last paragraph to Treasury.

GILBERT

760C.62/441

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State

[WASHINGTON,] February 7, 1939.

The Ambassador of Poland²⁶ came in on his own request. He proceeded to inform me that in the recent conferences between Foreign Minister Beck and a high official of the German Foreign Office visiting him, Germany and Poland had agreed on all of their relationships, so that there would be no occasion for friction at an early date. This was the substance of the conversation. He made some inquiry as to my impression about Europe and I replied that I could only repeat what I had said to him a few weeks ago, to the effect that we are not making predictions but we are taking nothing for granted, and, in the meantime, we are arming.

C[ORDELL] H[ULL]

²⁶ Count Jerzy Potocki.

751.65/524: Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, February 8, 1939—8 p. m.

[Received February 8—7:45 p. m.]

245. Bonnet said to me today that in his opinion the Italian Government was beginning to be somewhat desperate because it could foresee the collapse of its hopes for large annexations in the Mediterranean. It was his impression that the Italian Government would welcome any sort of incident at the present moment which might put the fat in the fire and might make it appear that war was the fault of the French. In this connection he mentioned the fact that he had just received a visit of a General of Military Intelligence who had been inspecting the French line in Tunis along the border of Libya. The General reported that it appeared from Italian actions there that the Minister of Marine was attempting to provoke an incident which could be made to appear an aggression on the part of the French. The French Government was therefore taking every conceivable precaution on all frontiers where its territory was contiguous to Italian territory to make certain that no Frenchman should be provoked to any hostile act against an Italian.

Bonnet said that he felt that the French at the moment should treat the Italians with the greatest conceivable politeness and leave criticism of Italian words and acts to the British and Americans who were not at the moment objects of Mussolini's immediate hostility. At the same time the French should refuse flatly and absolutely any concession of any nature to the Italians. If the French should carry out this policy and if Mussolini should be unable to provoke any frontier incidents it seemed certain that Mussolini would have to crawl out of the present situation by disavowing the articles demanding French territory which have been appearing in the Italian press. In this connection Bonnet called attention to the fact that no official of the Italian Government had made any demand for any concessions by the French.

Bonnet was cheerful and said he felt that although there would be anxious days ahead the revival of economic life and morale in France plus the attitude of the United States plus Chamberlain's latest statement²⁷ had made it probable that war could be avoided.

BULLITT

²⁷ In the House of Commons, February 6, 1939.

762.00/246 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Poland (Biddle) to the Secretary of State

WARSAW, February 16, 1939—10 a. m.

[Received February 16—7:45 a. m.]

14. For President and Secretary.

1. Beck is of opinion (a) Hitler's eastward looking ambitions definitely do not figure in his immediate program, (b) Hitler will continue concentrating his attention in west in his determined colonial campaign envisaged as a play more of major character than one in which Hitler is likely to submit to bargaining or minor concessions.

2. Poland will give *de jure* recognition to Franco's Government²⁸ today.

BIDDLE

740.00/588 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, February 17, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received 9:30 p. m.]

246. I saw Halifax and the Prime Minister this morning and as my visit with the Prime Minister was quite lengthy and covered all the points discussed with Halifax, I will merely give you the information from the Prime Minister, suggesting any possible differences of opinion between the two, when I come to them.

As to the general outlook: Chamberlain feels definitely that it is much better. He does not lose sight of the fact that Hitler is impractical and fanatical, but he sees no definite indication of moves toward Holland, Switzerland, or elsewhere to the west or to the Ukraine and in this he takes issue with the Foreign Office. He still feels that the only hope of doing business with Hitler is to take him at his word and when he says this he realizes that it is by no means certain that the word will be kept, but up to date he has no reason personally to disbelieve it.

He believes the reason for Hitler quieting down is primarily the President's speech before the Military Committee²⁹ and his rearmament program. He said it came at a psychological moment and he feels that his own correspondingly stiffening attitude has done much to make Hitler believe that the English would not take a fight lying down.

²⁸ In Spain.²⁹ January 1, 1939, at the White House, before a secret conference of the Senate Military Affairs Committee called by President Roosevelt. The general nature of the meeting was reported to the press.

He believes there is a very definite chance of arriving at some solution through economics. He told me that in one of his visits to Hitler, while waiting for the latter, Ribbentrop proceeded to tell him what a specialist Hitler was on economics; that while he was in prison he worked out all the pros and cons and Chamberlain said that this coming from Ribbentrop, who knows nothing about economics, was faintly amusing. After he met Hitler and listened to a long dissertation on his economic theory for the solution of all our problems, Chamberlain was convinced that Hitler knew just a little more than Ribbentrop about economics, which was very little indeed. Chamberlain felt that Hitler's reference in his speech to the economic situation that "we must have trade or die" was most significant because, in view of his attitude towards his immediate subordinates that he is god in the matter of economic policy, he would not have dared make this statement to the German people if there was not a very definite feeling amongst them that what he stated was the truth. Chamberlain also said that when Schacht was here he had a long talk with him and the latter was most outspoken in his criticism and personal vindictiveness towards Hitler but told Chamberlain not to believe for a minute that the economic policy would crack. Schacht said he was responsible for it but frankly did not know what kept it going. Schacht said there were two alternatives for Hitler to take: one was heavy taxation which they believed was impractical and the other inflation, the first steps toward which they were afraid would start internal agitation in Germany that would ruin the Government. So, with this in mind, Hitler has made definite overtures to England for economic consultation. They have made a coal agreement; they have invited Oliver Stanley³⁰ to Germany and he is going the beginning of March; they have requested Gwatkin,³¹ who is under Leith-Ross,³² to come over and they plan to send Funk³³ here. Both Halifax and Chamberlain feel that these are steps in the right direction and, while they are keeping their fingers crossed, they feel it essential to make as many industrial contacts as possible in order to keep their information as to what the Germans are thinking as much up to date as possible. Another indication of a more pliant attitude was that when Nevile Henderson³⁴ went back to Berlin the other night and showed his speech to the Foreign Office they took back the speech of the Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha and changed it to go along with Henderson's speech

³⁰ President of the British Board of Trade.

³¹ Frank T. Ashton-Gwatkin, Counsellor in the British Foreign Office.

³² Sir Frederick Leith-Ross, Chief Economic Adviser to the British Government.

³³ Walter Funk, President of the Reichsbank and Minister of Economics, who replaced Hjalmar Schacht.

³⁴ British Ambassador in Germany.

and it was not returned to the Duke until during the dinner and he was ready to speak.

As to his visit with Mussolini, Chamberlain definitely considers him a practical operator. He contrasts Mussolini, as a man who likes to see the whole picture, very much like himself, as against Hitler, who looks out of the window at Berchtesgaden, dreamingly considering the future prospect of Germany without being very practical. He asked Mussolini what Hitler meant by all this flurry in connection with moves to the Ukraine, Holland and finally Great Britain itself. Mussolini shook his head and said there was no possibility of a move directly against England and he did not believe any possibility of a move against the other countries because Hitler, in his talks with him, had indicated that his problem had increased tremendously with the Sudetenland and Austria and that he wanted a long period of peace to put the whole situation in shape.

Chamberlain said that the Italians were talking loud in their threats against France, but he did not believe that Mussolini would take on France in a battle unless he had an absolute commitment from Hitler that he would go along and this, Chamberlain believes, he has not had. In fact he thinks, and I am of the opinion that this comes from Ribbentrop, that Hitler is urging Mussolini to play down the issues with France rather than make too great a fuss about them.

Chamberlain believes that a settlement of the Spanish situation will permit the Italians and French to get together. Mussolini said he had tried to do business with the French but had been unable to and therefore would not discuss anything further with them until the Spanish war is over. Chamberlain is holding up recognition of Franco in order not to give the opposition here a chance to say that he had recognized Franco just when the Government were on their way to win back Spain for the Loyalists. He says that this attitude is of course all nonsense, but, as he believes the war is likely to be finished in a very short time, he is holding off recognition and while he will not hold it up indefinitely, as he thinks the Government is liable to surrender any day now, he will grant recognition at what he considers the psychological moment. With the recognition of Franco, he thinks the Italians and French can get together for negotiations although he believes neither will want to start and that he may be called upon to use his good offices to get them together. He thinks that what will probably happen is that the Italians will settle for better treatment of the Italians in Tunisia, lower fares on the Djibouti Railroad and some improvement in their position on the Suez Canal, all of which he says the French will be willing to give them as Bonnet has already assured them, and as they would have been

willing to give them without all this hollering, but Chamberlain is of the opinion that the dictators must holler loud to convince their people they are going forward.

Chamberlain does not take the possibility of a Russian-German alliance seriously. He says they are both so distrustful of each other that it would never work out; and that it is Hitler's hope of course to stir up enough trouble in the Ukraine so that he can point out how badly the Russians are treating the Ukrainians and that he could go in if he wanted to and in this way get some more concessions without any strain on his resources.

Mussolini when talking with Chamberlain said he had very definite ideas on disarmament and Chamberlain said so had he and Mussolini agreed that, when the Spanish situation was settled, he would draw up a memorandum containing his ideas and send it to Chamberlain.

Chamberlain also considered as significant that Ribbentrop, who has been talking constantly about the decrepit English, now says that the one thing he wants to do more than anything else in the world is to have an arrangement between England and Germany.

I think that the point of difference on the whole question of England's relationship with Germany is that the Foreign Office believes that Hitler is not to be trusted at all and that he will do something that will provoke trouble any day. Chamberlain's idea is that he is going to go along, preparing and arming all the time, but assuming that he can do business with Hitler. He feels that America's action psychologically and Britain's tremendous amounts for defense have had a very definite effect on Germany and may do the trick.

I feel and the general impression here is that Chamberlain is stronger now than he has ever been and I asked him about this and he said he felt that was true. He is against having a general election at this time because he is afraid that it may interfere with trade. Business he says "is just starting to pick up and you want to cause more agitation."

He was in very good spirits and looked very well and I would say that, in spite of all the evidence to the contrary, all of which he recognizes, he is very optimistic.

Incidentally he told me that he had had a report about guns being shipped over the Italian border from Germany and the answer he gets is that they are being shipped to Libya. He is not convinced however that what has been shipped up to date is of serious import.

It is very difficult to reconcile his two points of view: his hope that appeasement will still be worked out and his fear that Hitler has in his hands, and is quite likely to use them, the means of causing a world war. He definitely does not think Mussolini will cause it.

KENNEDY

740.00/595½

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Under Secretary of State
(Welles)*

[WASHINGTON,] February 20, 1939.

The British Ambassador³⁵ called to see me this morning to make his first visit upon his return to Washington from England.

The Ambassador said that it was his impression upon his departure from England ten days ago that Mr. Chamberlain's position in the country was very strong indeed. He said that both the extreme conservatives and the extreme radicals were continuing to belabor the Government violently because it had found itself in a position last September where Munich was possible, but that even these two elements now seemed to have come to the conclusion that Munich was preferable to a war in which England and France would both have been at a great disadvantage.

The Ambassador said that on January 24 and 25 public opinion in London and the Foreign Office in particular had been in an almost unbelievable state of excitement because of reports that Germany was planning a move in the west involving the invasion of Holland. By February 11, the day he had left London to come to the United States, opinion in general including that of the Foreign Office had swung over to a state of almost unbelievable optimism and of reassurance. The Ambassador said that he thought one state of mind was as disquieting as the other and that the nervous strain under which they were all living in England was appalling. He said that his own Foreign Office was in a very unsatisfactory condition. He said that Lord Halifax was a man of real ability and an "excellent Christian gentleman", but that he did not seem to have any real insight into the European situation. He said that Sir Robert Vansittart³⁶ was consulted by neither Chamberlain nor Halifax and was creating so much trouble that the Government would probably get rid of him this spring and he said that when Vansittart did go he would go with a considerable "splash". I asked him what attitude Sir Robert was taking, and he gave me to understand that he was violently opposed to the policy of appeasement and strongly of the opinion that war was inevitable and that Great Britain should all along have taken a far stronger stand.

The Ambassador said that while he had not talked with the chiefs of the British naval or military establishments, he was nevertheless of the impression from his talks with members of the Government that the rearmament program was at last moving ahead very quickly. He said his belief was that far too much time had been wasted in laying

³⁵ Sir Ronald Lindsay.

³⁶ Chief Diplomatic Adviser, British Foreign Office.

the foundations for the rearmament program, such as the creation of special towns for special kinds of munitions factories, et cetera, but that now the projects which had been carried out were functioning with rapidity and successfully. He said that in his last talk with Lord Halifax the latter had said that the rearmament program was moving ahead so well that if the British Government could get safely through the next four months, he would feel assured as to the finally peaceful outcome of the present situation. The Ambassador commented that the real crux of the problem was that they ought to be in that position now and not still have to wait four months before feeling themselves sufficiently armed. He said one great step had been taken with the approval of everyone and that was the replacement of Sir Thomas Inskip by Lord Chatfield as head of the national defense program.

I told the Ambassador in general terms of Mr. Kennedy's telegram reporting his recent conversation with Mr. Chamberlain³⁷ and said that while I was, of course, relieved to receive such an optimistic impression of the present situation as that expressed by Mr. Chamberlain, the information which I had from other sources in Europe was all exceedingly disquieting and I mentioned the fact, without indicating its origin, that we had received reports which would tend to show that Italy was now planning for a definite showdown in March and that there were indications that Germany was prepared to back her up in that attempt. I also said that it seemed significant, in view of these reports, that the Government of Japan should at this moment have occupied the Island of Hainan. I said that it seemed to me in view of these reports we had received, all of them grave and all of them alarming, that there must be some explanation of Mr. Chamberlain's optimism and I wondered if the Ambassador had any clue to give me with regard thereto.

The Ambassador said that his own feeling was that Mr. Chamberlain was a remarkably unemotional, very logical, and very clear thinker who was reasoning out the situation on a basis of abstract logic perhaps rather than by taking into account the human elements involved and the mercurial factors with which he was dealing. He said that he doubted whether Mr. Chamberlain's colleagues in the Cabinet shared his feeling of reassurance, and that he, the Ambassador, knew as a positive fact that the Foreign Office was exceedingly apprehensive, although, as he had said before, in such a state of high tension that it was apt to lapse into the extremes of emotion one way or the other, varying from day to day.

I told the Ambassador that I hoped the Secretary of State would be well enough tomorrow to come to the office again and that I knew

³⁷ Telegram No. 246, February 17, *supra*.

he would want to talk with the Ambassador, particularly with regard to the trade approach which the British Government was planning to make to the German Government.

In the course of our conversation the Ambassador handed me a copy of a secret and personal message "From Lord Halifax for the President", a copy of which is attached.³⁸

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

740.00/590a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to President Roosevelt*³⁹

WASHINGTON, February 20, 1939—6 p. m.

3. From the Under Secretary. The British Ambassador who has just returned from England gave me this morning the text of a personal and secret message sent to you for your information by the British Government and received by telegram today. After referring to previous memoranda sent by the British Government to the French Government, the message states that the British Government has informed the French Government as regards Switzerland that if Germany invaded Switzerland and France thereupon declared war upon Germany, the United Kingdom would go to the assistance of France in the same way that they understood France would be willing to support Great Britain if Germany invaded Holland and Great Britain thereupon declared war upon Germany.

The remainder of the message reads textually as follows:

"In reply to the French arguments regarding Anglo-French solidarity in face of an unprovoked attack by Germany or Italy, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom stated that joint action by Germany and Italy against the two Western Great Powers or against any one of them would clearly have to be resisted in common by the two Powers with the whole of their resources; indeed the obligations which His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom had assumed towards the French Government by treaty already cover the case of an unprovoked attack delivered upon France by Germany whether acting alone or in support of Italy. While it was possible that in the event of an attack on France by Italy alone France might feel that it was not necessarily in her interests that Great Britain should intervene if the effect of such intervention were to bring Germany into what might otherwise be a localized conflict, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom were fully conscious that the risks to which the two Powers were severally exposed could not be disassociated. The French Government would have noted the Prime Minister's statement in the House of Commons on February 6th. It was in the light of this situation that His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom had proposed to the French Government the exten-

³⁸ See telegram to President Roosevelt, February 20, *infra*.

³⁹ Aboard the cruiser *Houston* in the Caribbean to view fleet maneuvers.

sion of staff conversations as indicated in paragraph 2 of Lord Halifax's shorter message of February 7th.⁴⁰

The terms of this reply to the French Government are being communicated to the Belgian Government for their secret information."

[WELLES]

HULL

740.00/592 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, February 23, 1939—2 p. m.

[Received 2:30 p. m.]

259. I saw Halifax and Cadogan separately this morning. Halifax had had a talk with Von Dirksen⁴¹ who is leaving to go back to Germany for a couple of weeks. Three things of rather interesting significance are: (1) Halifax asked Von Dirksen why, if Hitler really were serious about wanting trade pacts and peace, he continued his terrific armament program and Von Dirksen said that they were greatly disturbed in Germany at the almost weekly utterances of the President of the United States and they had become convinced that the United States would come to the aid of England and France not in 2 years, but probably in 2 days and they therefore felt that the only thing to do was to keep making themselves strong. This last conclusion does not seem to have much rhyme nor reason but nevertheless that was the one he said the German Government have arrived at. (2) Halifax told Von Dirksen that he wished he would attempt to have the German Government influence the Italians in playing down the agitation of the Italian press in stirring up difficulties between Italy and France, because, said Halifax, Mussolini may find himself in a position that he would not like at all and will not be able to back up. Von Dirksen agreed with that statement completely. (3) Halifax asked him whether there was any truth in the rumor that Ribbentrop was likely to come to London. Von Dirksen said that Ribbentrop no longer felt animosity toward England and would come here to sign an industrial agreement or any other agreement that would give him a good excuse for coming.

With reference to the Spanish situation they are preparing a cable to send to our Government in Washington through the German delegates. They have made up their minds that there is no real Spanish Government functioning, because over a week ago the Spanish Ambassador asked them to get some respectable terms for surrender. The

⁴⁰ *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939, Third Series, vol. iv, doc. No. 87, p. 83.*

⁴¹ German Ambassador in the United Kingdom.

English said they would help and prepared a note to Franco which they wanted submitted through the Spanish Ambassador to his Government before they sent it. They have not yet had an answer as to whether their proposition was what the Spanish Government wanted, which confirms their idea that there is no such thing as a government any longer, and that Franco can finish it off any time he wants to. They have so advised the French and suggested recognizing Franco. The French want a little more time to get Bérard's⁴² report, but at any rate it will be within a few days. They have a promise from Franco that he will not punish any of the opponents except those who have violated the Spanish criminal laws so the British are accepting this for what it is worth and will extend recognition.

The British Cabinet have agreed to give a guarantee up to £5,000,000 for stabilization of Chinese currency. They regard this as being very helpful to the Chinese and their reports convince them that the Japanese are having tremendous difficulties and are very much disturbed over the possibility of Anglo-American cooperation against them.

There are no new developments regarding the German situation and as to the Italian-French situation, Cadogan told me that they had received advices from Lindsay that the State Department had been informed of the French General Staff's growing uneasiness caused by Italian preparations.⁴³ Cadogan says that they can get no confirmation themselves that anything special is taking place or at least for which their people in Italy and the French staff cannot find reasonably good excuses.

I have a feeling that, in spite of the British complacency at the moment, the topside men in the Government ask themselves every night, if Germany continues to arm and it is becoming more and more difficult to stop arming and make the transition to a peaceful economic basis, what can Hitler possibly do? It would seem easier to continue warlike methods rather than assume the burden of a new economy for Germany. Mussolini also may find himself in a position where he cannot back out and we will have a war in desperation before we know it. England feels that the last 6 months have aided them tremendously in preparation for defense and their attitude at a round table conference would be much stiffer than it was at Munich. In the meantime, tremendous amounts of money must be borrowed and a revival of European rumors of war will not make this any too easy. The long term outlook for England, whichever way you look at it, seems to me exceedingly dark.

KENNEDY

⁴² Léon Bérard, official French representative to the Spanish Nationalist Government.

⁴³ See telegram No. 245, February 8, 8 p. m., from the Ambassador in France, p. 13.

762.00/263

*The Chargé in Germany (Gilbert) to the Secretary of State*⁴⁴

[Extracts]

No. 603

BERLIN, February 24, 1939.

[Received March 14.]

SIR:

Memel: In my last telegram reporting on Memel, I cited an informed authority to the effect that Germany contemplated incorporating the Memel territory into the Reich, giving Lithuania in return access to Memel as a free port together with certain commercial advantages. I have now, however, been given advices that the plan for this territorial transfer may have been abandoned for the moment. I have been told to watch for a new German-Lithuanian treaty which may carry possible inferences of Memel's remaining *de jure* under Lithuanian sovereignty while the *de facto* control will lie with Germany. This whole matter is, however, apparently still in the making.

Incidentally in the meantime, presumably as an instrument of pressure for some purpose, the new Lithuanian Minister Designate in Berlin⁴⁵ has for some time been awaiting a response to his request to present his credentials.

As I have stated in a somewhat different manner earlier in this despatch, one cannot but be conscious of an underlying uncertainty in reporting from Berlin where one is confronted with an unknown, and unknowable, factor which is unqualifiedly dominant in all German policy. I refer to the attitude of Hitler and such decisions as he may reach. In reporting from Berlin one naturally follows the normal tendency of building up an estimate of German policy on the outward aspects of the scene presented, combined with such information from private sources and expressions of competent opinion as may be available. All this may be done and yet the possibility remains that what is reported is in reality far from the mark. At the cost of appearing to labor the point I cannot too strongly emphasize that it must not be lost sight of that all decisions rest in the final analysis in the hands of one man and of one man alone. It may easily be that Hitler is in a situation where he has not made up his mind what course to follow and thus in a sense no German policy exists. It may again be the case that Hitler has made up his mind but that he has imparted his decisions to no one or perhaps to a most limited group of his

⁴⁴ Unsigned except in typescript, by reason of Mr. Gilbert's sudden death on February 24; transmitted to the Department by the First Secretary of Embassy.

⁴⁵ Kazys Skirpa.

immediate associates who strictly guard the secret. Even attempts to estimate German policy from appraisals of Hitler's character may likewise lead one into grave error. He remains inscrutable. Considerations such as the foregoing enter into all discussions of German policy between diplomatic representatives here.

Respectfully yours,

PRENTISS GILBERT

740.00/688

Report by the Military Attaché in Germany (Smith) ⁴⁶

No. 16,470

BERLIN, February 20 [26?], 1939.

On February 26th there appears to be practically no chance of any German aggression in Europe for the balance of 1939, unless some at present unpredictable development should occur. The Military Attaché has had the opportunity to talk with at least five important officers of the German army who have heard Hitler discussing foreign political issues within the past week. All of these officers are agreed that Hitler foresaw no immediate complications for the time being. Hitler appears to believe that as a result of the conference at Munich, a definite development is occurring in all South-Eastern Europe and that this development would only be hindered by German interference in Hungary or Roumania. Hitler never mentioned to any of these officers any plans in the West, but this is recognized as an absurdity by all Germans, whether military or of the party, and would never be brought up in a conversation.

Hitler does not appear to foresee any war-like developments in the Mediterranean this year. This opinion is also shared by practically all German officers. These officers reject, almost with laughter, the idea that Germany is going to expend its youths for the sake of Italian control in Jibuti or Tunis. These officers, however, are all of the opinion that Mussolini will come out the winner in the present Mediterranean crisis. They point to the fact that it is out of the question that Mussolini will leave Majorca until his claims elsewhere are satisfied. They all believe that Mussolini is too clever and wise a statesman to place his demands beyond the point which France can accept with honor. Many German officers believe that the eventual solution will be a division of Tunis.

Evidence from every side in Berlin at the present time is that the main effort of Hitler and the German government is on the expansion of foreign trade. Hitler made this question of increase of foreign trade the principal plank of his speech to the Reichstag on January

⁴⁶ Copy transmitted to the Department of State by the War Department; received March 20, 1939.

30 and all evidence goes to show that this is actually the main interest of the German government at the present time. There is every evidence in Berlin that the commercial discussions with England are being very carefully prepared in advance and that the preliminary basis of an agreement is already in existence.

There have been numerous indications in recent weeks that the German army, at least in a minor way, has begun to economize. Whether this economy extends beyond normal administrative expenses, however, has not yet been determined.

Germany during the month of February 1939 has been quieter politically than at any time since August 1935. It is apparent that the German government and Hitler are seeking to counteract the war rumors which apparently are widely prevalent in Paris, London and Washington.

TRUMAN SMITH

711.62/234 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, February 28, 1939—10 p. m.
[Received February 28—8:43 p. m.]

380. Last night Bonnet asked me to call on him so that he might show me a telegram which he had just received from Coulondre, French Ambassador in Berlin, in which the French Ambassador expressed the opinion in strong terms that the United States should send the American Ambassador back to Berlin at once.⁴⁷ I read the telegram in Bonnet's office this evening.

Incidentally it gave a clear idea of the intense effort the French Government is making to reach an understanding with Germany. Coulondre said that he was doing his best to improve relations and that the atmosphere at the present moment was good. He also stated: "As you know the British Government has been redoubling its efforts recently to reach an understanding with Germany".

Coulondre went on to say that the American Embassy had been cooperating in the effort to achieve understanding between Germany, France, and England and that he felt the death of Chargé d'Affaires left a hole in the ranks of the democracies in Berlin which should be filled as soon as possible by the return of the Ambassador. It was his opinion that the chance of understanding between Germany, France, and England would be greatly increased if there should be an American Ambassador in Berlin working for reconciliation.

⁴⁷ For instruction to Ambassador Wilson to return to Washington for consultation, see telegram No. 201, November 14, 1938, 2 p. m., *Foreign Relations*, 1938, vol. II, p. 398. The Ambassador did not return to Germany.

Bonnet said that he was not so sure this evening as he had been last night that Coulondre was right. It was most valuable to France and England in their efforts to achieve reconciliation with Germany to have the United States as an unreconciled potential threat in the background. The comparatively conciliatory line which the Germans were taking was in his opinion due to the fact that they were afraid of the United States.

It would certainly be valuable to have an American Ambassador in Berlin cooperating closely with Coulondre and Nevile Henderson, but this might be less valuable than the position which it was now possible for the French and British to take in Berlin; to wit: that they were much more reasonable in their attitude toward Germany than the Government of the United States. After thinking it over he was therefore of the opinion that from the point of view of reconciliation it might be advisable not to have the American Ambassador return to Berlin until after the crisis which he anticipated would arise from Italian demands after the election of the Pope.

I replied that from his point of view there appeared to be much to be said on both sides of the question; and that the Government of the United States had its own point of view.

BULLITT

740.00/624

The Ambassador in Poland (Biddle) to the Secretary of State

No. 979

WARSAW, March 3, 1939.

[Received March 16.]

SIR: Now that the spotlight of political attention is focussed on Warsaw as a center for diplomatic "shopping tours" by the Foreign Ministers of Germany, Italy and Rumania, and since Minister Beck has just given a favorable response to the British Embassy's soundings as to his attitude towards an early visit to London, (now tentatively scheduled for first week in April), I have the honor to report, as of possible interest, my following observations regarding Polish officialdom's attitude concerning the current trend of European affairs:

Accordingly, the following substance of Beck's recent confidential remarks to me, affords in my opinion, an insight to Beck's present reaction to events current and their potential bearing on those apparently in-the-making.

Beck reminded me that during the tense period leading up to the Munich Conference, he had imparted his belief Chamberlain was bluffing; at the very moment he was taking emergency measures and whipping up a war psychosis among his people, Chamberlain had full intention of trading instead of fighting it out with Hitler. More-

over, Beck reminded me he had said at that time that this was a risky procedure in connection both with British public psychology and confidence on part of statesmen abroad, in terms of the long-range outlook. It might prove expensive to Chamberlain in any future crisis. If and when another crisis arose, the British people would not be apt to forget their last experience. What was more, in view thereof, and until he adopted serious measures to build up a first class army, Chamberlain would have difficulty in exacting advance commitments from statesmen of foreign countries who, once "bitten", would hardly allow themselves to be used as potential instruments in what might possibly develop into a game of international bluff, for fear of subsequently falling victims of the vindictiveness of the Dictators.

Having recalled to mind the foregoing, Beck then significantly remarked he continued to feel of the same opinion: that in view of pre-Munich events, Chamberlain might conceivably find not only his own people but also the Governments of other states wary of Chamberlain's underlying intentions in the event Britain and/or France came to a show-down with Berlin and/or Rome.

I consider the foregoing significant, in that to my mind, it portrays what is in the back of the Polish official mind today, when appraising the nearby turn of events. In other words, I am of the opinion the Polish Government will seek to avoid the possibility of finding itself "out on a limb", in terms of commitments, not only to the Axis powers but also to the Western Powers, possibly only later to be let down, and left to the vindictiveness of either or both ends of the Axis in event of a potential deal between the latter and London and Paris. Indeed, persistent reports from confidential sources abroad, to the effect that there is an underlying tendency amongst important elements in official circles both in Paris and London to compromise the Italo-French differences as well as Germany's colonial claims, have made a marked impression on Government circles here.

On the other hand, I am aware that Beck and his associates in Government and military circles here greeted the firm attitude manifested by President Roosevelt and his Government associates, together with our sale of planes to France and Britain and our Government's armament program, as "music to their ears". Moreover, they felt that altogether this had stiffened the Western European democracies, and had chased the dictators to cover, to reexamining their respective and joint positions. They are sincerely hopeful that recent signs of stiffening on part of the European democracies will continue, and that the dictators will at least for a while, continue to modulate the tone of their former boisterousness. Moreover, it is well to bear in mind that fundamentally Beck realizes that in event of an inter-Axes con-

flict, Poland's only "out" from eventual German aggression and potential hegemony, would be Poland's participation on the side of a victorious democratic front. Meanwhile, however, due to the aforesaid circumstances, and Poland's delicate geo-political position, Poland will "wait and see".

In other words, and in terms of the immediate future, I look for Beck to pursue an "I'm from Missouri" policy vis-à-vis the Western European Powers, coupled with a "wait and see" policy vis-à-vis developments between the Rome-Berlin and London-Paris Axes.

Respectfully yours,

A. J. DREXEL BIDDLE, JR.

641.6231/167 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom
(Kennedy)*

WASHINGTON, March 7, 1939—6 p. m.

169. Your 292, March 3⁴⁹ and previous. The prospective trade negotiations between Germany and England, as they relate both to negotiations between private industrial interests and to negotiations between the Governments, are of course of the greatest interest to this Government. I appreciate your reports on the information you have been able to obtain on this subject and I trust that you will continue to follow it and to report thereon. The reports from the field and the great flood of newspaper stories which have reached the Department still leave us without any certain understanding of the objectives of the discussions or of the arrangements which may result.

In a recent conversation with Lindsay, I indicated the strong American interest in this matter, an interest which extends to both the political and the economic connotations of any arrangements which may be worked out between England and Germany. I summarized to him once again our trade program and principles of commercial policy and the necessity for our Governments to take a long-run view rather than to be diverted into picking up bits of immediate advantage which over a longer period fail to contribute to the increase of international trade. I stated to the Ambassador that both Governments are in agreement that this is the only sound permanent basis for international trade and that if a large number of countries, led by Great Britain and the United States, will gradually move toward this program with a decreasing number of exceptions to it, there can be no doubt that our system of trade cannot fail to remain the dominant one. In these circumstances, the degree to which British commercial policy sustains rather than departs from this type of program is therefore of the greatest importance.

⁴⁹ Not printed.

Such evidence as we have been able to gather seems to indicate that the British Government is using the conversations with Germany primarily as a means of safeguarding British trade against German methods of competition and that the German Government is similarly seeking to protect German trade. What form of arrangements such efforts may result in is, however, not at all clear. If any arrangements should be established which would facilitate the operation of the German trade system, while Germany continues to arm and to threaten aggression, this could not fail at the present time to attract attention in the United States and to affect public sentiment with regard to European affairs.

One possible form of arrangement might, of course, be some sort of British credits to Germany, either open or disguised. I shall appreciate receiving whatever information you may be able to obtain on the prospects for such credits as well as upon all other aspects of this subject.

HULL

770.00/597 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, March 9, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received March 9—3 p. m.]

443. Daladier⁵⁰ and the Polish Ambassador lunched with me today and discussed the situation in Central and Eastern Europe. During the conversation the Polish Ambassador stated that the visit of Gafencu⁵¹ to Warsaw had resulted in Rumania giving entire approval to the Polish proposal that Ruthenia eventually should be occupied by Polish and Hungarian troops and given to Hungary. The Polish Ambassador added that Beck had agreed with Gafencu that Poland should undertake negotiations immediately for reconciliation between Hungary and Rumania on the basis of a greatly increased liberty for the Hungarians of Transylvania and Rumanian permission for Hungary to take Ruthenia. He said that as soon as this agreement should have been worked out a Hungarian occupation of Ruthenia was to be expected.

The Polish Ambassador reiterated to Daladier what he had said to me previously, to wit: that the only reason Hungary did not today own Ruthenia was because the Hungarian Government under Imredy⁵² had not dared to act at the crucial moment. He said that

⁵⁰ Édouard Daladier, President of the French Council of Ministers.

⁵¹ Grigore Gafencu, Rumanian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

⁵² Bela de Imredy, Hungarian Prime Minister, May 1938-February 1939.

in case Poland and Hungary should act in the near future the only thing to be expected from Germany would be a note of protest.

The Polish Ambassador pointed out that resistance to German advance in Central and Eastern Europe since Munich had been provided not by France and England, both of whom had been rather visibly anxious to have Germany turn her hostile intentions towards Russia, but on the contrary by Poland, Hungary and Rumania, all of which states knew that they had everything to lose by German domination. The Polish Ambassador said that relations between Rumania and Poland had never been so close as they were today and added Polish-Hungarian relations had never been closer.

While it would be impossible for Poland to form anything that could be called "a bloc" composed of Poland, Rumania and Hungary in opposition to German expansion to the southward and eastward, in point of fact Poland would do everything possible to strengthen Rumanian and Hungarian resistance to German advance. He stated to Daladier that he believed that this should also be the policy of France. The strengthening of national resistance to the advance of Germany in Poland, Hungary, Rumania and Yugoslavia should be the basis of French policy. Daladier agreed that this sounded sensible.

Both Daladier and the Polish Ambassador were of the opinion that the Soviet Union was to be counted on for nothing. They both felt that it was certain that internal conditions in the Soviet Union would prevent the Red Army from taking any active part in any war anywhere and both agreed that no reliance could be based on any promises of Soviet support in the form of supplies to Poland or Rumania. Both agreed also that if Hitler should be willing it would not take a half hour to form an alliance between Germany and the Soviet Union. Stalin was panting for such an agreement.

Daladier stated with the greatest possible emphasis to the Polish Ambassador that there could be no possible question of any French concessions whatsoever to Italy at the present time. He would not give way to blackmail. He had given his final orders this morning for further reenforcement of French troops in Tunisia. If the Italians wanted war they could have it. They would be defeated. He did not propose to discuss any concessions of any kind to Italy.

The Polish Ambassador informed me that Beck now expected to go to London on the second of April and would not visit Paris en route. He said that Beck was extremely angry because the French press had been so delighted by the student demonstrations against Germany while Ciano⁵⁴ was in Poland. Moreover the French Ambassador in Warsaw, Noel, had apparently taken an attitude toward

⁵⁴ Galeazzo Ciano, Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

these demonstrations which had infuriated Beck. Beck therefore had been compelled to be more amiable in his conversations with Ciano than he had wished to be. There had been no agreements. I gathered, however, that Beck had expressed to Ciano Poland's interest in an eventual general redistribution of colonies.

The Polish Ambassador said that he had received a letter from Beck this morning stating that his impression after his conversations with Ciano was that Italy at the present moment would not dare to risk war with France.

BULLITT

740.00/654

The Consul at Geneva (Bucknell) to the Secretary of State

[Extract]

No. 513 Political

GENEVA, March 10, 1939.
[Received March 21.]

SIR: I have the honor to inform the Department that in a recent conversation with the Secretary General of the League Mr. Avenol discussed at some length the present international situation. To sum up his views briefly, he felt that until some sort of international conference could meet to settle basic problems such as disarmament, economic barriers to trade, et cetera, no long-range or final settlement was possible in Europe. He thought that a conference of this kind was impossible for the moment but on the other hand felt that some progress had been made in that public opinion against war in the totalitarian countries seemed to be steadily growing and furthermore the balance of forces between the democratic countries and the totalitarian states was rapidly becoming more equal. This latter factor he thought might well act as a deterrent to any desperate venture on the part of either Hitler or Mussolini. Failing some final settlement of the more underlying problems, he felt that the present situation of relative calm might be only temporary and that the general situation might change drastically from day to day or from month to month.

During the same conversation he spoke with great appreciation of the Secretary's reply to the League concerning the technical activities of the League and our collaboration in these activities. He described the reply as a very important document and one that was greatly appreciated. He also took occasion to refer to the President's last speech before Congress,⁵⁵ which he said he had read and re-read, and described it as a "very great speech". In speaking of the defense

⁵⁵ January 4, 1939, *Congressional Record*, vol. 84, pt. 1, p. 74.

of democratic institutions in the face of totalitarian pressure, he went on to say that any defender of the League could have made the speech that the President had made before Congress in defense and support of the former institution.

As regards the present mission of the League, he felt that it was no time to make political pronouncements or to undertake political manoeuvres. Emphasis should, he thought, be placed rather upon the extension and added efficiency of the League's technical services which would prove the value of the technical collaboration mentioned in the Secretary's reply referred to above.

Respectfully yours,

HOWARD BUCKNELL, JR.

751.65/588 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

[Extracts]

PARIS, [undated].

[Received March 11, 1939—12:45 p. m.]

457. Bonnet spent a part of this afternoon with me and I invited Ambassador Kennedy to join us. Before the Ambassador arrived Bonnet said to me that he had sent a note to the British Government today⁵⁷ replying in extremely stiff terms to the British note referred to in my numbers 401, March 3, and 430, March 8.⁵⁸

Bonnet asked Ambassador Kennedy if to his knowledge the Italian Government had presented any demands against France to the British Government. The Ambassador replied that he had discussed this subject with Chamberlain and Halifax and he was certain that the Italians had not presented any concrete demands either to Lord Perth⁵⁹ or in London. He went on to say that the British attitude today was entirely different from the British attitude in September. He had never believed that the British Government would fight last September. He believed now that the British Government was fully prepared to fight and that Hore-Belisha's speech⁶⁰ was of the utmost importance as an indication of British policy.

⁵⁷ For text of French note dated March 8, 1939, see *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939*, Third Series, vol. iv, doc. No. 365, p. 341.

⁵⁸ Neither printed.

⁵⁹ British Ambassador in Italy.

⁶⁰ Speech by Hore-Belisha, British Secretary of State for War, March 8, 1939, in the British House of Commons; see *Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons*, 5th ser., vol. 344 (1938-39), p. 2161.

Chamberlain had told him a week before Belisha's speech that he had told Belisha to make such a speech although he knew that it would be the most severe blow that the British public had had to receive for years. It would not be easy for the British to swallow the idea that they must send soldiers to France. He considered this speech a positive indication that the British would bring no pressure whatsoever on the French to make concessions to Japan [*Italy?*].

Bonnet said that he was extremely glad to hear this and the discussion then turned to the problem which would be presented if on the one hand the French and British should go on increasing their defensive strength but not desire war and on the other hand the Germans and Italians should go on increasing their armed strength but be afraid to begin war. Security against attack would increase on both sides but ruin would approach with each gain in security.

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At this point Ambassador Kennedy was obliged to leave for Rome.

Bonnet then said that he had been much surprised to read today a despatch from Washington by Roussy de Sales⁶¹ stating that public opinion in the United States would be against a conference for limitation of armaments at the present time and asked me if our Government would be opposed to such a conference.

I replied that the President's speeches and yours indicated clearly that the United States always would be ready to participate in a conference for the limitation of armaments; but added that in my opinion we would not desire to abandon the program of rearmament which we had just inaugurated.

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In conclusion Bonnet said to me that he could not help reflecting during our conversation on the immense improvement in the situation from the point of view of the democracies since last September. This was due in part to the evolution of public opinion in Great Britain, the progress of the rearmament program in Great Britain and to the greatly improved situation in France, but in major part it was due to the policy which had been followed by the Government of the United States since last October.

BULLITT

⁶¹ Count Raoul de Roussy de Sales, special correspondent in the United States for the *Paris-Soir*.

II. OCCUPATION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA BY GERMANY, MARCH 15, 1939;
REFUSAL OF THE UNITED STATES TO RECOGNIZE EXTINCTION OF
THE CZECHOSLOVAK REPUBLIC⁶³

760F.62/1911: Telegram

The Minister in Czechoslovakia (Carr) to the Secretary of State

PRAHA, January 26, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received January 26—2:20 p. m.]

7. I visited the Foreign Minister⁶⁴ yesterday. In contrast with his appearance at the end of December he seemed worn and dispirited but this may have been due to the fact that he had not been well and carried out his recent trip to Berlin despite a high fever.

The Reichs Chancellor, he said, had expressed himself as dissatisfied with Czech attitude toward several matters principally the Jews, the press, the army and the German minority. Hitler had said that he would not be content until every Jew had been driven out of Germany and that he thought that Czechoslovakia, if it wished to show its loyalty to Germany and establish proper relations with it, should pursue a like course instead. No drastic measures had been taken against the Jews and many of them still occupied high positions in the Government as they had under Beneš.⁶⁵ The Minister for Foreign Affairs had replied that it was absolutely impossible for Czechoslovakia to pursue toward the Jews the same course which had been pursued in Germany. Hitler's reply had been that he was not telling Czechoslovakia what to do but that if the Jewish question were not settled to Germany's satisfaction Czechoslovakia would have to abide by the consequences. The bulk of Hitler's delineations had been in relation to the Jews and he had made it clear that until that question was settled no satisfactory relations could be established between Germany and Czechoslovakia. The Government was now considering this matter.

Hitler had also asked that the Czechoslovak Army be reduced and that the country agree to be neutralized or at least to place itself in much the position of Holland and Denmark. Germany, Hitler had said, had no desire ever to attack either of those countries and would have the same attitude toward Czechoslovakia if she should reduce her army and bring herself into harmony with the policies of the Reich. In response to my question the Minister of Foreign Affairs said that Hitler positively did not want the Czechoslovak Army enlarged or to utilize it to supplement the German Army.

⁶³ For previous correspondence concerning Czechoslovakia, see *Foreign Relations*, 1938, vol I, pp. 483 ff.

⁶⁴ F. Chvalkovsky.

⁶⁵ Eduard Beneš, former President of Czechoslovakia.

Another demand of Hitler had been that the Germans now in Czechoslovakia should have the right to develop their National Socialist philosophy in this country without hindrance.

Unless these things should be done it would be impossible for Hitler to guarantee boundaries and establish satisfactory relations with Czechoslovakia.

In response to my question the Minister of Foreign Affairs said that Germany had not asked for a customs union and that in fact Dr. Ritter, connected with Foreign Office, had told him positively that Germany had no intention of doing so. The Minister for Foreign Affairs added that Germany is this country's largest buyer and that she wants to buy more but frankly says that she will pay only in German goods and she wants to enter into an understanding as to the precise goods which are to be accepted in payment.

It is interesting to note that the Minister for Foreign Affairs' return has been followed by the liquidation of a number of Communist labor unions and the suppression of the newspaper which was the organ of the pro-Beneš legionnaire group.

CARR

760F.62/1914 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Gilbert) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, February 1, 1939—2 p. m.
[Received February 1—12:03 p. m.]

83. 1. The Czechoslovak Government has informed Germany in a note which has been made public that it will permit the activities of the National Socialist Foreign Organization among Germans in Czechoslovakia.

2. The Czechoslovak Minister informs me that in the course of recent discussions here with German officials the question arose as to what would be Czechoslovakia's future attitude toward the Jewish question. Czechoslovakia took the position that it could not resort to anti-Semitic action owing to the grave effects that foreign boycotts would have on its difficult trade position. This standpoint was accepted by the German Government.

GILBERT

860F.00/600 : Telegram

The Minister in Czechoslovakia (Carr) to the Secretary of State

PRAHA, March 10, 1939—6 p. m.
[Received March 10—4:50 p. m.]

18. According to an official communiqué broadcast here this morning, President Hacha has dismissed the entire Slovak Cabinet with

the exception of Teplansky, Minister of Finance, and Joseph Sivak, Minister of Education, both of whom are moderate members of the Slovak Party. Sidor remains Deputy Prime Minister in the Central Government. At the same time it is stated that the Central Government has assured Slovakia financial assistance for economic reconstruction.

This change follows closely upon the attempt within the past week (see my despatch 345 sent by air mail this morning⁶⁶) to settle differences between the Slovak and the Central Government hinging chiefly upon the question of financial assistance to Slovakia and its constitutional status within the state. The action is claimed to have been taken in full agreement with all responsible Slovak authorities who are said to realize that the existence of Slovakia can be secured only within the outline of the present Czechoslovak Republic (as declared by the Slovak Government on Saturday) and the Pittsburgh Agreement⁶⁷ and therefore answers the program of the Hlinka Party.⁶⁸

At the request of the President of Czechoslovakia, Sokol, speaker Slovak Diet, has come to Praha and is discussing the formation of a new Slovak government. Sivak en route to Rome as delegate of the Slovak Government to the Papal coronation has been recalled to Praha. Meanwhile Teplansky is in charge of the Government in Bratislava.

The changes seem to eliminate most of those personages who were furthering a separatist movement and who were reputed to be carrying on direct negotiations with Berlin. Moreover, the changes would seem to represent the Central Government's conditions for the financial aid essential to repair the large deficit in the Slovak budget and indicate a stronger attitude which it is presumed must have been taken with the actual or tacit approval of Berlin. The Foreign Minister told me yesterday that Germany is not supporting separatist activities in Slovakia, although I learn from other non-governmental sources which I consider reliable that the secessionist policy has been actively encouraged from Vienna if not from Berlin.

The dismissals seem to have been precipitated by propaganda in favor of Slovak independence carried on by Tuka and Slovak propaganda chief Mach, and the increasing disorder in Slovakia culminating in disturbances at various points in the province yesterday. In

⁶⁶ Despatch No. 345, March 9, not printed.

⁶⁷ Protocol by representatives of the Slovak and Czech organizations in the United States, approving the political program aiming at the union of the Czechs and Slovaks in an independent state, adopted at Pittsburgh, Pa., May 30, 1918; for text, see Ivan Dérer, Czechoslovak Minister of Justice, *The Unity of the Czechs and Slovaks (Czechoslovak Sources and Documents No. 23)*, (Prague, "Orbis" Publishing Co., 1938), p. 23.

⁶⁸ Slovak Peoples Party established by Andrej Hlinka, and headed by him until his death, August 16, 1938.

neither case was the Slovak Government strong enough to exercise the necessary control and it became imperative that drastic measures be taken. The dismissed Ministers and Mach and Tuka are reported to be under detention in Bratislava and public buildings there are occupied by the military. Order is said to prevail.

CARR

860F.00/608 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, March 13, 1939—7 p. m.

[Received March 13—4: 58 p. m.]

470. We are told by the Czech Legation that the present situation in Slovakia has been created deliberately by the Germans because of the refusal of the Czech Government and people to hand over control of their country to Germany. The Czech Government has withstood demands by Germany for the dismissal of officials who had been associated with Beneš and Czech financial and business people have refused to sell the controlling interest in their concerns to Germans. The Nazis therefore determined to get at Bohemia and Moravia by first obtaining control of Slovakia. If the attempted coup had succeeded on the 10th it was intended to proclaim immediately not only a so-called independent Slovakia but also a customs and monetary union between Slovakia and Germany.

Our informant said that the Nazis had been greatly assisted by the political incapacity and venality of the Slovaks. The Germans have already acquired control of the principal Slovak industries and mining properties including all lands where oil is believed to exist: in fact, "the Germans have already bought Slovakia".

In the opinion of our informant the Nazis will not rest until they have a government in Praha completely subservient to their wishes. Once this has been accomplished it will then be the turn of Hungary and after that of Rumania. The French listen sympathetically but are doing nothing. The British have appeared to be entirely without interest in the matter until this afternoon when the Czechoslovak Legation here heard from London that the British Government had made some statement, whether to the press or to the German Government was not clear, to the effect that they were in fact interested in this latest crisis affecting Czechoslovakia.

In reply to a question regarding the status of the guarantee of Czechoslovakia's frontiers promised at Munich we were told that about a month ago the Czechoslovak Government raised this question with the French and British Governments. These Governments took the matter up with Berlin, but were informed that the guarantee

could not be made effective until the problem of Polish and Hungarian minorities in Czechoslovakia had been adjusted—whatever that might mean. There the matter has been allowed to rest.

BULLITT

860F.00/614 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Geist) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, March 14, 1939—2 p. m.
[Received March 14—11:47 a. m.]

166. Developments during the last 12 hours indicate that the Germans intend to take decisive action in connection with the Slovakian crisis.

It looks now as though this intervention may consist (1) of a military occupation not only of Slovakia and Ruthenia but possibly also Bohemia and Moravia or (2) the possibility of setting up an independent Slovakia and Ruthenia under German protectorate. While the development toward the crisis appears to be as grave as those preceding the occupation of Austria and the Sudeten area the reaction on the part of the Western powers appears not to be serious.

The British Counselor, who returned from London today, states that the British Foreign Office is inclined to regard any move by the Germans in Czechoslovakia with calmness and will advise the British Government against assuming a threatening attitude when in fact it contemplates doing nothing. He stated in short that "the British Government were reconciled to a possibly extreme German action in Czechoslovakia". The British Embassy has no information as to what Hitler intends.

Troop movements identified indicate German military action in force in which possibly 40 divisions will participate. Military opinion in Berlin is divided as to whether the Poles will do nothing or attempt to occupy Ruthenia.

GEIST

860F.00/626 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, March 14, 1939—7 p. m.
[Received March 14—5:14 p. m.]

480. I called on Bonnet⁶⁹ this evening to ask for information with regard to the situation in Slovakia. He read to me a telegram which

⁶⁹ Georges Bonnet, French Minister for Foreign Affairs.

he had just received from Coulondre, French Ambassador in Berlin. Coulondre said that he had called on Weiszäcker ⁷⁰ today. Weiszäcker had said that there were 12 to 14 German divisions on the Czech frontier. The German Government considered the Government of M. Tiso the only legal government of Slovakia and had warned the Czechoslovak Government not to interfere with its operations. No ultimatum had yet been sent to the Czechoslovak Government.

The British Chargé d'Affaires in Berlin also saw Weiszäcker today and his impression was that the Germans did not intend to march into the territories controlled by the Czechoslovak Government.

On the other hand, the French Minister in Praha had telegraphed that both he and the Government in Praha believed that a German attack on the Czechoslovak Army was imminent. The Germans desired to destroy all power of resistance of the Czechoslovaks and for this purpose desired to destroy completely the Czechoslovak Army.

Bonnet said that he personally did not believe that Germany would go this far at once.

While I was with Bonnet he telephoned to Daladier ⁷¹ and consulted him with regard to the course that France should pursue, giving him the information recorded above.

Daladier and Bonnet decided that Bonnet should send immediately an instruction to Coulondre in Berlin ordering him to go at once to the German Foreign Office and to state that present German actions were in entire disaccord with the Munich agreements and that the French Government would regard most seriously any entry of German troops into the territories now controlled by the Czechoslovak Government. Coulondre was given discretion as to the wording of his remarks even to the point of being authorized to make them in the form of asking for information.

Bonnet said that the British Government had been in contact with him this afternoon and that the British simply did not know what to do.

I asked Bonnet what action would be taken by the French Government if in spite of Coulondre's *démarche* German troops should enter Czech territories. He said he had no idea, which is quite true.

BULLITT

⁷⁰ Baron Ernst von Weiszäcker, State Secretary in the German Foreign Office.

⁷¹ Édouard Daladier, President of the French Council of Ministers.

860F.00/631 : Telegram

The Minister in Czechoslovakia (Carr) to the Secretary of State

PRAHA, March 15, 1939—6 a. m.
[Received 6:20 a. m.]

32. The occupation of the remainder of this country by German troops is scheduled to begin at this moment, i. e., 6 a. m.

The Military Attaché reports that this information has been confirmed by the General Staff.

CARR

860F.00/645 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Geist) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, March 15, 1939—3 p. m.
[Received March 15—12:08 p. m.]

172. I saw Dr. Woermann of the Foreign Office this morning and informed him that I had noted in the press the Chancellor's proclamation and the agreement between the authorities of Czechoslovakia and the Reich and the newspaper reports of other events now taking place in Czechoslovakia and requested whatever information he could give concerning these matters. Dr. Woermann stated that he was not in a position to give any definite information with regard to the status of Czechoslovakia beyond what had appeared in the press and that he thought decisions would be rapidly made and the status clarified in several days. He informed me that instructions had been given to allow diplomatic missions and consulates in Praha to continue to communicate with their governments; that Herr Ritter had been appointed diplomatic liaison officer whose headquarters would be at the German Legation in Praha.

I brought up the question of the protection of American citizens, their property and their interests in Czechoslovakia, and Dr. Woermann said that he considered the commanders of the German forces in Moravia and in Bohemia would be responsible in those districts; he was unable to make any statement with regard to the responsible authorities in Slovakia or Ruthenia with respect to the protection of properties of foreigners. He believed that any questions arising could be discussed with Herr Ritter in Praha until the status of all the territory concerned became clear.

GEIST

860F.00/6574

Memorandum of Trans-Atlantic Telephone Conversation Between the Ambassador in France (Bullitt) and the Acting Secretary of State

[Extract]

[WASHINGTON,] March 15, 1939—3:20 p. m.

MR. WELLES: What is happening today?

MR. BULLITT: I have just seen Bonnet and the German Ambassador handed him half an hour ago a note from his Government saying that since everything which had happened had happened at the request of the Czech Government which was unable to preserve order, and since he had taken possession of the territory at the request of the Czech Government, there was no cause for France to get excited about anything. He said he received this note and made no comment of any kind. He saw him for just about two minutes because I was waiting to go in myself. In general the news of what had happened was not published until this afternoon because it happened too late for the early morning papers and the reaction is just beginning, but the people over here in general are completely stunned by these repeated blows. I do not know how pronounced the reaction will be, press reaction, I mean. There is the most intense and violent private feeling. I wanted to ask you if there was a possibility that we might have something to say.

MR. WELLES: I spoke with the President this morning and also gave him your telegram.⁷² He has decided that he is not going to say anything at this time; and with regard to neutrality legislation, since there is every prospect that that will be coming along satisfactorily in the immediate future,⁷³ he does not want to tie that up with this.

MR. BULLITT: Is the reaction of the country as intense as I have been led to believe?

MR. WELLES: The reaction is exactly what you could expect, but at the same time there is a very definite feeling, so far as I can see from the press, that there is nothing personal, intimately personal, about it. It is a reaction to something horrifying and shocking but not personally connected, and from the impressions I get—I was up two hours and a half with the Foreign Relations Committee this morning—the impressions that I get are that it would be very much better not to link this up with neutrality legislation since I think that will be coming along in very satisfactory form.

⁷² Telegram No. 485, March 15, noon, not printed.

⁷³ See pp. 656 ff.

860F.00/657 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, March 15, 1939—9 p. m.
 [Received March 15—7:20 p. m.]

491. Bonnet said to me this evening that the German Ambassador had delivered to him a note on behalf of his Government in which it was stated that since the Czechoslovak Government had requested Hitler to take charge of Bohemia and Moravia because the Czechoslovak Government was unable to preserve order in those districts and since everything that had happened was in accordance with the desires of the Czechoslovak Government there was no cause for France to be in the least excited about the developments. I asked him what he had replied. He said that he had received the note and said nothing.

I asked Bonnet if the French Government intended to make any statement or to react in any way. He said that Coulondre had asked for information at the Foreign Office in Berlin today and that Alphand, Director of Commercial Accords, had received orders to return to Paris and to break off the commercial negotiations which were about to be brought to a successful conclusion. There would be a debate in the Chamber of Deputies on Thursday or Friday in which both he and Daladier would express the point of view of the French Government.

I asked Bonnet what he envisaged for the future. He said that he could not see any possibility of any successful negotiations anywhere in Europe at the present time. There was nothing for France and England to do but to arm as fast as possible and stand ready to meet any attack. He then said "You must help us". I passed over this remark and began to ask him other questions but he repeated "The United States must help us". I asked what he meant by this and he said "You must support us in any way you can". I said that there were very decided limits on any support to be expected from the United States. He replied "At least you can change the Neutrality Act so that we can get arms and munitions from America".

BULLITT

701.60F11/273

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Chief of the Division
 of European Affairs (Moffat)*

[WASHINGTON,] March 16, 1939.

The Czechoslovak Minister, Dr. Hurban, came to see me on a number of matters:

(1) Dr. Hurban said that he had been talking with Mr. Beneš and Mr. Jan Masaryk ⁷⁴ concerning what he should do in the way of turning over his Legation if ordered to do so. The tentative conclusion that he had reached was not to turn over the Legation until he had received written orders from President Hacha.⁷⁵ He would not accept telegraphic orders as anyone could sign Hacha's name to a telegram. He had this morning sent a message to his colleagues in Paris and London inquiring what they were doing, but had not yet received a reply.

He asked for my comment on his plans. I told him that at first blush I would well understand his desire to be perfectly certain that he was carrying out the wishes of his Government, and that in any event I thought he was well advised to do nothing precipitately.

(2) Dr. Hurban was increasingly worried concerning the safety of Miss Alice Masaryk. He said that a plane had reached London having on board General Syrový ⁷⁶ and Premier Beran. Miss Masaryk was not on the plane. He understood that the Germans now had orders to shoot down any Czech plane in the air. I called up Mr. Norman Davis ⁷⁷ again, who agreed to send off a telegram this morning to de Rouget of the League of Red Cross Societies in Paris urging him to give Miss Masaryk a post, and to use the influence of the Society in getting her out of Bohemia.

(3) Dr. Hurban inquired about the status not only of Czech officials but of their personal employees and servants in the matter of their visas. I took the Minister to call on Mr. Avra Warren,⁷⁸ who explained the situation as it affected different categories of officials—diplomats, consuls, servants, those married to Americans, et cetera. He also told the Minister about certain private bills that had been introduced.

(4) Dr. Hurban touched lightly and in strict confidence on the financial embarrassment in which Czechoslovak officials would find themselves by virtue of their official salaries being (presumably) cut off. I shall not make this part of the conversation a matter of record.

(5) The Minister reverted to the claims of the Germans that Hacha had invited them into the country, and thought that from everybody's point of view it was essential to get this phase of the matter cleared up.

PIERREPONT MOFFAT

⁷⁴ Czechoslovak Minister in the United Kingdom from 1925 to March 1939.

⁷⁵ Emil Hacha, President of Czechoslovakia at the time of the German occupation, and subsequently President of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia.

⁷⁶ Gen. Jan Syrový, Minister of Defense in Premier Beran's Cabinet.

⁷⁷ Chairman of the American Red Cross and of the Board of Governors of the League of Red Cross Societies.

⁷⁸ Chief of the Visa Division.

701.60F11/272

The Chief of the Division of European Affairs (Moffat) to the Under Secretary of State (Welles)

[WASHINGTON,] March 16, 1939.

MR. WELLES: The Czechoslovak Minister has just telephoned that upon returning to his Legation from the Department of State he received a call from Herr Resenberg.⁷⁹ The latter read him an excerpt of a telegram directing Dr. Thomsen⁸⁰ to get in touch at once with Dr. Hurban, explain to him the developments that had taken place, and take over the Czechoslovak Legation.

The Czechoslovak Minister replied that he did not take orders from Berlin, and that the only condition under which he would turn over the Legation was upon receipt of written orders from President Hacha.

Dr. Resenberg endeavored to read a number of messages, telegrams and clippings, which he said would explain the situation, but Dr. Hurban replied that he was not interested in messages from Berlin, and could only consider messages from Praha as being applicable to him.

Later the Minister called up and asked if I saw objection to his telling this to the press. I replied that as the U. P. already carried a story that Dr. Thomsen was on his way to ask him to give up the Legation I saw no harm.

PIERREPONT MOFFAT

701.60F11/274

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Chief of the Division of European Affairs (Moffat)

[WASHINGTON,] March 17, 1939.

The Czechoslovak Minister called this morning. He said that yesterday afternoon he had received a telegram in clear, signed Chvalkovsky,⁸¹ directing him to turn over the Legation to the German Embassy and to follow the latter's instructions.

After considering the matter and consulting with Beneš, Jan Masaryk, and with Professor Shotwell,⁸² he had this morning sent a telegram in Czech to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Praha stating that he could not recognize the capitulation of President Hacha because the latter, under the Czech Constitution, did not have the right

⁷⁹ Karl Resenberg, First Secretary of the German Embassy in Washington.

⁸⁰ Hans Thomsen, Chargé of the German Embassy in Washington.

⁸¹ F. Chvalkovsky, Czechoslovak Minister for Foreign Affairs.

⁸² James T. Shotwell, professor of history, Columbia University, and president of the League of Nations Association.

to do what he did. Accordingly, he would not turn over the Legation property to the German Embassy.

The Minister said that he wished to cause us the least possible embarrassment and was prepared, if we desired, at any time to leave Washington. He would not, however, surrender the Legation property. I told him that I saw no embarrassment in his remaining for the present but that if the situation should change we would let him know informally.

The Minister's mind is revolving upon the future of the Legation property. He inquired whether he could transfer title to the Masaryk Institute or to a committee for relief in Czechoslovakia. I told him that this question involved so many legal considerations that I could not answer it but would ask Mr. Hackworth⁸³ to consider the points involved. I thought that in any event title would be questionable.

The Minister went on to say that he had directed the various consulates to liquidate the activities of their offices, to terminate leases and to store archives in their personal names. As for state money, he had directed the consuls to open special accounts in their name under his (the Minister's) control. As to other people's money in their possession he had directed them to open a second special account.

PIERREPONT MOFFAT

860F.00/756

The German Chargé (Thomsen) to the Secretary of State

[Translation]

WASHINGTON, March 17, 1939.

MR. SECRETARY OF STATE: By direction of the German Government, I have the honor to notify the Government of the United States of America of the following decree of March 16 of the Government of the Reich on the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia:⁸⁴

"*Article 1.* The areas of the former Czechoslovak Republic occupied by German troops belong from now on to the domain of the Greater German Reich and come under its protection as the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia.

"*Article 2.* The German inhabitants of the Protectorate become nationals and, under the provisions of the Reich Citizens Law of September 1935, citizens of the Reich. With respect to them, therefore, the provisions for the protection of the German blood and the German honor also apply. They are subject to the jurisdiction of German courts. The other inhabitants become nationals of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia.

⁸³ Green H. Hackworth, Legal Adviser of the Department of State.

⁸⁴ The preamble to this decree was transmitted by the German Chargé to the Secretary of State in a note of March 18, p. 51.

“Article 3. The Protectorate is autonomous and administers its own affairs. It exercises its rights of sovereignty granted it within the framework of the Protectorate in harmony with the political, military and economic requirements of the Reich. The rights of sovereignty will be exercised by its own organs and its own authorities with officials of its own.

“Article 4. The head of the autonomous government of the Protectorate enjoys the protection and the honors of the head of a state. The head of the Protectorate must have the confidence of the Fuehrer and Chancellor of the Reich for the exercise of his office.

“Article 5. As protector of the interests of the Reich, the Fuehrer and Chancellor of the Reich appoints the Reich Protector in Bohemia and Moravia, whose seat is Prague. The Reich Protector has the duty of seeing to the observance of the political policies of the Fuehrer and Chancellor of the Reich. The members of the Protectorate government are confirmed by the Reich Protector. The latter is empowered to have himself informed regarding all measures of the government of the Protectorate and to give it advice. He may veto measures capable of injuring the Reich, and in case there is danger in delay, he may take the measures necessary for the common interest. The promulgation of laws, regulations and other legal prescriptions, as well as the execution of administrative measures and court orders having the force of law is to be suspended if the Reich Protector interposes a veto.

“Article 6. The Reich takes charge of the foreign affairs of the Protectorate, and in particular of the protection of its nationals in foreign countries. The Reich will conduct foreign affairs in accordance with the common interests. The Protectorate is given a representative near the Reich Government with the official designation of Minister.

“Article 7. The Reich grants military protection to the Protectorate. In the exercise of this protection, the Reich maintains garrisons and military establishments in the Protectorate. For maintaining internal security and order, the Protectorate may organize its own units. Their organization, strength, number and armament are determined by the Government of the Reich.

“Article 8. The Reich exercises direct supervision over transportation, mail and telecommunications.

“Article 9. The Protectorate belongs to the customs territory of the Reich and is under its customs sovereignty.

“Article 10. Until further notice, the crown is legal tender together with the Reichsmark. The relation of the two currencies to each other is determined by the Reich Government.

“Article 11. The Reich can issue legal regulations valid for the Protectorate, in so far as the common interests so require. In so far as a common need exists, the Reich can transfer administrative branches to its own administration and provide the officials belonging to the Reich who are needed therefor. The Government of the Reich can take the measures necessary for the maintenance of security and order.

“Article 12. The law now in effect in Bohemia and Moravia remains in force, in so far as it does not contradict the sense of the assumption of protection by the German Reich.

"Article 13. The Reich Minister of the Interior issues, in agreement with the Reich Ministers concerned, the legal and administrative regulations necessary for the execution and supplementing of this decree."

Under Article 6 of this decree the German Reich takes charge of the foreign affairs of the Protectorate, in particular, of the protection of its nationals in foreign countries. The former diplomatic representatives of Czechoslovakia in foreign countries are no longer qualified for official acts.

Accept [etc.]

THOMSEN

860F.00/703a : Telegram

*The Acting Secretary of State to the Minister in Czechoslovakia
(Carr)*

WASHINGTON, March 17, 1939—1 p.m.

14. The Department would appreciate receiving from you as soon as you can prepare it a telegram somewhat along the following lines, but in greater factual detail.

Since Bohemia and Moravia have been occupied by Germany which has declared a protectorate and sent military officials to assume the functions of government; since Slovakia, through her President, has asked Hitler to assume a protectorate, and since Ruthenia is now occupied by Hungarian troops, there are no Czechoslovak officials with whom you can carry on business. In the circumstances you request instructions as to your future activities.

Upon receipt of such a telegram we shall reply directing you to close the Legation and turn over the files and archives to the Consul General, and to return to Washington at your convenience.

Your telegram should be drafted in such form that if we desire it can be given publicity.

WELLES

860F.00/679 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Italy (Phillips) to the Secretary of State

ROME, March 17, 1939—1 p.m.

[Received March 17—9:20 a.m.]

91. My telegram number 90, March 16.⁸⁵ I told Ciano⁸⁶ this morning that I had come to him in the thought that he might give me some statement regarding the Italian Government's attitude toward events in Central Europe which I could transmit to Washington. He replied

⁸⁵ Not printed.

⁸⁶ Count Galeazzo Ciano, Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

somewhat hesitatingly that developments had proceeded in accordance with the Rome-Berlin Axis and added with even more hesitation "and in accordance with an understanding between the German and Italian Governments." He used the expression that developments had proceeded "in their normal course".

I asked him whether my impression was correct that the Italian Government had agreed previously to the separation of Slovakia from Bohemia and Moravia. He replied that I was "neither correct nor incorrect in this impression."

I said that Hitler's performance had greatly shocked American public opinion and that while naturally I had no communication to make from my Government I did wish to tell him that the brutal methods employed by Hitler in seizing Bohemia and Moravia by armed force had created a profound impression in the United States. Ciano seemed interested and I repeated that such was indeed a fact. He made a point of the lack of national spirit exhibited by the Czechs as indicated by the fact that they had not fired a single shot. Adding that Hacha and Chvalkovsky had gone to Berlin and "given away their country", he exclaimed "what could be said for a country which showed so little spirit of resistance".

As I was leaving I adverted to Ciano's opening statement that developments had proceeded normally under the Rome-Berlin Axis and I inquired whether I might transmit this to Washington. He became distinctly confused and asked me not to do so. After endeavoring for some moments to think of the proper phrase he said "there were no adjectives which could be used." His confusion and inability or unwillingness to formulate any statement would seem to justify the inference that the seizure of Bohemia and Moravia had come as a disagreeable surprise.

PHILLIPS

860F.00/687 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, March 17, 1939—4 p. m.

[Received 6:05 p. m.]

498. The shock of Hitler's invasion of Czechoslovakia stunned not only the members of the Government but all Frenchmen. Thought as to the future has, however, already begun to crystallize in the following manner:

The invasion of Czechoslovakia ends definitely all possibility of diplomatic negotiations. Seven specific promises by Hitler that he would not invade Czechoslovakia were broken by this action and it is no longer possible to have confidence in any promises he may make.

Mussolini is considered as unscrupulous as Hitler and it is believed with equal force that no confidence can be had in any promises by Mussolini. The practice of diplomacy therefore becomes impossible. Nothing remains but to develop as much armed force as possible, as rapidly as possible, to await the day when Germany and Italy will strike against France and England.

It is believed that this day may arrive as early as the 26th of the month. Reports from Italy indicate that Mussolini's prestige with his own people has been diminished so seriously by Hitler's advance in Central Europe that he must attempt to make annexations for Italy. It is thought that he may first seize Albania⁸⁷ but it is also thought that he may consider his present control over Albania sufficient and may first act by an advance on Djibouti. The French troops at Djibouti will resist and war will result not only in Africa but also in Europe.

It is believed that Hitler has promised Mussolini his support in such a war but would like to have Mussolini adjourn action until after he, Hitler, should have reduced Hungary and Rumania to the position of vassal states. It is not believed that Mussolini will wait for this new advance by Hitler even though Hitler may predict confidently that he will have both Hungary and Rumania in hand within a month.

Reports indicate that extreme fear of Hitler is now prevalent throughout Eastern Europe especially in Lithuania and the other Baltic States, in Rumania and in Hungary. There is consternation in Poland; but it is believed that the Poles will have the courage to fight if Hitler makes any direct attack on Polish territory. No assistance is expected from the Soviet Union against Germany unless Soviet territory is attacked.

The French are making every effort to persuade the British to introduce conscription and to prepare for immediate war.

There is no excitement in Paris or in France. There is only regret that Hitler's action has ended the period when it was still possible to hope that constructive diplomatic action might maintain peace.

BULLITT

860F.00/712

*Statement Issued to the Press by the Acting Secretary of State,
March 17, 1939*

The Government of the United States has on frequent occasions stated its conviction that only through international support of a program of order based upon law can world peace be assured.

⁸⁷ For correspondence regarding the absorption of Albania by Italy, see vol II, Albania.

This Government, founded upon and dedicated to the principles of human liberty and of democracy, cannot refrain from making known this country's condemnation of the acts which have resulted in the temporary extinguishment of the liberties of a free and independent people with whom, from the day when the Republic of Czechoslovakia attained its independence, the people of the United States have maintained specially close and friendly relations.

The position of the Government of the United States has been made consistently clear. It has emphasized the need for respect for the sanctity of treaties and of the pledged word, and for non-intervention by any nation in the domestic affairs of other nations; and it has on repeated occasions expressed its condemnation of a policy of military aggression.

It is manifest that acts of wanton lawlessness and of arbitrary force are threatening world peace and the very structure of modern civilization. The imperative need for the observance of the principles advocated by this Government has been clearly demonstrated by the developments which have taken place during the past three days.

860F.00/690a : Telegram

*The Acting Secretary of State to the Minister in Czechoslovakia
(Carr)*

WASHINGTON, March 17, 1939—6 p. m.

15. At the press conference today I issued the following statement of the position of this Government toward recent developments in Czechoslovakia:

[Here follows text of press release printed *supra*.]

We hope that you may be able to make this available to the Czechoslovak press and that the latter may find a way to give it publicity.

WELLES

860F.48/55a : Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Chargé in Germany (Geist)

WASHINGTON, March 17, 1939—6 p. m.

51. The British Government has instructed its Embassy at Berlin to make representations urging that no obstacles be placed in the way of departure from territory of the former Czechoslovak Government now under the control of Germany of persons for whom provision to enter the United Kingdom had been given or promised.

You are requested to make similar representations with respect to the persons who have received visas for admission into the United States or who may expect shortly to obtain such visas. You should

also emphasize to the German authorities that persecution resulting in the driving of large numbers of persons out of the newly occupied territories could not but have a most serious effect upon the efforts which are being made by this and other governments to facilitate orderly emigration from Germany.

Report reaction.

WELLES

860F.00/691 : Telegram

The Minister in Czechoslovakia (Carr) to the Secretary of State

PRAHA, March 17, 1939—11 p. m.
[Received March 18—11:40 a. m.]

51. In recapitulation of my several telegrams of the last few days permit me to review as follows the present situation in this area.

Bohemia and Moravia have been occupied by German military forces. They have been declared by the Reich Chancellor to be a protectorate of the Reich and to constitute a part of greater Germany. According to this same declaration their head of state must enjoy the confidence of the Reich Chancellor, and their foreign affairs and military protection are taken over by the Reich. German military and civil authorities have assumed administrative power in the provinces. The Czechoslovak Foreign Office has been closed.

The Reich Chancellor is reported to have accepted the request of the Slovak President that he take Slovakia under his protection.

Indirect reports from Ruthenia, which is now completely cut off from Praha indicate that that province is partially occupied by Hungarian troops and that there are no authorities left who could be considered as representing the power of the Czechoslovak State.

There are consequently no officials of the Czechoslovak Government to which I am accredited with whom I can maintain relations for the protection of the interests of the United States and its citizens.

In these circumstances I respectfully request instructions in regard to my future course.

CARR

860F.00/756

*The German Chargé (Thomsen) to the Secretary of State*⁸⁸

[Translation]

WASHINGTON, March 18, 1939.

MR. SECRETARY OF STATE: Following my note of the 17th of this month, I have the honor to make known to Your Excellency, below, the

⁸⁸ The receipt of this note was acknowledged by the Acting Secretary of State in a note dated March 21, not printed.

preamble to the decree of March 16th of the Reich Government on the establishment of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. This preamble, which had not reached me before, forms an integral part of the decree mentioned. It reads as follows:

"For a thousand years the lands of Bohemia and Moravia belonged to the living area of the German people.

"Force and want of understanding arbitrarily tore them from their ancient historic surroundings and finally by their incorporation in the artificial structure of Czechoslovakia created the center of constant unrest.

"From year to year the danger increased that a new and terrible threat to the peace of Europe would come from this area, as it once did in the past.

"For the Czechoslovak State and its rulers had not succeeded in organizing the common life of the national groups arbitrarily united in it and thereby in arousing and maintaining the interest of all concerned in the maintenance of their common State.

"In that way, however, it displayed its internal incapacity for life and therefore it has now fallen into actual disintegration.

"The German Reich, however, cannot permit any continuous disturbances in these regions, of such decisive importance to its own peace and security and to the general welfare and the general peace.

"Sooner or later it was bound, as the power most interested and sympathetically affected because of the historical and geographic situation, to have to bear the most serious consequences.

"It is therefore in keeping with the law of self-preservation if the German Reich has determined to intervene decisively for the restoration of the bases for a reasonable order in Central Europe and to take the measures arising therefrom.

"For it has already proved in its historical past of a thousand years that it alone is called to solve these problems, both because of the greatness and the characteristics of the German nation.

"Filled with earnest desire to serve the true interests of the peoples dwelling in this area, to safeguard the national individuality of the German and the Czech peoples, and to further the peace and social welfare of all, I therefore order the following, in the name of the German Reich, as the basis for the future common life of the inhabitants of these regions:"

Accept [etc.]

THOMSEN

860F.00/692 : Telegram

The Minister in Czechoslovakia (Carr) to the Secretary of State

PRAHA, March 18, 1939—6 p. m.
[Received March 18—2: 55 p. m.]

52. Your No. 15, March 17. The entire press here is under strict German control, the Gestapo is everywhere and it would be virtual suicide for anyone to publish the statement unless indeed it first appeared in Berlin press.

CARR

860F.00/698 : Telegram

The Consul at Geneva (Bucknell) to the Secretary of State

GENEVA, March 18, 1939—6 p. m.
[Received March 18—4:35 p. m.]

51. The consensus of responsible Secretariat and other informed opinion at Geneva regarding the situation resulting from the German annexation of Czechoslovakia may be summarized as follows:

1. The latest German move by its revelation, even to the most skeptical, of the ruthlessness of German methods and the extent of her ultimate aims has marked a turning point in the European situation and has rendered an eventual war almost inevitable. The Czech annexation is considered as Hitler's first great error since it can not be justified on racial or other reasonable grounds and starkly reflects a determination to extend German expansion to such an extent that this ambition can only be checked by force.

2. Further German moves in Eastern Europe are expected to take place in the near future. It is thought that such future moves will as in the case of Czechoslovakia, be directed either to securing Germany's "back door" in preparation for a move to the west or be preliminary to a further rapid expansion eastward or both.

3. As regards the highly desirable possibility of rallying the small states of Europe, particularly of Southeastern Europe, against further German attacks, this is thought to present great difficulties unless Great Britain and France are prepared immediately to take such a strong stand that they could not recede therefrom at the last moment. In the light of what has taken place in Europe during the past year, no small state or group of states it is felt would dare risk resistance to a German attack without the certainty of immediate and effective support from these two countries. More than ever there is much pessimism not only as regards the determination but also the ability of France and Great Britain to afford such support at present.

4. The position of Russia both as to her willingness and her ability to give effective aid presents a big question mark and must inevitably affect British and French policy.

5. The importance of Mediterranean as an immediate danger spot is stressed. One view expressed is that Mussolini has two main alternatives, (a) now feeling the German menace himself, come to terms with the British and French in return for their protection against Germany or (b) push his demands against France to the point of risking a war on the gamble that Hitler would be forced through fear of losing Italy as an ally to come to her assistance. Grave concern is felt here lest Mussolini choose the second alternative since the first would entail the abandonment of his dreams of empire. This concern is increased by the feeling that in the last analysis Hitler could

not afford to see Italy defeated even though a war to save Italy would be highly unpopular in Germany.

Finally, these predictions and preoccupations are based upon the premise that any major hostilities in either Eastern Europe or in the Mediterranean would eventually extend into a general war and that such hostilities might in the existing situation be provoked by even a minor incident.

BUCKNELL

860F.48/50 : Telegram

The Minister in Czechoslovakia (Carr) to the Secretary of State

[Extracts]

PRAHA, March 19, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received 5:20 p. m.]

55. From available information it seems clear that the refugee question here has already reached a serious stage. Nansen⁸⁹ of the Nansen Aid Committee informed me this morning that there are several thousand Social Democrats and other political refugees and their families here in hiding and in danger of their lives. Many of the women and children are spending the days and nights in the woods in the vicinity of Praha notwithstanding that the ground is covered by snow. All relief organizations have been forcibly disbanded. . . .

The German secret police here are making hundreds and perhaps thousands of arrests in the usual Nazi manner; the Jewish population is terrified; as are the Social Democrats and also those persons closely associated with the former regime. Consequently if action can be taken it should be done speedily. While the British Legation seems to be hopeful of obtaining exit permits for most of its refugee cases I am personally doubtful whether Germany would be receptive to requests for the departure of political refugees and Jews but it would seem to be the humane duty of our Government to support some kind of international action to this end even though doubts may be entertained as to the outcome.

CARR

860F.48/52 : Telegram

The Minister in Czechoslovakia (Carr) to the Secretary of State

PRAHA, March 19, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received 6:40 p. m.]

56. My 55, March 19, 5 p. m. Fully aware of and in full sympathy with the later reports and policy of the United States in regard to

⁸⁹ Odd Nansen, president of the Nansen Relief Organization for the aid of refugees and other persons in distress.

immigration, I nevertheless feel that a special situation exists here which merits the serious attention of the President and of Congress. The Czechoslovak state was in part the creation of the United States of America upon whose form of government the Czechoslovaks were proud to model their own. There are many here who gave their best efforts over a period of years with the encouragement and strengthened support of the United States and other democratic nations to an attempt to preserve in Central Europe an independent state devoted to the principles of liberty for which the United States stands. They made extraordinary progress in public improvements, education and social welfare. They may justly be proud of their contribution to progressive and enlightened government. Through no real fault of theirs their independence has ended. The men who were the leaders in the establishment of the Czechoslovak state, the public servants who patriotically carried on the public work often times under great handicaps, and some men of industry and business who devoted their best efforts to the building up of the state are now under arrest hunted by secret police facing loss of property and even life itself or apprehensive of some or all of these eventualities. It is obviously for the several governments to endeavor to persuade the German Government to permit these people to leave the country unharmed and seek homes elsewhere. But even if they could depart from this country no adequate provision exists for their admission to other countries. By law they are effectually shut out of the one country whose policies and principles they have sought most earnestly to emulate. It seems to me that by not opening our doors to a reasonable number of these distressed people the United States is likely to appear to the people here who depended upon its friendship to the end and to democratic people everywhere as lacking in sincerity and humane interest in the very people who have tried to mould their institutions upon its model. I think this should not be viewed as an emigration matter but one of the protection of innocent human beings from the effect of a catastrophe.

CARR

124.60F/37a : Telegram

*The Acting Secretary of State to the Minister in Czechoslovakia
(Carr)*

WASHINGTON, March 20, 1939—11 a. m.

19. In view of the situation as set forth in your telegram of March 17th, you are directed to close the Legation at Praha;⁹⁰ to turn over the Government building, property and archives to the Consulate

⁹⁰The Minister in Czechoslovakia reported in telegram No. 61, March 21, 5 p.m.: "The Legation closed today as instructed". (124.60F/38)

General; and at your convenience to leave Praha. A separate message containing detailed administrative instructions will be sent you.⁹¹

The President has requested me to express to you his particular appreciation of the highly distinguished service you have rendered the Government as Minister to Czechoslovakia. I desire also in the name of the Secretary of State as well as in my own to evidence our recognition of the exceptional work you have done under circumstances of peculiar difficulty. The services you have rendered are a matter of pride to the entire Foreign Service with which you have been closely connected over a period of so many years.

I am giving this telegram, together with your March 17th, to the press at noon today.

WELLES

860F.00/756

The Acting Secretary of State to the German Chargé (Thomsen)

WASHINGTON, March 20, 1939.

SIR: I acknowledge the receipt of your note of March 17 in which, by direction of your Government, you inform the Government of the United States of the terms of the decree issued on March 16 by the Government of the Reich announcing the assumption of a protectorate over the provinces of Bohemia and Moravia.

The Government of the United States has observed that the provinces referred to are now under the *de facto* administration of the German authorities. The Government of the United States does not recognize that any legal basis exists for the status so indicated.

The views of this Government with regard to the situation above referred to, as well as with regard to related facts, were made known on March 17. I enclose herewith for the information of your Government a copy of the statement in which those views were expressed.⁹²

Accept [etc.]

SUMNER WELLES

701.80F11/268

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Chief of the Division of European Affairs (Moffat)

[WASHINGTON,] March 21, 1939.

The Czechoslovak Minister called this morning. He had been out in Chicago and had spent twenty-four hours with Mr. Beneš. He said that although Mr. Beneš was without official status, nonetheless

⁹¹ Telegram No. 20, March 20, noon, not printed.

⁹² *Ante*, p. 49.

he and various other Czechs who do not accept the new régime look up to him for advice and guidance and will follow his lead.

I inquired about published reports that Mr. Beneš might be considering proclaiming a new provisional government in this country. He said that there was nothing in the idea, that Mr. Beneš' denials should be taken on their face value, and it had been decided by both of them to take no sensational or dramatic stand.

I then told the Minister that in reply to his question as to whether he could transfer the Legation property to the Masaryk Institute, the Legal Adviser had ruled that he could not do so. The Legation stood not in his name but in the name of the Czechoslovak Republic, and he could only transfer title if he had "full powers" to do so given by the Czechoslovak Government or a recognized successor thereto.

I then told him that we had read in the paper of Mr. Osusky's⁹⁸ action in turning over the keys of the Czechoslovak Legation in Paris to the French authorities, and intimated that if he should choose to follow suit this Government would gladly assume custody. At this suggestion the Minister became very excited and said that so long as we did not recognize the disappearance of Czechoslovakia he remained the Minister, and counted on us to give him full and active support.

As to Mr. Osusky, he said that he could not understand his activities of late. He was one of the few old guard Czechs who had not maintained touch in any way with Mr. Beneš since the crisis.

The Minister then went further, and advanced the doctrine that as his Government had disappeared and he could not obtain full powers from his Government, he could act on the theory that he *was* the Czechoslovak Government and control its physical properties as he saw fit. In this connection he referred not only to the Legation building but to Czechoslovak gold in New York banks. I pointed out that he should be very careful to assure himself that he was on sound legal ground in advancing these claims. Personally I felt that there was some doubt as to whether he could act in matters which normally required the presentation of full powers.

The question next arose about the advisability of a visit by Mr. Beneš to Washington. I told him that I could inform him in confidence that although the President in other circumstances would be delighted to receive Mr. Beneš, he felt that under present conditions everybody's interests would be served if Mr. Beneš should refrain from coming to Washington or asking an interview with the President. The Minister said that this message was not unexpected, and that he would guard its confidential character.

⁹⁸ Czechoslovak Minister in France.

The Minister next took up the question of his staff. He does not consider the Counselor of Legation sufficiently qualified for the post, and wished to make certain that in his absence Dr. Červenka⁹⁴ would be recognized as Chargé d'Affaires. . . .

PIERREFONT MOFFAT

860F.48/53 : Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Consul at Praha (Bruins)

WASHINGTON, March 21, 1939—7 p. m.

The Department has received a telegram from Nansen,⁹⁵ care Norwegian Consulate General, Prague, requesting intervention with the German Government to permit refugee emigration through Poland.

Please advise him that our Embassy at Berlin, in conjunction with the British Embassy, has made representations urging that no obstacles be placed in the way of departure from Czechoslovakian territory under control of Germany of persons who have prospects of admission into the United States or Great Britain.⁹⁶

WELLES

860F.48/55 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Geist) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, March 22, 1939—11 a. m.

[Received March 22—8:40 a. m.]

188. Department's 51, March 17, 6 p. m. I saw Doctor Woermann at the Foreign Office and made urgent representations in the sense of the Department's telegram above referred to. Doctor Woermann stated that the British Chargé d'Affaires had made a similar request with regard to persons holding visas for England and that he would take immediate measures to see that our wish was made known to the proper authorities in Praha.

I discussed at some length with Doctor Woermann the question of achieving orderly emigration from Germany of persons whose departure was urged by the German authorities. Doctor Woermann reiterated the position taken by Goering in his conversations with Rublee,⁹⁷ namely that the German Government desired to cooperate in

⁹⁴ Karel Červenka, First Secretary of the Czechoslovak Legation in Washington.

⁹⁵ Telegram of March 17, 8:32 a. m., not printed.

⁹⁶ The Consul at Praha reported in telegram dated March 22, noon, that he had been informed by the Norwegian Consulate General that Mr. Nansen had already departed from Praha, destination not known (860F.48/54).

⁹⁷ George Rublee, Director of the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees; see telegram No. 58, January 21, 9 p. m., from the Chargé in Germany, printed in vol. II, section entitled "Cooperation With the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees . . ."

achieving an orderly emigration from this country. I pointed out that if events in Czechoslovakia resulted in the driving of a large number of persons out of newly occupied territories, it would have a serious detrimental effect upon the arrangements now being made by certain other countries to facilitate orderly emigration from Germany. Doctor Woermann asserted that he would take the necessary measures to bring this observation to the attention of the authorities concerned.

GEIST

[For the President's proclamation of March 23, 1939, suspending the operation of the trade agreement with Czechoslovakia, see Department of State, *Press Releases*, March 25, 1939, page 241, or 53 Stat. 2530.]

860F.00/762 : Telegram

The Minister in Guatemala (Des Portes) to the Secretary of State

GUATEMALA CITY, March 24, 1939—4 p. m.

[Received 6 : 12 p. m.]

8. The Foreign Office has just informed me that the German Legation has formally notified this Government of the absorption of Czechoslovakia and that the communication has been acknowledged without comment. President Ubico now requests the advice and counsel of the American Government as to the attitude which should be adopted with respect to this aggression. He also suggests the convenience and desirability of the United States taking the initiative in effecting throughout Latin America a common policy and united front towards the *de facto* occupation. The Department's telegraphic instructions would be appreciated.

DES PORTES

860F.00/778

*Statement Issued to the Press by the Secretary of State,
March 24, 1939*

At the press conference this afternoon, Secretary Hull, returning from an absence of two weeks and responding to the greeting of the correspondents, said that he was more than pleased to be back. He went on to say that he wished to make the following remarks which might be quoted :

"Having closely followed international developments at home and abroad during my temporary absence, I have in common with the general public here been profoundly shocked by the recent developments in Europe. They have been of a nature seriously to threaten the peace of the world.

"These new evidences of international lawlessness make it all the more clear that never before has the support of all nations for law and order and sound economic relations been more urgently needed than at present. We in this country have striven, particularly during recent years, and we shall continue to strive, to strengthen the threatened structure of world peace by fostering in every possible way the rule of law and the building of sound economic relationships upon which alone peace can rest. Every citizen and every group in this country will, I am sure, cooperate loyally and wholeheartedly in this great and urgent task."

860F.00/768 : Telegram

The Consul General at Praha (Linnell) to the Secretary of State

PRAHA, March 25, 1939—4 p. m.

[Received 5:30 p. m.]

Under no circumstances to become public at present. Following from Minister Carr:

"During the last few days I have obtained details of some of the events in this country which I shall report in due time but the substance of the following I think the Department should have by telegraph. In regard to Slovakia information received from two highly responsible sources indicates unmistakably that Slovak declaration of independence was the result of German intrigue and dictation and not the voluntary expression of the will of the Slovaks; that Tiso went to Berlin at the request of Bürckel,⁸⁸ Seyss-Inquart⁸⁹ and German generals; that Tiso was told by Hitler on the 13th that he had decided to occupy Bohemia and Moravia at 12 o'clock on the 14th and that the Slovaks would choose between declaring their independence under German protection or having Hitler dissociate himself from them; that while Tiso was reporting on the 14th to the Diet the majority of which was opposed to separation from the Czechoslovak State, Karmasin¹ entered and warned Tiso that the hour for German occupation was near and they should declare their independence which they did amid demonstrations of great emotion.

Referring to the visit of the President to Berlin (see my telegrams numbers 35, March 15 and 53, March 19 [18]²) information from a high source impossible at present to reveal is in substance that owing to the news of the concentration of German troops on the Czechoslovak frontier and with the approval of the Government, the President of Czechoslovakia on the 13th asked for an interview with Hitler. The reply granting the interview came at 2 o'clock in the afternoon of the 14th. The President accompanied by the Minister for Foreign Affairs left on a special train for Berlin at 4 o'clock. Meanwhile the German troops had already crossed the Silesian frontier at 12 o'clock and

⁸⁸ Josef Bürckel, Reich-Commissioner for the "Ostmark" (formerly Austria).

⁸⁹ Arthur Seyss-Inquart, "Lord Lieutenant" (Reichsstatthalter) of Austria upon the incorporation of Austria into Germany, March 13, 1938.

¹ Franz Karmasin, leader of the German Party in Slovakia.

² Neither printed.

at 4:30 they entered Moravska Ostrava. The train was delayed and the President did not reach Berlin until 11. The conference with Hitler began about 1:00 in the presence of a number of German generals. Hitler announced his unalterable decision to occupy Bohemia and Moravia with the German military forces at 6 o'clock that morning, the 15th; said he had been willing to receive the President only in the hope of preventing resistance on the part of the Czechs and therefore bloodshed; demanded that the Czechoslovak Army be disarmed and kept in barracks, that railways, postal service, Government offices, theaters should continue to function and the people go about their work and warned that any resistance would be put down by the most drastic and even brutal methods. He claimed that he had reached his decision because of the failure of the Government to carry out definitely his wishes including measures against the Jews. He said he did not question the sincerity of the President and the Foreign Minister but clearly they were too weak. He then suggested that they might wish to consult their Government in Praha. In an adjoining room telephones were ready with a direct wire to the Prime Minister in Praha. On the way to the telephone Goering³ remarked to them that he would regret if resistance were offered for that would make it necessary for him under his orders to destroy Praha with his air force. The old President showed unsteadiness from the strain and fatigue and a stimulant was suggested. A physician was already at hand and administered a hypodermic injection. The President and the Foreign Minister telephoned to Praha but always in the presence of Hitler's aides. Praha telephoned in an hour that the terms [were accepted?] and orders given not to resist. The President then reported to Hitler and said his people were now in Hitler's hands and appealed to his 'chivalry'. Further discussion occurred and the communiqué later announced to the press was prepared and signed. There was no compulsion as to that. Hitler said he would give the provinces autonomy and added 'you cannot dream what we shall do for you; we shall give you autonomy and far exceed anything you did for the Sudeten Germans'. The German Army crossed the frontiers generally at 6 o'clock and began to arrive at Praha about 8:30 the morning of the 15th. The President reached Praha about 8 p. m., and immediately summoned the Council of Ministers. While he was relating his experiences in Berlin he was told that Hitler was already in the Presidential Palace. He refused to believe it. One of the Ministers went to investigate and returned to say that he had spoken with Von Ribbentrop and seen the Fuehrer. They had in fact arrived by automobile in advance of the President and unknown to him. The following day Ribbentrop read to the public (see my 42, March 16, and 43, March 16⁴) the proclamation declaring that the two provinces of Bohemia and Moravia should constitute a protectorate and be a part of greater Germany.

My informant says the President is completely powerless and is actuated by purely patriotic motives in continuing temporarily to serve."

LINNELL

³ Hermann Wilhelm Göring, Reich Minister for Air.

⁴ Neither printed.

860F.00/762 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Minister in Guatemala (Des Portes)

WASHINGTON, March 26, 1939—noon.

11. Your 8, March 24, 4 p. m. After thanking the Foreign Minister for his confidence in consulting this Government with respect to the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia you should give him copies of the statement issued by the Acting Secretary on March 17, and a copy of the reply of this Government to the note from the German Embassy, this reply being dated March 20 (see radio bulletin for texts).

Although, as is evident from the statement of the Acting Secretary, the Department views with concern recent developments in Central Europe, it does not believe that these developments present occasion for initiating the procedure of consultation as provided for in the Buenos Aires Pact⁵ and the Declaration of Lima.⁶ The Foreign Minister's suggestion will be borne in mind, however, for future reference.

HULL

701.60F11/277

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Chief of the Division
of European Affairs (Moffat)*

[WASHINGTON,] March 27, 1939.

The Czechoslovak Minister came in this morning saying that for the first time in a fortnight he felt inclined to smile. The reason was he now believed that his own authorities in Praha, in their heart of hearts, approved the stand that he had taken. In the last two or three days there had been received from Praha some funds for the Consulate General at New York and some funds for the Legation. Obviously the Germans could not watch over every administrative detail, and he regarded this transfer as in the nature of an unwritten message to him.

Even more important, some of the private Czech banks which had money on deposit in New York had transferred their accounts to the National Bank of Czechoslovakia. He, the Minister, could naturally do nothing with accounts in this country of private banks, but this did not apply to deposits of the National Bank. As a matter of fact, he had been in New York and talked the whole situation over with the Chase Bank. The Chase Bank has asked him to write them a letter

⁵ Signed December 23, 1936; for text, see Department of State Treaty Series No. 922, or 51 Stat. 15; for correspondence, see *Foreign Relations*, 1936, vol. v, pp. 1 ff.

⁶ Approved December 24, 1938; for text, see *Report of the Delegation of the United States of America to the Eighth International Conference of American States, Lima, Peru, December 9-27, 1938* (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1941), p. 189. For correspondence, see *Foreign Relations*, 1938, vol. v, pp. 1 ff.

forbidding them to transfer any money on deposit to the account of the National Bank, back to Czechoslovakia. If there is a lawsuit, the Chase Bank is prepared to defend it.

The Minister went on to say that he felt his primary task was to keep his financial transactions so above-board that he could not become the subject of criticism. He had under his control various sums of money belonging to individuals which he could not transfer to their owners. He asked whether we would accept these funds. I told him that I did not believe we had authority in law to do so, but that this matter should be taken up with the Legal Adviser. He said he would ask Mr. Acheson⁷ to discuss the matter with Mr. Hackworth.

The Minister then went on to say that he was putting all employees of the Legation and Consulates, except the few that were absolutely essential, on a leave status. They would be carried as absent on our various lists. I told him that if any of them accepted other employment we could naturally not continue to give them immunities or carry their names on any lists. The Minister agreed, and undertook promptly to let us know if and when any of them accepted employment. As a matter of fact, he said that they were having difficulty in securing employment as many firms had answered that as a matter of policy they would not engage aliens who had not yet taken out their first papers. He asked if we could intervene with the A. F. of L. or the C. I. O. I told him that I did not think the Department could do this, but if he chose to send one of his secretaries to the Department of Labor to discuss the employment angle I felt certain he would receive sympathetic consideration.

PIERREPONT MOFFAT

860F.00/863

The Consul General at Prague (Linnell) to the Secretary of State

No. 98

PRAGUE, May 23, 1939.

[Received June 9.]

SIR: On pages 4 to 6 of the report which accompanied my despatch No. 84 of May 15, 1939,⁸ I mentioned a few of the main features of the unsatisfactory state of political developments in the Czech lands. I now have the honor to report that the past week has shown a still further deterioration in the relations between Czechs and Germans, and that the resulting tension is approaching a point where the Czech leaders themselves may find it impossible to continue their cooperation in the maintenance of the fiction of a Czech autonomous regime.

⁷ Presumably Dean Acheson, Under Secretary of the Treasury in 1933; in private law practice, 1934-41.

⁸ Not printed.

That Czech "autonomy" has proved a fiction is no longer open to doubt. Despite continued German assurances to the contrary the Protectorate system, as guaranteed to the Czechs by the Reichschancellor in his decree of March 16, has never been seriously put into effect. Such steps as were originally taken towards even the formal observance of its provisions are now being steadily retracted in practice if not in theory.

The civil administration, which was supposed to have been restored to the Czech authorities upon the relinquishment of executive authority by the Reichswehr in April, has actually remained in German hands. There has been no move to withdraw the numerous commissars, many of them Sudeten Germans with various personal axes to grind, who were appointed to all the central ministries and to many municipal offices and state enterprises in March. The same is true of the German "Landrats" who were set up throughout the countryside during the period of the exercise of civil authority by the Reichswehr. Each of these officials has assigned to him a given field of competence comprising several of the existing Czech administrative districts (comparable to our counties). In these territories they continue to exercise real administrative authority with no legal basis whatsoever. The Czech district officials often report to them and take orders from them rather than from their own dormant Ministry of the Interior. Cases are known where failure to do this, or at least to obey the Landrat's instructions, has been followed by prompt arrest. The Landrats themselves are subordinated through the Reichsprotector's office to the Reich Ministry of the Interior. Last week they were all summoned to Prague to confer directly with Herr von Stuckart, who handles Protectorate affairs in that Ministry and who came to Prague expressly for this purpose.

In many instances, the Czech authorities are being simply displaced by those of the Reich. This has been the case, for example, with the customs officials on the Polish and Slovak borders. It is characteristic that the Czech central authorities no longer even know precisely where these borders lie. There are indications—although the Slovaks deny this—that the Germans have been altering the Slovak-Moravian border at will, during the last few weeks, with no consultation of the Czech authorities. Quite probably, the same thing has been happening on the other frontiers as well.

In their administrative activities the German authorities are actively assisted by the various German police units—Schutzpolizei, SS and Gestapo—which are present in all sizeable Czech communities despite the fact that the Law of March 16 provides as little justification for their presence as for that of the Landrats and the Commissars. Quite recently, these police units have developed intense activity. As

nearly as can be ascertained in the absence of official information, the number of arrests has been increasing daily. The existing prisons are overcrowded and old ones, long in disuse under the Czech regime, are again being put into operation. Tales of brutality, of physical and mental torture, seem unfortunately to be only too well authenticated. All in all, it would scarcely be an exaggeration to say that "terror", in the accepted totalitarian sense, had now begun, and that the Czech authorities are quite powerless to oppose it.

It is obvious that in these circumstances, the position of the Czech Government is anything but enviable. As far as I am aware, it has had nothing of any importance to do during the last month but to draft two laws at German behest and submit them to the Reichsprotector for consideration. Meanwhile, personal relations between some of its members and leaders of the Reichsprotector's office have become strained. As was anticipated, Baron von Neurath⁹ seems to be playing a much less conspicuous rôle in Prague than certain of his subordinates. Herr Frank (formerly deputy Gauleiter in the Sudeten district) and Dr. Sebekovsky (formerly Regierungspräsident in Karlsbad) are now said to be the most active members of his staff. Both are Sudeten Germans and neither is in any sense *persona grata* to the Czechs. In general, it may be said that if the Germans ever had any intention of appeasing the Czechs, the wide-spread admission of Sudeten-Germans to positions of influence in the Protectorate has been the worst mistake they could have made. During the past century, if we may believe the historians, it was largely the Sudetens who ruined relations between the Czechs and Vienna. They are now in a fair way to repeating this performance with respect to the relations between the Czechs and Berlin.

But Czech anxiety is not confined to the future of the Czech administration, which they regard as a lost cause in any case. It is the German attitude with respect to President Hacha's new Czech political movement, the so-called "National Community", which is arousing the greatest apprehension in influential Czech circles. For it is on this movement that they are depending for the preservation of their own unity and discipline pending the day when it may again become possible for them to assert themselves actively in opposition to the German rule.

It has been related in previous communications from this office that the organization of the National Community was a conspicuous success and that its leaders even succeeded in gaining the adherence of over 97 percent of those eligible for membership. While the movement first seemed to find favor in German eyes as a gesture towards totali-

⁹ Baron Konstantin von Neurath, Reich Protector of Bohemia and Moravia, and Minister without Portfolio.

tarianism, its success aroused definite irritation in German circles. The Czechs, it seems, were expected to make the effort but they were not expected to succeed. The Germans had evidently hoped that a large proportion of the Czechs would remain outside the movement and would thus constitute an element which could always be played off against the remainder of the Czech population for the advancement of German aims. Since this hope did not materialize, the Germans have now adopted a definitely hostile tone toward the movement and are using the only remaining available element, namely the Czech fascists, as a lever for the creation of dissension among the Czech population.

It will be recalled that the Czech fascists, under the leadership of General Gayda, endeavored to gain control of Czech political life immediately after the occupation but were pushed out with German connivance in favor of President Hacha and his friends. For some time after that the fascists wavered. They were torn between admiration for Nationalist-Socialist methods, which drew them toward the Germans, and nationalistic tendencies, which drew them toward the overwhelming anti-German majority of the Czech population. Their indecision was aggravated by the personality of their leader, who commanded little confidence among the Germans and who was himself never marked by any great clarity or firmness of decision. Dissension soon developed between the Moravian and the Bohemian sections. More recently, the Moravian section began to receive extensive support, financially and otherwise from the Gestapo. At the beginning of May, Gayda, finally disillusioned of German motives, tried to lead his followers into a dissolution of the whole movement, to be followed by a merging with the "National Community". Had this step succeeded, the Czech nation would have been truly united in the face of German occupation. But the Moravian wing, acting doubtless on Gestapo inspiration, revolted, carrying with it a portion of the Bohemian party as well, and has now set itself up in opposition not only to Gayda but also to President Hacha and the "National Community". The result has been retaliation on the part of the President through the removal of the recalcitrant fascist members of the Committee of National Community. The break is now complete, and is fraught with danger for the preservation of Czech unity. For while the fascists have thus far been numerically insignificant, German support is nothing to be sneezed at. Money is always a powerful weapon, and the fascist press claims that membership is now increasing rapidly, ten thousand members having been added within the last week.

In the face of this situation the Czech leaders are now wondering whether the disadvantages of nominal cooperation with the Germans are not beginning to outweigh the advantages. They see clearly

what the Germans are trying to do to them. They are afraid that their continued participation—however devoid of content—in the Protectorate Government will only compromise them in the eyes of their own people without accomplishing anything tangible for their followers. They are coming to the conclusion that they would have better chances of preserving Czech unity as frank opponents of the German rule rather than as nominal participants in it.

For these reasons, I am reliably informed, they are contemplating some sort of a voluntary step on their own part which would put an end to their participation in the Government and to their cooperation with the Germans in general and would leave them in a position to come out openly, in opposition to the Germans, as whole-hearted protagonists and leaders of Czech separatism. They would prefer this course, which might well turn out to be a form of martyrdom, to the continuance of a cooperation which has proved so one-sided.

They are only waiting at the present moment for the favorable outcome of the Anglo-Russian conversations¹⁰ before taking this step. Despite the various disillusionments of the past year, they still have great hopes for the eventual efficacy of support from England and the United States, and they feel that if Germany were to be backed to the wall diplomatically there might be some possibility for at least a partial retraction of the action which the Germans have taken in the Czech lands. How long they can continue to wait, however, is problematical. The situation is becoming daily more difficult for them, and they have always to bear in mind the possibility that the Germans may anticipate them by abolishing or changing the Protectorate before they get around to making their own move.

If President Hacha and the National Community should back out on the Germans in this fashion, it is difficult to predict what would follow. The fascists are already pressing for seats on the Protectorate Government, and there might be an attempt to set up another Government composed exclusively of Czech fascists. But the moral authority of such a body—which represents its chief value to the Germans—would be minimal, and its popularity no greater than those of the puppet regimes established by the Japanese in China. The job of finding a new president would present a problem of particular difficulty.

Whether such a regime could serve as an effective instrument of German control is doubtful. I consider it more probable that the Germans will find themselves forced in the end to sweep away the last figments of Czech autonomy, to place their reliance solely on their bayonets and to attempt to crush by sheer force the powerful Czech nationalism which they have hitherto tried to exploit. In this case, it is outright war: an undeclared war in which imprisonments, shoot-

¹⁰ See pp. 232 ff.

ings, deportations, intimidation and bribery on the one side would be pitted against passive resistance, sabotage, espionage and conspiracy on the other. If it comes to this, the Germans will probably hold the upper hand without undue difficulty as long as the broad basis of national-socialist power remains intact. But they will have no happy time of it, and if the tide ever turns, Czech retaliation will be fearful to contemplate.

Respectfully yours,

IRVING N. LINNELL

142.14/2427 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Italy (Phillips) to the Secretary of State

ROME, June 26, 1939—4 p. m.
[Received June 26—3:20 p. m.]

234. I have just received the following communication dated June 22, from the Slovak Minister to Italy:¹¹

“Lacking other channels I permit myself to address Your Excellency personally requesting that you intervene with the competent authorities of the United States in the following matter:

The United States customs authorities require of our exporters that merchandise originating in Slovakia be marked ‘made in Germany’. The Slovak exporters are unable to comply with any such requirement in view of the fact that Slovakia is an independent country from the political as well as from the economic point of view and is not bound to Germany other than by a treaty of friendship and guarantee such as have often been concluded in recent times. The Slovak Government, by governmental decision of March 14th last, declared that it would maintain in force all the international agreements concluded by the Czechoslovak Republic. Consequently as far as concerns Slovakia there remains in effect also the commercial agreements entered into between the United States of America and Czechoslovakia.¹²

Furthermore the Slovak Republic has not entered into a customs union with Germany; it has its own national bank and its money—the Slovak crown.

The Slovak Government earnestly desires not only to continue to maintain the good relations which have so happily developed between my country and the United States but also to strengthen them as much as possible.”

I have refrained from entering into official relations with the Slovak Minister and should consequently appreciate having the Department’s instructions concerning the response which should be made to his letter.

PHILLIPS

¹¹ Miloslav Josef Zvrškovec.

¹² Reciprocal Trade Agreement signed March 7, 1938, and Agreement with Respect to Motion Picture Films, signed May 18, 1938. For correspondence see *Foreign Relations*, 1938, vol. xi, pp. 223 ff., and pp. 231 ff.; for texts see Executive Agreement Series No. 147 and No. 126, or 53 Stat. 2293 and 52 Stat. 1517.

142.14/2427 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Italy (Phillips)

WASHINGTON, June 28, 1939—5 p. m.

59. Your 234, June 26, 4 p. m. Should you feel that there is occasion to reply to the Slovak Minister you should confine yourself to the statement that you have referred his communication to the Department.

For your own information the position of this Government with regard to Slovakia as set forth in Radio Bulletin No. 63 of March 17, 1939¹³ has not changed.

HULL

860F.01/268

The Chargé in Hungary (Travers) to the Secretary of State

No. 1701

BUDAPEST, August 7, 1939.

[Received August 22.]

SIR: I have the honor to report that the Minister of Slovakia called upon me this morning and referred to his previous call as reported in the Legation's telegram No. 117 of May 23, 1939,¹⁴ requesting *de facto* recognition of Slovakia.

The Minister stated that Prime Minister Tiso had asked him to endeavor to ascertain from our Government through this Legation as to whether a decision in the matter would be reached within the next few months.

The Minister stated that since Czechoslovakia ceased to function the Slovak Government has paid the salaries and upkeep of the Czechoslovak Legation in Washington and of the various Consulates. He mentioned that the personnel of the Legation and of the Consulates is largely Slovak and that as the expense involved is very heavy Mr. Tiso is desirous of either ordering the personnel home where they can be of service to the Government or of transferring them to countries which have already granted to Slovakia *de facto* recognition.

Should the Department have no objections I should be pleased to inform the Minister unofficially as to any suggestions the Department has to offer.

Respectfully yours,

HOWARD K. TRAVERS

¹³ See letter of March 17, 1939, from the Acting Secretary of State to the Secretary of the Treasury, Department of State, *Press Releases*, March 18, 1939, p. 200.

¹⁴ Not printed.

860F.01/268

The Secretary of State to the Chargé in Hungary (Travers)

No. 372

WASHINGTON, August 28, 1939.

SIR: With reference to the Legation's despatch No. 1701 of August 7, 1939 concerning the question of the *de facto* recognition of Slovakia, there is transmitted for your confidential information a copy of a memorandum prepared in the Department on August 17 on this subject. This memorandum sets forth the position which the Department has assumed in this connection and from which it is unwilling to recede.

The Department perceives no useful purpose in pursuing conversations on this matter with the "Minister of Slovakia".

Very truly yours,

For the Secretary of State:
G. S. MESSERSMITH

[Enclosure—Memorandum]

[WASHINGTON,] August 17, 1939.

A Consulate cannot very well be established in Slovakia by the United States unless this Government is willing to recede from the position assumed by it on the German occupation of Czechoslovakia last March. At that time, namely on March 17, the State Department advised the Treasury that "in view of the recent military occupation of the Provinces of Bohemia, Moravia, and Slovakia of Czechoslovakia by German armed forces and the assumption of control over these areas by German authorities, the State Department, while not recognizing any legal basis for the assumption of so-called protection over this territory, is constrained by force of the foregoing circumstances to regard the above-mentioned Provinces as being under the *de facto* administration of the German authorities. . . ." ¹⁵

On March 14, 1939, Dr. F. Ďurčanský, "Minister of Foreign Affairs of Slovakia," addressed an appeal to the American Government for recognition of the Slovak State.¹⁶ This was filed without acknowledgment. A similar communication was apparently sent to the Argentine Government as the Ambassador of that country asked the Department what it intended to do about it as Argentina wished to pursue the same course as the United States. Several American diplomatic representatives abroad have also been approached by Slovak officials for recognition of the State of Slovakia. The principal reason for

¹⁵ Omission indicated in the original.

¹⁶ Note not printed.

these overtures was the difficulties which have arisen over the marking of goods from this area in connection with their importation into the United States.

On July 11 the Consulate General in Prague informed the Department by telegram that the local press had reported that Slovak official circles had made it known that after July 15 consular offices of all states which had not recognized the new Slovak State would no longer be permitted to function in Slovakia. Nothing further in this connection has been received by the Department.

Despite the hardships that may be suffered because of the non-existence of an American consular office in Slovakia, both by those resident in Slovakia and in the United States, it is not thought that this Government is prepared to abandon its position of nonrecognition of Slovakia. The situation in Slovakia has not changed and German military forces occupy parts of Western and Northern Slovakia. There, therefore, appears to be no alternative but to inform Dr. Wise in the above sense.

III. TENSION IN EUROPE FOLLOWING GERMAN OCCUPATION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA, MARCH 16-APRIL 14, 1939

740.00/640

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Chief of the Division of Controls
(Green)*

[WASHINGTON,] March 16, 1939.

The British Ambassador called at my office this morning to discuss some problems which have arisen in connection with the administration of the Act of June 8, 1938,¹⁷ requiring the registration of agents of foreign principals. Before he took up that matter, however, we had some general conversation in regard to the present situation in Europe. I asked him whether during his stay in England he had found any considerable number of persons of the opinion that "peace in our time" had been assured.

He replied emphatically in the negative, saying that he had discussed the matter with all sorts of people and that no one to whom he had talked—"not even the Prime Minister"—was now of the opinion that war could be indefinitely postponed. He went on to tell me at some length of the British preparations for defense.

JOSEPH C. GREEN

¹⁷ 52 Stat. 631.

740.00/627 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State*LONDON, March 17, 1939—6 p. m.
[Received March 17—5 : 23 p. m.]

353. The Rumanian Minister¹⁸ just called to see me. He is on his way to the Foreign Office with instructions from his Government to try and get some idea of what England proposes to do. He is going to ask them three questions: (1) Does England propose to do anything at all? If not Rumania will make the best deal she can. (2) Are they going to draw a line somewhere in Europe beyond which Hitler must not go that will just include Turkey, or will it possibly include Rumania and Yugoslavia? (3) If the Rumanians fight, will England give them any support? He said that the German demands, made about a week or 10 days ago, were economic and really meant the end of Rumania, and have been turned down by the Rumanians. The Germans ordered them (1) to stop certain industries, (2) to give them oil concessions and (3) to become nothing but an agricultural country. Germany in turn would take all their exports. He said this is an impossible situation for them and they will not agree. He also said that all their orders for armament were with the Czechs and they have all been stopped, with the result that they find themselves with practically no armaments and they are asking England to sell them some of theirs, even if they are antiquated.

I imagine you get most of the information direct from Rumania but I have asked him to keep in touch with me.

KENNEDY

762.71/43a : Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Minister in Rumania (Gunther)

WASHINGTON, March 18, 1939—3 p. m.

29. The *New York Times* this morning carries an article from London that "a virtual ultimatum had been issued by Germany to Rumania to the effect that (1) Rumania should give up certain industries and (2) should agree that her entire exports of grain, oil, lumber, cattle and foodstuffs should go exclusively to Germany, in return for which Germany would be ready to guarantee Rumanian territorial integrity."

¹⁸ Viorel Virgil Tilea.

Kennedy quotes the Rumanian Minister in London as confirming the general substance but as saying that the demands were made a week or 10 days ago when Wohlthat¹⁹ was in Bucharest.

The Rumanian Minister here²⁰ informs the Department that knowledge of these demands has reunited all elements in Rumania and that Maniu²¹ and others are now subordinating politics to national unity.

Please telegraph such information as you can gain and analytic comments.

WELLES

740.00/706

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Chief of the Division of European Affairs (Moffat)

[WASHINGTON,] March 18, 1939.

The Soviet Chargé d'Affaires²² in the course of a conversation said that bad as the situation in Europe was, he felt there were some bright spots. The first was the statement of Mr. Welles,²³ and the second, the changed attitude of Mr. Chamberlain.²⁴ None the less, he did not see any possibility of ultimate pacification until certain Western Powers gave up their wish thinking that Hitler's idea was ultimately to move against Soviet Russia. Such was not the case.

The Chargé felt that the next move of Germany would be in the direction of Rumania, with a view to making certain of basic raw supplies. Thereupon he believed that Germany would turn west, chiefly against France, realizing that never again would she have as good an opportunity to strike as at present. He attached considerable importance to the fact that France was now effectively surrounded by hostile countries on three sides and that there could be no repetition of 1870 or 1914, when the Government chose to move to Bordeaux.

He repeated Litvinov's²⁵ dictum that peace was indivisible, and said that ever since the fall of Barcelona²⁶ his Government had been anticipating a heavy German-Italian drive.

PIERREPONT MOFFAT

¹⁹ Helmuth Wohlthat, Economic Adviser to Marshal Goering.

²⁰ Radu Irimescu.

²¹ Julius Maniu, founder of Rumanian National Peasant Party; Premier, 1928-31.

²² Constantine A. Oumansky.

²³ See statement issued to the press by the Acting Secretary of State, March 17, 1939, p. 49.

²⁴ British Prime Minister.

²⁵ Maxim Litvinov, Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs.

²⁶ For information concerning collapse of Spanish Loyalist resistance in Catalan area, see telegram No. 1206, February 5, 1939, 8 p. m., from the Counselor of Embassy in Spain, printed in vol. II, section entitled "The Spanish Civil War: I. International Political Aspects."

641.6231/178 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, March 18, 1939—6 p. m.
 [Received March 18—2:35 p. m.]

364. Your 169, March 7, 6 p. m.²⁷ Bracken, editor of *Financial News*, London, makes statement that Sir Walter Layton²⁸ who has just returned from the United States, asserts you are seriously perturbed as to the possible course of the current Federation of British Industries—Reichsgruppe Industrie trade negotiations.

Wallace, representative of Chase Bank here, tells Oliver Stanley²⁹ that Aldridge³⁰ reports you as approving these negotiations. Stanley and Board of Trade concerned about these contrary reports. Although information as to actual results achieved to date is not yet available, I would appreciate receiving some definite statement to give Stanley.

KENNEDY

762.71/44 : Telegram

The Minister in Rumania (Gunther) to the Secretary of State

BUCHAREST, March 20, 1939—6 p. m.
 [Received March 21—6:30 a. m.]

50. You will by now have received my telegram No. 46, March 17, 8 p. m.,³¹ sent via London radio for usual reasons of economy. German trade negotiations here are secret and it has been difficult to obtain reliable detailed information thereon but we have no reason to believe, from subsequent inquiries, that the telegram referred to does not give an accurate picture. My despatch No. 798,³² mailed March 16th, which should reach you early next week, gives our analytical comment and comparison with German demands at the time of the Treaty of Bucharest.

Upon receipt by wireless of your telegram 29, March 18, 3 p. m., I sought out the Minister for Foreign Affairs at his house. It appears that Tilea, the Anglophile Rumanian Minister at London, aided and abetted by Dimancesco who handles press relations for the London Legation, was guilty of excessive zeal. When taken to task Foreign

²⁷ *Ante*, p. 28.

²⁸ Chairman, News Chronicle, Ltd., and Star Newspaper Co., Ltd., London.

²⁹ President of the British Board of Trade.

³⁰ Apparently refers to Winthrop W. Aldrich, Chairman of the Board of the Chase National Bank.

³¹ Not printed.

³² Dated March 13, not printed.

Minister Gafencu says Tilea replied that he was merely trying to be helpful. Gafencu re-asseverated that there had been nothing in the nature of a German ultimatum and that though Germany asked for more than could be given this was to be expected and that bargaining was now proceeding in a normal [apparent omission]. He said that the false report had been seized upon by the Jewish controlled sections of the western press. He maintains that there is room for all in Rumania and that concessions had better be made now to Germany rather than give reasons for wresting them by force later. The Germans offer to loan technicians. It is maintained, and this seems reasonable, that Rumanian agricultural production could be doubled or tripled with use of modern methods. Germany offers a steady market for Rumania's present and any general agricultural surpluses. It will be difficult for Rumania to accept German economic collaboration and guidance and still avoid later political dictation after German investments have increased especially in view of the lack of any restraint on the policy of expansion. In making peace with Rumania in 1918 German ambitions were held in check by the counter claims and caution of Austria.

The Minister said that he would cable Irimescu to explain the situation to you and mentioned the flood of inquiries and queries which had reached him after the London radio rumor. I have remarked that this showed the interest of the West in Rumania. He replied that both the King and himself were gratified to note that the Western powers were not indifferent. He referred again to the concentration of troops, about 200,000 men, on the northern frontier and assured me that the Rumanian forces would avoid any provocation and that they were there solely to show that Rumania, at least, would go down fighting if needs must. The Minister referring [*referred?*] to his efforts for Hungarian appeasement.

My conjecture is that this particular storm will blow over. The danger for Rumania will come later, probably when least expected, unless meanwhile Germany becomes convinced that a repetition of recent events would bring down upon her the whole might and force of arms of the democratic powers. Barring such a development I feel that Hitler's plan will continue to be pursued as opportunities present themselves. Apart from higher considerations may I again mention here that as reported in our survey of American interests in Rumania dated May 26, 1938,³³ the total American stake in Rumania is well over \$200 million.

GUNTHER

³³ Not printed.

641.6231/178 : Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy)

WASHINGTON, March 20, 1939—6 p. m.

201. Your 364, March 18, 6 p. m. Would refer you for guidance to the Secretary's 169 of March 7, 6 p. m. The Department has never felt itself to be in possession of adequate information as to the objectives of these conversations (and also as regards the objectives of the conversations which it had been expected the British Government officials would undertake). Aldrich's reports have given some indirect indication which while helpful were however not complete.

Among the various reports received were some to the effect that they were intended merely to achieve an agreement regarding competition in outside areas, particularly central and eastern Europe; others were to the effect that the interests would try to get safeguards against German competition in the British market, others were to the contrary effect that as part of the so-called policy of appeasement, German commerce would receive fresh opportunities and credits in the British market. In the face of such conflicting reports it is obvious that the Department has felt it necessary to reserve its opinion.

However, and this should be made clear to Stanley, from the beginning it has been disturbed lest the outcome should serve to strengthen the present German system of trading and handicap the type of commercial policy which this Government has sought to advance. Obviously as far as the matter may still be in the field of consideration, the events of the past week will have increased doubts as to whether such negotiations could possibly produce desirable results.

The Secretary suggests that you take this occasion to inform the British Government that it might serve a good purpose if the British Government would now reiterate a policy of lower trade restrictions under conditions permitting multilateral trade along lines of economic benefit and reciprocal equality of opportunity.

Since dictating the above, your 373 has been received.³⁴ The arrangements described do not furnish any basis for enthusiastic approval. What seems to be visualized is a series of cartel agreements with no precise plans for enlarging the volume of trade anywhere. The numbered paragraph 8, carrying an implied threat that if industries of other countries do not join such agreements the German and British Governments will be asked to cooperate in order to bring pressure and to compel them to do so, will not make a happy impression here.

WELLES

³⁴ *Infra.*

641.6231/181 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, March 20, 1939—7 p. m.
[Received March 20—2:26 p. m.]

373. My 372 of March 20, 6 p. m.³⁵ The following is text signed March 16 of a joint declaration by the Reichsgruppe Industrie and the Federation of British Industries on the results of the convention held at Dusseldorf March 15 and 16, 1939. This will not be made public until tomorrow:

“The Reichsgruppe Industrie and the Federation of British Industries, having concluded a general discussion on Anglo-German trade relations, issue the following agreed statement:

1. The two organizations welcome the opportunity which these discussions have given of developing still further the friendly relations which have existed between the two bodies for so many years.

2. The two organizations recognize that both for Germany and for Great Britain a substantial and profitable export trade is vital to their economic life.

3. The two organizations recognize that the object of this export trade must be to give employment to their people, to improve their standard of living, and to provide a volume of foreign currency sufficient for their economic needs.

4. The two bodies are agreed that the objective to be attained is that the export of all countries should be conducted in such a way as to ensure a fair return for the producers of those countries. Hence it is agreed that it is essential to replace destructive competition wherever it may be found by constructive cooperation, designed to foster the expansion of world trade, to the mutual benefit of Great Britain, Germany and all other countries.

5. The two organizations are agreed that it is desirable that individual industries in both countries should endeavour to arrive at industrial agreements which will eliminate destructive competition, wherever occurring, but prices must be fixed at such a level as not to diminish the buying power of the consumers.

6. The two organizations realize that agreements upon prices or other factors between Germany and Great Britain are only a step, although a most important step, towards a more ordered system of world trade. They would welcome the participation of other nations in such agreements.

7. The two organizations are of opinion that negotiations should be started immediately between those industries which are already organized for the purpose. They are further agreed that the wider the area of such agreements, both as to industries and countries, the more rapidly will international trade be established on a permanently progressive and profitable basis.

8. The two organizations realize that in certain cases the advantages of agreements between the industries of two countries or of a group

³⁵ Not printed.

of countries may be nullified by competition from the industry in some other country that refuses to become a party to the agreement. In such circumstances it may be necessary for the organizations to obtain the help of their governments and the two organizations agree to collaborate in seeking that help.

9. The two organizations agree that it is their objective to ensure that as a result of an agreement between their industries unhealthy competition shall be removed. Their aim is to secure as complete cooperation as possible throughout the industrial structure of their respective countries.

10. The two organizations have agreed to use their best endeavours to promote and foster negotiations between individual industries in their respective countries. They are encouraged in this task owing to the fact that a considerable number of agreements between individual German and British industrial groups are already in existence. There is thus available a large body of experience which inspires confidence that an immediate extension of this policy is both practicable and advantageous.

They are glad to state that approximately a further 50 industrial groups have already signified their willingness in principle to negotiate at an early date.

They also report with satisfaction that negotiations have already been started and are now taking place between 10 industrial groups.

11. In conclusion, the Reichsgruppe Industrie and the Federation of British Industries feel that the problem is not merely one of eliminating undesirable competition, but of taking concrete steps to increase world consumption of the products in which German and British industry are interested; they have, therefore, decided to maintain closer and more active relations with regard to this matter. They also recommend to individual industries that an effort should be made in any agreements that may be concluded for joint action to increase world consumption of the products in which they are interested. Again, this joint action should be considered as the precursor to a wider international collaboration between industries designed with a view to increasing world consumption and consequently production, to the benefit of all concerned.

12. The ultimate objective must be to increase world prosperity. The Reichsgruppe Industrie and the Federation of British Industries believe that the result of their discussions has been to lay a sound foundation upon which individual industries can usefully begin with mutual advantage.

In order to ensure the success of this policy it has been agreed between the Reichsgruppe Industrie and the Federation of British Industries to form a standing committee of the two organizations, which will meet regularly to review progress. The Federation of British Industries have invited the German members of this joint committee to pay a visit to England in June for this purpose, and this invitation has been accepted by their German colleagues."

762.71/43 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

[Extracts]

PARIS, March 20, 1939—7 p. m.

[Received 7:19 p. m.]

522. I called on Bonnet³⁶ this afternoon and asked for his view of the situation in Rumania.

He replied that Gafencu, the Rumanian Foreign Minister, had sent for the French Minister this morning and had said to him that there was no question of an ultimatum and that the Germans yesterday had talked much more reasonably and he expected that the commercial negotiations now in progress between Germany and Rumania would result in an agreement.

Bonnet went on to say that he had in [*seen?*] the Soviet Ambassador and had asked him what support the Soviet Union would give to Rumania in case Rumania should resist with force German aggression or demands incompatible with her independence. The Russian Ambassador had communicated at once with his Government and had come in this morning to say to him that the Soviet Union proposed an immediate conference to take place in Bucharest between representatives of the Soviet Union, Poland, France, England, and Yugoslavia to arrange methods of mutual protection.

Bonnet commented that as usual the Russians had put their feet in the platter. They must know that the Rumanians could not accept any such conference in Bucharest and this might be merely Litvinov's easy way of getting around the question he had put to the Soviet Ambassador. He added that this proposal was most secret and asked me to keep it entirely private.

Bonnet said that he had talked with the Yugoslav Minister and had been in constant contact with the British who were also in contact with the Soviet Union, Poland, Rumania, and Yugoslavia.

(Both Wilson³⁷ and I talked today on different occasions with the Rumanian Ambassador here and with the Rumanian Counselor of Embassy. The Counselor of Embassy assured Wilson that Germany's economic demands on Rumania had taken the form of a virtual ultimatum. The Rumanian Ambassador said to me that what Germany had demanded was all the grain of Rumania for 4 years and

³⁶ Georges Bonnet, French Minister for Foreign Affairs.

³⁷ Edwin C. Wilson, Counselor of Embassy in France.

all her oil production, the turning over to Germany of plants connected with the oil production which were now in the hands of foreigners, some of them Americans, and the right to Germany to develop and exploit new oil fields in Rumania without that Rumanian Government having any control over the German development and exploitation of those.

He said that this demand had been considered incompatible with the maintenance of Rumanian independence and that Rumania had refused it. He added that the Germans had not pushed this demand and that the negotiations now in progress were proceeding in a polite manner and that he believed they would reach a successful conclusion. It was in Rumania's interest to sell her oil and wheat to Germany and the only point to be guarded was the point of Rumanian independence and sovereignty.

I then asked if Rumania would be prepared to receive assistance from the Soviet Union. The Rumanian Ambassador replied to this question in exactly the same words that the Polish Ambassador had used to me when I put the same question to him with regard to Poland 2 days ago.

Both Ambassadors said, "In time of peace we cannot make any agreement whatsoever to permit Russian troops to enter our territory or to receive assistance in the form of munitions, guns, tanks, or airplanes from the Soviet Union; but in time of war we would be ready to take help from the devil himself."

I believe that these identical replies of the two Ambassadors represent accurately the prevailing opinion in Poland and Rumania. Neither country will dare to make a deal with the Soviet Union for fear of too greatly offending Germany; but both countries in case of necessity will welcome the Soviet Union's aid.)

Bonnet concluded our conversation by saying that he and all members of the Government were deeply grateful for the attitude which the Government of the United States had taken during the past few days.⁸⁸ The acts and words of the American Government had given all the support to the democracies that anyone could conceivably have hoped for.

BULLITT

⁸⁸ Presumably with reference to the German occupation of Czechoslovakia; see pp. 34 ff.

641.6231/182 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, March 20, 1939—8 p. m.

[Received March 20—4: 08 p. m.]

376. Embassy's telegram 373, March 20, 7 p. m. In discussing the joint declaration with Board of Trade official, he stated that no British industry had as yet reached an agreement with its German counterpart. He had been hopeful that the 50 industries might work out mutually advantageous price and marketing agreements but that under present political circumstances there was little hope of any agreement.

The official said that the plan had already been to invite industries in other countries to join any agreement reached with the Germans, thus forming, if it seemed advisable in each case, a cartel. With reference to paragraph No. 8 of the declaration he said that the German and English negotiators did not have the United States in mind when they drafted the language. It was devised he said to persuade certain countries to become parties to the agreement, particularly Japan and European exporters who might seek to under-cut in third countries the price level agreed upon by the English and the Germans, for example Swedish hollow-ware manufacturers.

Commenting on the same paragraph an official of the Federation of British Industries who was one of the negotiators at Dusseldorf said that it had so far proved impossible for the British manufacturers to come to any workable agreement with German industry with respect to South American markets, for any arrangement was soon nullified by the Aski mark system. Thus he said the Anglo-German agreement would not have threatened American trade in South America.

Lord Halifax³⁹ told me that the British Government would not support the F. B. I.'s industrial negotiations in view of the political situation. It can therefore be taken as certain that nothing concrete has come of the Anglo-German trade talks and that they will not be resumed until some political settlement has been made.

KENNEDY

³⁹ British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

740.00/641 : Telegram

The Minister in Yugoslavia (Lane) to the Secretary of State

BELGRADE, March 20, 1939—midnight.

[Received March 21—2:47 a. m.]

35. Prince Paul ⁴⁰ expressed himself to me this evening as being very pessimistic regarding outlook for peace, stating that apparently only means by which France and Great Britain can stop Hitler is by force of arms. Speaking of popular resentment in Italy against Germany he said that democracies place undue importance on popular feeling in dictatorships; but that only question of importance in Italy is what Mussolini thinks.

As to Croatia the Prince said it has been most difficult to deal with Macek ⁴¹ who never lives up to his promises and who has time and again agreed on certain points only to repudiate his agreement the following day. Negotiations are nevertheless proceeding for a settlement. He expressed pessimism as to satisfactory and permanent nature of settlement due to idiosyncracies of Slavs "who have intelligence but no character", whether they be in Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia or Russia. He expressed doubt that Croatia would be taken by Germany but remarked cynically that Italy, which had always fomented trouble in Croatia, was now endeavoring to bring the Serbs and Croats together.

I have never seen the Prince in such a depressed state of mind; Government officials likewise show their pessimism, one official of the Foreign Office having today told us that his Government does not now consider that war is avoidable. Even in the darkest days of last September there was some optimism which now seems entirely lacking.

Meily ⁴² reports that Kosutic, Macek's first lieutenant, has gone to Praha "for personal reasons". There is local apprehension that his trip is for purpose of implementing himself with the technique of becoming a German protectorate. Apprehension is increased by establishment of German Consulate at Maribor, increased German political activity in Slovenia and Croatia and by reports that airplane landing field and military barracks are now being constructed between Villach and Klagenfurt.

A responsible Italian official expressed to me yesterday his fear lest Germany would take Croatia and thus gain access to the Adriatic. He likewise said that Hitler, in incorporating non-Germans from

⁴⁰ Regent of Yugoslavia during the minority of King Peter II.

⁴¹ Dr. Macek, Croat leader.

⁴² John J. Meily, Consul at Zagreb.

Czechoslovakia into the Reich, "had at last taken off his mask" and shown that his policy is not one of Germanization but of imperialism. Despatch follows.⁴³

LANE

740.00/707

*Memorandum by the Chief of the Division of European Affairs
(Moffat)*

[WASHINGTON,] March 21, 1939.

The Soviet Chargé d'Affaires telephoned me this morning and read me the text of a telegram he had just received from his Government. According to this telegram, the foreign press was spreading rumors to the effect that the Soviet Government had recently offered help to Poland and Rumania in the event that these two countries were the victims of aggression.

This is not in accordance with the facts. Neither Poland nor Rumania has asked for assistance, nor has either informed the Soviet Union of any danger threatening them.

What actually happened was as follows: On March 18th the British Government informed the Soviet Government that it had weighty reasons to fear that a German coup was impending against Rumania, and asked what the Soviet Union would do. In answer the Soviet Union suggested an immediate conference of the six most interested countries, namely, Great Britain, France, Poland, Rumania, Turkey, and the U. S. S. R. The Soviet Government felt that such a conference would afford the best opportunity for elucidating the real situation and the position of all participants. The only reply the Soviet Government has had to date is that the British Government found this suggestion premature.

PIERREPONT MOFFAT

740.00/649 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, March 21, 1939—9 p. m.
[Received March 22—9:54 a. m.]

533. I called on Leger⁴⁴ who is in charge of the Foreign Office in the absence of Bonnet. He said that the British had sent this morning a proposal to Poland, France, the Soviet Union, Rumania, Turkey,

⁴³ No. 523, March 22, not printed.

⁴⁴ Alexis Léger, Secretary General, French Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

Greece and Yugoslavia asking them if they were prepared to take concerted action with Great Britain in case of further German aggression against any one of them.⁴⁵ No replies had as yet been received.

The news had reached Paris of German troop concentrations on the Lithuanian border and it seemed possible that the Germans would soon take Memel. He did not believe that this would produce general European war.

We then discussed the relations between Poland and France which have been extremely turbulent today. The Polish Ambassador called on me this afternoon in great excitement to say that he had had a terrible fight with Leger and he wanted my advice and assistance.

Two days ago Bonnet had stated to him that France and Great Britain in reply to a Rumanian inquiry had stated that they were ready to go to war to protect Rumania if Rumania should be attacked. Bonnet had inquired if Poland would do the same.

This morning he, Lukaszewicz, had received from Beck⁴⁶ a telegram instructing him to state in reply to this inquiry that Poland did not desire to discuss at the present time any such hypothetical question. It was the opinion of the Polish Government that there was no danger of an attack by either Germany or Hungary against Rumania at the present time. The Polish Government was doing everything that it could to bring about a reconciliation between Hungary and Rumania on the basis of mutual concessions. The Polish Government did not wish to interfere with this attempt to obtain mutual concessions by guaranteeing the present frontiers of Rumania. Furthermore, the Polish Government had a military alliance with Rumania directed against the Soviet Union and it could not discuss with France the affairs of its ally unless at the request of its ally.

According to the Polish Ambassador, Leger replied in the most malevolent manner "That means that Poland refuses to join France and England in protecting Rumania". There were then hot words and almost a fist fight according to the Polish Ambassador.

I talked with Leger later about this episode and found out the Polish Ambassador had given me various explanations which he had not given to Leger which I repeated to Leger and attempted to do what I could to smooth out the matter. The Polish Ambassador said to me that he believed that Beck's refusal to discuss the question at the present moment would last only 2 or 3 days. He did not believe that Beck's efforts to reconcile Hungary and Rumania would be successful and he believed that Poland would be ready to give the guarantee for Rumania after those efforts necessarily prove unsuccessful.

⁴⁵ Apparently refers to the draft declaration sent to France, the Soviet Union, and Poland, March 20, 1939; see *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939*, Third Series, vol. iv, doc. No. 446, p. 400.

⁴⁶ Józef Beck, Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs.

He felt that the entire question would be raised by the British invitation to Poland to participate in a general guarantee in such imperative form that Beck would prefer to make his answer to the British inquiry rather than to the French.

As I seem to have been able to restore somewhat the sense of humor of both men, I do not believe that the incident reported above will have any very harmful effects.

Leger stated that it was his belief that Beck could not possibly respect [*sic*] the British proposal but added that he felt that Beck while assenting verbally would prove to be a very bad ally for the British as he had proved to be for the French.

Incidentally, after my return to my house, Leger telephoned to me to say that he had just received a telegram from the French Ambassador in Warsaw saying that he had talked with Beck last night and that Beck was most apprehensive with regard to the possibility that Hungary would attack Rumania immediately. He pointed out that within a few minutes of the time when Beck had said this to the French Ambassador in Warsaw he had telegraphed the Polish Ambassador in Paris that he felt certain that no attack on Hungary by Rumania was imminent.

BULLITT

740.00/651 : Telegram

The Minister in Hungary (Montgomery) to the Secretary of State

BUDAPEST, March 21, 1939—midnight.

[Received March 22—7:49 a. m.]

59. The Regent⁴⁷ received me most affably today but he was more restrained in speech than in any previous conversations and particularly guarded with respect to Hungarian activities.

He felt that Hitler would take no action anywhere producing resistance because this might provoke a war which would be disastrous for Germany. It was noticeable in Budapest that Germany was frightened by the reaction to its last coup which had been made because of Germany's economic need and Hitler felt he could make one last stroke before France and Great Britain were prepared to resist him. He felt that Hitler had finished his territorial expansion in Europe although he still would demand colonies and make demands upon Poland concerning Danzig but he would attempt a solution of the latter by adjustment because of the fear of war and of removing Poland as a buffer state against Russia. Through diplomacy, intrigue, economic penetration and other means Germany would attempt more

⁴⁷ Admiral Horthy.

assiduously to obtain advantages other than territorial by gaining control over other countries.

Hitler's success, he said, was due entirely to the credulity of France and Great Britain who had become so accustomed since the war to having their will obeyed internationally that they were unable to cope with Hitler who disobeyed this rule.

The Regent said Hungary was not committed to Germany in any way and under any circumstance it would play a strictly Hungarian political game refraining from rushing headlong into situations which in the past had cost it so much. In war it would remain neutral if possible and await the turn of the tide to join the side which ultimately would win. He and the majority of Hungarians detested the Germans and sympathized with Great Britain but the democratic powers since the war had remained inattentive to the pleas of Hungary who had achieved something only with the aid of Germany and Italy. Consequently Hungary would continue to accept what it could providing this did not call for extreme commitments but the Regent had told Hitler personally that Hungary would meet German military aggression with resistance to the last shepherd. Consequently he felt Germany would make no antagonistic move, and Hungary would afford no opportunity for peaceful penetration.

Transylvania he asserted like Croatia was a political danger spot because its people had suffered unfair treatment for 17 years and their discontent produced a fertile field for trouble. This problem demanded solution. In response to my question he said the present Hungarian military preparations were for any eventuality.

From the Regent's guarded remarks I inferred that there at least is entertained the possibility of some Hungarian collusion with Germany with a view to retrieving Transylvania or, more immediately probable, to effecting its autonomy. Germany for whatever ends it may wish to gain from Hungary also has to offer the enticement of returning Slovakia. Without defining a purely Hungarian policy to which he referred repeatedly I concluded that the Regent meant a policy of expediency to be developed by any possible means to retrieve lost territory and to maintain Hungarian independence. In this situation I do not think Germany as yet presents the predominant permanent coloring and that the democratic powers could exert a large influence if they were to offer some tangible and practical positive solution of Hungary's problems. He dismissed discussion of Italy's possible future course by professing ignorance thereof. In any event I feel that the conduct of Hungary's affairs in future will be held firmly and singularly in the hands of the Regent and of his Prime Minister.

Since my audience was had without the knowledge of the Foreign Office I should appreciate the maintenance of its secrecy.

MONTGOMERY

860M.01 Memel/577: Telegram

The Minister in Lithuania (Norem) to the Secretary of State

KAUNAS, March 22, 1939—10 a. m.

[Received 10:10 a. m.]

10. Lithuanian Foreign Minister⁴⁸ returned Tuesday with German unwritten ultimatum regarding the voluntary surrender of Memel territory within 60 days. According to the plan, Lithuania will receive use of port.

While accepting the ultimatum in principle, the Lithuanian Government is employing the method of appeal to the signatory powers.⁴⁹ The orderly transfer of the territory this week is foreseen. The Germans are preparing for a triumphal entry. The treatment of the Lithuanian Minister for Foreign Affairs in Berlin was typically German—brutal and discourteous. Slight disturbances noted in country.

A delegation, most likely headed by Minister for Foreign Affairs, will leave for Berlin tonight to discuss methods of transfer and other questions involved.

NOREM

860M.01 Memel/593

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Chief of the Division of European Affairs (Moffat)

[WASHINGTON,] March 22, 1939.

The Lithuanian Minister⁵⁰ came in to inform this Government that Lithuania had decided last night to cede back Memel to the German Reich. Lithuania had been confronted by an alternative, given by von Ribbentrop⁵¹ to the Foreign Minister of Lithuania in Berlin a day or two ago, either to make this cession or to risk invasion. In the circumstances, the government decided to make the cession and its decision was ratified by the Parliament in secret session.

I asked what form it took. In reply the Minister said that a short note announcing the decision was handed to the German Minister at Kaunas.⁵² Thus he explained at least Lithuania ceded Memel to the Reich and it was not Memel which had seceded from Lithuania. I asked the Minister whether press reports that Lithuania had obtained special rights in Memel or even a guarantee of territorial integrity from Hitler were true. He said he had no official knowledge on either point.

⁴⁸ Juozas Urbsys.⁴⁹ i. e., of the Memel Convention signed May 8, 1924; for text, see League of Nations Treaty Series, vol. xxix, p. 86.⁵⁰ Povilas Zadeikis.⁵¹ Joachim von Ribbentrop, German Minister for Foreign Affairs.⁵² Erich Zechlin.

From unofficial sources the Minister had learned that the transfer was effected this morning without incident and that Hitler had reached Memel at 11 a. m. Memel time.

I thanked the Minister for his courtesy in informing this Government without delay and said that I would report it at once to the Acting Secretary of State.

PIERREPONT MOFFAT

740.00/647½ : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, March 22, 1939—noon.
[Received March 22—8:25 a. m.]

383. Personal for the Secretary. My 370, March 20, 5 p. m.⁵³ Halifax told me last night that he understands the Germans are mobilizing 20 divisions on the western front. He also said that Poland's answer to France is very unsatisfactory. The British have not yet received an answer. The British feel that Russia may go along with them, not to serve the general cause but to serve whatever purpose they have in mind and if they do agree to go along with the French and the English, and if Rumania and Turkey and the Balkan States are prepared to fight, then England is advising France that they should both go along regardless of Poland.

The plan is that the fleet would start an immediate blockade. The French would start to attack on their own borders and England would send over as many planes as they could to help France. Lebrun⁵⁴ told Halifax that the language Mussolini used to a very close friend of his regarding Hitler was not fit to repeat.

Halifax made one suggestion last night. He said that in 1936, when the trouble was on with Italy, Great Britain had promised Australia that, in the event of any trouble, they would send a fleet to Singapore. Under present conditions they do not feel they can spare a fleet for Singapore and they wonder if the United States would consider, at the psychological moment, transferring the American fleet back to the Pacific—to Honolulu—or some place else. This would be perfectly satisfactory to Australia and would permit the British Navy to function in the Mediterranean, where they plan to start operations. Lord Chatfield⁵⁵ saw me for a few minutes afterwards and also said that this was psychologically important if it was at all possible to be done.

KENNEDY

⁵³ Not printed.

⁵⁴ Albert Lebrun, President of France.

⁵⁵ British Minister for the Co-ordination of Defence.

860M.01 Memel/580 : Telegram

The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, March 22, 1939—1 p. m.

[Received March 22—12:35 p. m.]

134. My 106, March 14, 6 p. m.,⁵⁶ second paragraph. The Lithuanian Minister⁵⁷ here received this morning a message from Kaunas stating that the Lithuanian Government had accepted the German ultimatum in regard to the transfer of Memel to the Reich and instructing him to communicate the foregoing to Litvinov. He has not yet had occasion to see Litvinov but expects to shortly.

The Minister states that, in recent conversations with Litvinov in regard to the threat to Memel, Litvinov had in no way minimized the gravity of the situation which would be created by a transfer of the territory to the Reich but had characterized it as another of the series of aggressive acts of Germany which had been made possible by the attitude adopted by the powers in the face of those acts; and restated the principle which he, Litvinov, had constantly advocated, namely, collective action and mutual assistance on the part of the powers against German aggression.

The Minister added that the transfer of Memel might be regarded as an initial step toward further German penetration into Lithuania on the basis of a menace to neighboring German territory resulting from what the Nazi Government might choose to call local disturbances within Lithuania. The Minister also referred to the consternation which this last move might well cause in Poland but offered the opinion that Germany is not for the moment inclined to precipitate open hostility on the part of Poland by action against the Corridor.

KIRK

860M.01 Memel/581 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, March 22, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received March 22—2:45 p. m.]

541. Rochat⁵⁸ read to Wilson telegrams received by the Foreign Office last night and early this morning from which it appears that, in the interview between the Lithuanian Foreign Minister and Von Ribbentrop, on March 20 [the latter?] demanded that Lithuania abandon the Memel territory outright to the Reich; that if this demand were accepted the German Government would grant economic facil-

⁵⁶ Not printed.

⁵⁷ Jurgis K. Baltrusaitis.

⁵⁸ Charles-Antoine Rochat, Assistant Director of Political and Commercial Affairs at the French Foreign Office.

ities and the use of the port to Lithuania and would be glad to receive a Lithuanian delegation in Berlin to work out details. If this demand were refused the German Army would immediately occupy the Memel territory and no guarantee could be given as to the limits which might be fixed for the advance of the German forces.

The German Government demanded a reply by March 24. Furthermore Von Ribbentrop warned the Lithuanian Foreign Minister not to appeal to any other Government in this matter.

The Lithuanian Government tried to obtain an extension of the time limit of the ultimatum but failed to do so. Under the circumstances it had no choice other than to accept the German terms and had so notified the German Government last night.

Rochat said that there was as yet no indication whether Germany after the annexation of the Memel territory intended to take further action against Lithuania designed to reduce this country to the status of a protectorate.

BULLITT

740.00/655 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to
the Secretary of State*

LONDON, March 22, 1939—7 p. m.
[Received March 22—4:40 p. m.]

388. As reported in my 360, March 18, 2 p. m.,⁵⁹ the British Government following the *démarche* of the Rumanian Minister with his information of an "ultimatum" having been served on Rumania by Germany, communicated with the Governments of Turkey, Greece, Yugoslavia, Poland, Russia, France and Rumania to inquire what would be the position of those Governments in the face of a German attack on Rumania.⁶⁰ According to information given by the Foreign Office replies to these inquiries have been received and may be summarized as follows:

(1) Turkey said that she had received no communication from Rumania. The reply was otherwise noncommittal, Turkey stating merely that she would abide by the obligation imposed on her by the Balkan Pact.⁶¹

(2) Greece would fulfill the obligations of the Balkan Pact. As regards any attack on the Rumanian frontiers beyond the limits of the Balkan Pact, Greece would examine the situation sympathetically with Turkey and Yugoslavia, taking into account the attitude of the

⁵⁹ Not printed.

⁶⁰ For texts of telegrams of March 17, 1939, see *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939*, Third Series, vol. iv, doc. Nos. 388-390, pp. 360-361.

⁶¹ Signed at Athens, February 9, 1934, by Greece, Rumania, Turkey, and Yugoslavia; for text, see League of Nations Treaty Series, vol. CLIII, p. 153.

British and French Governments. The Greek Prime Minister remarked to the British Minister that everything would depend in that situation upon Yugoslavia as, without the concurrence and cooperation of Yugoslavia, Greece would not be in a position to bring any effective aid to Rumania.

(3) Yugoslavia. The Prince Regent's reply was to make a similar inquiry of the British Government. He likewise expressed surprise that Rumania had not approached him. The British Minister at Belgrade, Sir Ronald Campbell, thinks that Yugoslavia would make every effort to remain neutral, as in a conflict with Germany unless Italy were neutral or on her side she would be almost completely immobilized.

(4) Poland. Beck frankly said that he did not believe the Rumanian statement was correct. He said that his Government would examine the situation with the Rumanian Government before expressing any view on the British Government's inquiry. In a conversation yesterday afternoon between Lord Halifax and the French Foreign Minister now in London, M. Bonnet said that he had spoken to the Polish Ambassador in Paris on March 19 and inquired what assistance Poland was prepared to give to balk a German attack on Rumania. The Polish Ambassador replied that the Polish-Rumanian treaty covered aggression by Russia only. He further told M. Bonnet that he had been authorized by Colonel Beck to inform the French Government (a) that the Polish Government attached all importance to the Franco-Polish alliance but that it was only valid in the case of a German attack on France; (b) that the most useful assistance to Rumania would be not to bring in Russia but to support the present Polish representations at Budapest and Bucharest undertaken with a view to persuading Hungary and Rumania not to mobilize against each other on account of Hungarian occupations of Ruthenia. M. Bonnet further told Lord Halifax that since he left Paris the final Polish reply had been received, that he had not seen it but that he was informed it was unsatisfactory and full of reservations.

(5) Russia. M. Litvinoff in his reply proposed the now much publicized conference and inquired what the British Government would do in the circumstances. He expressed surprise that Rumania had not consulted with him.

(6) The French replied that they were prepared to collaborate in examination of possibilities of concerted action and that they felt it extremely important for the Western powers to take a stand on the line of Rumania.

(7) Rumania replied that she wished to avoid provoking Germany and therefore does not want to join any pact of mutual assistance. She thinks the Western powers should declare that they will not allow any further changes of frontiers in Europe and that they would support any state that defended itself with all its military forces.[""]

The Foreign Office now realizes that the story brought by the Rumanian Minister of a German "ultimatum" to Rumania, which was the immediate cause of the inquiries to these Governments, cannot be substantiated. They feel, however, that even though the case had been over-stated by the Rumanians, the danger of further German

advance in Eastern Europe is nevertheless existent and that the Rumanian *démarche* had at least served the useful purpose of galvanizing the Western democratic powers into immediate examination of the new situation and the dangers it presented. It is perhaps needless to add that Foreign Office officials do not regard these vague and generalized replies as a serious contribution toward a solution of the immediate problems.

There has been some confusion among newspaper correspondents between the British inquiries at the capitals mentioned in this telegram and the draft declaration sent to France, Russia and Poland and reported in my 370, March 20, 5 p. m.⁶² The two moves were separate undertakings.

KENNEDY

740.00/656 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, March 22, 1939—8 p. m.
[Received March 22—5 : 50 p. m.]

389. My 388, March 22, 7 p. m., in particular last paragraph. Replies to the British Government's proposals sent to Russia, Poland and France for signature of a joint declaration that the four countries would enter into discussions regarding concerted measures which might have to be taken in the event of an attack by Germany against any Eastern European state have not been received. The Foreign Office has, however, received certain preliminary reactions and observations which may be summarized as follows:

(1) Russia. M. Litvinoff has expressed great disappointment at the rejection of his earlier proposals for a conference, which he still prefers. Russia has in no way committed herself with regard to the draft declaration and M. Bonnet since his arrival in London has expressed the opinion that if anything is to be got from Russia she will have to be pinned down to a precise definition of exactly what she will do, as the Russians have a great predilection for making international propaganda by public statements, which do not commit them to anything.

(2) Poland indicates fears of Germany and expresses dislike of cooperation with Russia. She says that if she gives her adherence to the declaration proposed by the British it would take her definitely off the fence and put her in the Soviet camp against Germany. She indicates that it would be easier for her to go along with Great Britain and France if Russia were out of the picture. The British proposal, however, will be further examined.

⁶² Telegram No. 370 not printed.

(3) France. The French think it is time to call a halt to Germany but feel that it is necessary to know exactly how each country stands and exactly what action each country would take. M. Bonnet has expressed the view to Lord Halifax that the adherence of Poland to the proposed declaration is of vital importance and that it should be secured even if Poland had to be threatened. He apparently did not specify in what way Poland could be threatened.

Although the proposed declaration has not been submitted by the British Government to Turkey, the Turkish Ambassador has been informed of it by the Foreign Secretary. The Ambassador said to Lord Halifax that he could speak with confidence and full knowledge of Turkish policy and that his country would go to all lengths with Great Britain if assured of British support and if Turkey could rely on British assistance should she herself be attacked in the Mediterranean. Turkey would depart from neutrality only if on the side of Great Britain. Her attachment to this relationship is unconditional and would not be affected by Polish and Russian replies. Apart from this, Turkey is prepared to fulfill all her existing treaty obligations.

It will be seen from the foregoing features great are the difficulties of reaching any agreement on concerted action against Germany. Each country wants to know what the other one is going to do and if the views of the smaller countries are to be met to a degree sufficient to insure their cooperation, Great Britain and France will have to assume burdens of incalculable responsibility. With the Munich agreement washed away, an entirely new line of action has to be worked out and applied. Responsible officials indicate that the British Government has no attachment to solution along any doctrinaire line but that it is examining every possibility which might offer a lead to effective machinery for stemming German aggression. Such possibilities are therefore being examined solely from the viewpoint of what is practicable and expedient.

KENNEDY

740.00/718

The Minister in the Netherlands (Gordon) to the Secretary of State

[Extracts]

No. 691

THE HAGUE, March 22, 1939.
[Received March 31.]

SIR:

I have naturally been desirous during the past week of sending a telegram to the Department which would indicate with some authoritativeness the reactions of Dutch public opinion, both private and official, to this most recent demonstration of German unprovoked and

ruthless aggression, as well as contain references to official reports from Dutch representatives abroad as to definite indications of repercussions of this German move upon the position of the Netherlands—for such help as it might be in fitting into the Department's general mosaic—but so far there has been a dearth of information of sufficiently positive quality to warrant cabling it.

Universal indignation and dismay has been manifest, but of course that was only to be expected. Various conversations which I and other members of the Legation have had with officials and well-informed private individuals reveal a marked diversity of views, running the gamut from resigned certainty that this country will be crushed by Germany and that whatever resistance may be offered on land it cannot escape destruction from German bombers, to a feeling that there is little less ground to hope that the Netherlands may remain neutral in a forthcoming European war than there was in 1914.

Between these two rather unreasoning extremes there is still a considerable variety of opinion. Even among members of the armed forces with whom we have talked there are those who feel that in a general European war Holland is so directly on Germany's necessary path to attack England that she cannot escape, and on the other hand those who hold that even if Belgium were able to maintain her neutrality vis-à-vis both France and Germany so that the road for a German attack upon England would necessarily point to going through Holland—both for that reason and for the submarine threat against England, which is greater than that afforded by the Belgian coast line—Germany would nevertheless be reluctant to force this country into the ranks of her active enemies. This latter view is based on the thought that even the present Spanish war has shown that a military decision cannot be won in the air only, and that the Dutch army, plus the Dutch scheme of land defense based on inundation, could oppose a stiff resistance to German invaders and inflict serious damage upon them; it is a view, however, which I fear is not very widely held by others than zealous and energetic military officers—by which I do not mean that faith in the efficacy of inundation to stop an advancing army has vanished from the face of the Netherlands, but rather that the dread of massed aerial bombing expeditions has captured first place in the popular imagination.

As regards high official opinion, I understand that Dr. Colijn⁶³ is still disposed to take the view that Germany will not be inclined to look for any unnecessary trouble by a wanton invasion of the Netherlands (see despatch No. 678,⁶⁴ page 3), but rather is only likely to

⁶³ President of the Netherland Council of Ministers and Minister for General Affairs.

⁶⁴ Dated March 11, not printed.

attack this country if Germany feels herself in such a position that she, to use the Prime Minister's words, "might as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb". Dr. Patijn⁶⁵ and other officials of the Foreign Office state that there is nothing in their reports to indicate that in pursuance of the policy which dictated the Czechoslovak coup Germany has adversely changed her designs or intentions vis-à-vis the Netherlands. But even in official circles it is felt that not only the embodiment in this latest coup of a new German policy completely devoid of even any pretext of racial protection principles, but also the circumstances of its execution, are impressive of the stark fact that there is no longer the possibility of forming any reasonable estimate of what Hitler will do next. Moreover, when it considers the hypothesis of Hitler going to such extremes as to force England and France into a war, I doubt whether officialdom in general entirely shares the robust optimism of the Prime Minister.

All in all, therefore, it is my impression that the best informed opinion in this country, both official and private, is even more nervous than last September—save perhaps for the two or three days immediately preceding the meeting at Munich.

One thing, in any event, emerges from the recent events in Czechoslovakia more strongly than ever, and that is that in any future general European war Dutch sentiment will be far more anti-German than it was from 1914 to 1918; the Department is aware of this but it does no harm to state it concretely. . . .

Respectfully yours,

GEORGE A. GORDON

860M.01 Memel/590 : Telegram

The Minister in Lithuania (Norem) to the Secretary of State

KAUNAS, March 23, 1939—4 p. m.

[Received March 23—3:30 p. m.]

13. The occupation of Memel territory effected today. German troops entered at 5 this morning and Hitler arrived at 2 p. m., Mr. Norkaitis, Director of the Economic Division of Foreign Office, proceeding today to Memel to act with Mr. Bertuleit as Commissioner for transfer. The substance of agreement signed last evening in Berlin⁶⁶ is as follows:

(1) Return of territory to Germany, (2) withdrawal of Lithuanian military and transfer of Government property by commissions, (3) free harbor zone provided in Memel, (4) non-aggression clause. Ap-

⁶⁵ Netherland Minister for Foreign Affairs.

⁶⁶ German White Book, *Documents on the Events Preceding the Outbreak of the War* (New York, German Library of Information, 1940), doc. No. 342, p. 363.

pendix: Part I, (1) German harbor board provided with Lithuanian rights vested in a company under terms of 99-year lease, (2) lease considered paid by Lithuanian investments, (3) harbor fees to be collected by company upon review of harbor board; [part II,] (1) tax exemptions granted to harbor company, (2) establishment of limits, et cetera, of free zone, (3) custom inspection on border of free zone, (4) traffic in bond to Lithuania via Kretinga, (5) stay of Lithuanian ships in territorial waters to be favorably regulated.

Reaction to agreement found favorable in all quarters. The Government is proceeding cautiously to make necessary readjustments with martial defense measures throughout country. Certain Cabinet changes likely but indications are that Nationalist Party will continue in power. Jewish refugee problem remains to be solved.

NOREM

740.00/671: Telegram

The Ambassador in Poland (Biddle) to the Secretary of State

WARSAW, March 23, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received 5:03 p. m.]

42. 1. Upon Ribbentrop's advice that neither Britain nor France as signatories of Memel convention would intervene forcibly, Hitler timed Memel's annexation to discredit and circumvent British and French Eastern and Central European diplomatic maneuvers which on account of Memel, Czecho-Slovakia and other letdowns have left Warsaw cold. Accordingly Polish officialdom marks French and British soundings down to diplomatic "shadow boxing" and to efforts to get Poland and other countries out here to do their fighting for them. Moreover, disunion between Belgrade, the Baltic capitals and even Bucharest characterizes the preliminary reaction of the Memel annexation.

2. Poland's current position may be described as steering a careful course through confused events, hoping that by strictly minding her own business and through adoption of precautionary military measures to meet a possible challenge of her own frontiers, she will not incur Germany's forceful attention. Attributable to this policy:

(a) Warsaw gave negative reply to Kaunas' recent question as to whether Warsaw considered Memel's potential annexation a fighting issue;

(b) Beck stated in response to British, French and Rumanian Ambassador's question whether Poland would march for Rumania if invaded from the west that Poland had no intention of marching unless Poland were attacked.

(c) Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs Arciszewski, when pressed by British Ambassador to state unofficially Poland's potential atti-

tude in the event Germany provoked early European conflict, replied that Poland, except for her direct obligations under Rumanian and French alliances, would march only if attacked in which case Poland would fight to the last man. Moreover, experience during past few years had taught Poland not to count on outside support. In this connection I am aware that despite alliance Beck is convinced Poland could not count on France's assistance in a Polish-German conflict.

BIDDLE

740.00/665 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the
Secretary of State*

LONDON, March 23, 1939—8 p. m.

[Received March 23—3: 52 p. m.]

395. My 389, March 22, 8 p.m. The Foreign Office states that final replies to the British proposals for a joint declaration have been received from France and Soviet Russia and preliminary indications have been received from Poland.

1. The Soviet Government accepts and will sign as soon as France and Poland have accepted. Moscow is anxious that not only the Balkan but also the Baltic and Scandinavian countries be invited to adhere to the declaration after publication.

2. The French reply expresses entire assent. M. Bonnet, however, in conversations with the Prime Minister and Lord Halifax has emphasized the importance of Polish participation and the difficulty of effecting this in view of the Soviet participation.

3. The chief preoccupation of Poland is the suggested participation of Russia. The Polish Ambassador in London has been instructed to propose that the British Government and the Polish Government enter into a secret agreement of consultation on the lines suggested in the declaration, this not however to prejudice any official decision regarding Polish participation in the public declaration on which the Ambassador is to communicate the views of the Polish Government later. It would not affect the position of France either as the existing Franco-Polish treaty already contains a consultative clause. The British Ambassador in Warsaw has suggested that publication with Polish consent might be possible if Poland were given definite assurances that the Western powers would take effective and immediate steps in case of German aggression against Poland. Foreign Office officials do not venture an opinion as to whether the Polish and Soviet positions can be reconciled.

The British and French representatives are urging moderation at Budapest and Bucharest in view of the degree of military mobiliza-

tion in Hungary and Rumania. The British also understand that Poland is making vigorous representation in those two capitals against violent action.

KENNEDY

740.00/677 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Belgium (Davies) to the Secretary of State

BRUSSELS, March 24, 1939—4 p. m.

[Received March 24—1: 35 p. m.]

35. I have received information from a reliable source that the Belgian Government will maintain a strictly neutral and independent attitude in the present crisis, that it will not sign any "common declaration" against Germany nor become a party to any agreement relating to collective security.

Diplomatic representatives of smaller European countries here point out that although an entire week has elapsed since Chamberlain's speech condemning the German invasion of Czechoslovakia, Great Britain has been unable to establish a unified front even as between the three major powers in comparison with Hitler's rapid action. It cannot be expected, they urge, that the smaller states adjacent to Germany should join in any common declaration thereby incurring the risk of disaster without very definite commitments and guarantees of specific and effective military and other aid.

DAVIES

740.00/681 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

[Extract]

LONDON, March 24, 1939—8 p. m.

[Received March 24—6: 45 p. m.]

399. I have just seen Halifax. He had just seen the Polish Ambassador. Poland says finally that they want to go along with Great Britain and France but hesitate to join up with Russia first of all because they do not like them as bedfellows and second because a tieup of any sort between Russia and Poland will cause an open break with Hitler and war will be on. Halifax feels, however, that on Beck's arrival here next week they will arrange, in a way, Halifax does not yet know, for Poland to assure Great Britain that it will fight if Hitler attempts to take Danzig or makes any other overt act against Poland.

As to the Russian situation, they have indicated their willingness to sign the statement which Britain and France asked them to sign, but Halifax feels that Poland is of much more value to the tieup than Russia, because their latest information on Russia shows their air force to be very weak and old and of short range, their army very poor and their industrial backing for the army frightful and the most they could expect from Russia, if Russia wanted to be of help, would be that they might send some ammunition to Poland in the event of trouble.

As to the Rumanians, in spite of the trade agreement signed today between Rumania and Germany, which agreement Halifax said was signed by the Rumanians partially because they were promised that the ammunitions under contract with the Skoda works in Czechoslovakia for their account should continue to be delivered as per schedule, Halifax still feels it is possible that they may also fight against the Germans if Poland decides to take up arms.

I told Halifax that it seemed to me that, when England and France got down to the last stages of a working agreement with Poland and possibly Rumania and Russia, in the event of acts of aggression by Hitler against them, it would become quite obvious that the assurances given might not be satisfactory to both France and England and they would then find it necessary to wash their hands of the whole of Southeastern Europe. Halifax said he did not believe that was the case.

He felt that the inevitability of war sooner or later should be met right now and that the Prime Minister himself and the Cabinet are strongly of the opinion that a line should be laid down and a statement given to Berlin that if they cross that imaginary line the war is on. He is not quite sure whether they will want to include Rumania in that imaginary line.

KENNEDY

770.00/604: Telegram

The Minister in Bulgaria (Atherton) to the Secretary of State

[Extract]

SOFIA, March 24, 1939—midnight.

[Received March 24—9:06 a. m.]

11. The Prime Minister received me shortly after the details of the Rumanian-German accord⁶⁷ had been confirmed here.

⁶⁷ Signed March 23, 1939, League of Nations Treaty Series, vol. cxcix, p. 77.

The Prime Minister said that he had received the British and French Ambassadors to Turkey and in reply to their asseverations regarding assistance to Bulgaria he had informed them that it was now too late and that repeated speeches and diplomatic activity towards the formation of a democratic bloc was merely accelerating Hitler's preparations for self-sufficiency in case of war. The Prime Minister said very confidentially he was struck by how little either the French or British Ambassador understood the questions of Southeastern Europe and he intimated his discussions with the French and British representatives in Sofia had been equally disappointing. (I know this has been likewise the view of my Belgian colleague who has had long experience here.)

The Prime Minister observed that he probably was not favorably viewed in Germany which I understand results from his attitude at the time of Neurath's visit to Sofia (reported before my arrival in the Legation's despatch 393, June 12, 1937⁶⁹) and to the fact that he has consistently maintained an independent Bulgarian policy in the face of persistent opposition. His attitude was one of utter discouragement even though his Government may be able to carry on.

ATHERTON

860k.01/132 : Telegram

The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, March 25, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received March 25—1:35 p. m.]

149. My telegram No. 148, March 25, 5 p. m.⁶⁹ In discussing Polish-German relations a member of the German Embassy here stated the opinion that certain developments in the question of Danzig may now be expected which would involve the incorporation of that city into the Reich together with permission for Germany to construct an extraterritorial motor road across the Corridor and a guarantee on the part of Germany of the German-Polish frontier.⁷⁰ The informant added that it would be "unwise" for Poland to refuse these proposals although it was admitted that the internal political opposition in Poland might make it difficult for Beck to accept in the present circumstances.

KIRK

⁶⁹ Not printed.

⁷⁰ The German Minister for Foreign Affairs stated his Government's desires on these points to the Polish Ambassador in interviews on March 21 and March 28, 1939; see Polish White Book, *Official Documents Concerning Polish-German and Polish-Soviet Relations, 1933-1939* (London, Hutchinson and Co., n. d.), doc. Nos. 61 and 63, pp. 61 and 66.

860k.01/134 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Poland (Biddle) to the Secretary of State

WARSAW, March 25, 1939—8 p. m.

[Received 8:35 p. m.]

49. For the President and the Secretary.

1. Beck imparted to British Ambassador Hitler was pressing him for settlement of Danzig negotiations before Easter. Moreover, I am aware Beck does not exclude possibility of Berlin's timing potential trouble in Danzig to prevent Beck's London trip.

2. Meanwhile mobilization of four classes here rapidly nearing completion and large-scale concentrations on northern and western frontiers as well as southeastern Poland indicate Beck contemplates stubborn defense in the light of aforementioned negotiations (it is pertinent that German Ambassador imparted last fall that Berlin was always concerned lest, in the event of a show-down in German-Polish differences, Poland might pounce on East Prussia as a retaliatory measure).

3. Further preparation for possible action is marked by withdrawal of Polish railway rolling stock from Danzig terminal aimed partly: (a) to make it available for Polish troop movements, (b) to withdraw it to a safe position, (c) to impress Nazi Danzigers with their dependence on Polish railways, and (d) importantly to strengthen Beck's hand in further dealings on Danzig and in case of German demand for a double right of way across Corridor.

4. It is, moreover, significant that Warsaw and Moscow agreed to dispense with ratification of trade agreement and to bring it into force March 27.

BIDDLE

860k.01/133 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Poland (Biddle) to the Secretary of State

WARSAW, March 26, 1939—1 p. m.

[Received 2:06 p. m.]

50. For the President and the Secretary. Referring to my No. 49, March 25.

1. Poland today on war footing having achieved same swiftly but quietly. Attitude of people calm but determined to defend Poland's integrity to last man.

2. Situation grave and at mercy both of frontier and political incidents.

3. Poland, however, has thus spoken quietly but firmly language Berlin understands and might even conceivably swallow provided Berlin's prestige were not jeopardized by public knowledge that

Poland's mobilization represented more Poland's challenge to Berlin's pressure over Danzig issue (see paragraph 1, my telegram No. 49, March 25th) than general precautionary measures.

BIDDLE

760C.62/477 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Poland (Biddle) to the Secretary of State

WARSAW, March 29, 1939—2 p. m.

[Received 3:08 p. m.]

55. 1. Beck remarked following in last night's lengthy conversation: Poland's mobilization had been a dignified, polite but firm answer to certain suggestions made by Berlin⁷¹ which the Polish Government feared might only represent forerunner of further demands and an eventual ultimatum. So far no ultimatum had been received. Poland was open to conciliation looking to an equitable solution but not open to a solution imposed by intimidation. The Government felt, however, that even if equitable conciliation of current differences were accomplished Poland under current day circumstances would have to maintain her present status of mobilization at least until cessation of the international danger.

2. I interpret current situation in the following light: (a) Berlin is power drunk, unaccustomed to resistance and the extremists are pressing Hitler to bring about a quick annexation of Danzig and Poland's agreement to allow permanent right of ways over Corridor all of which tends to make Berlin more than ordinarily "prestige conscious". (b) Marshal Smigly-Rydz⁷² imparted he had gained more than an impression that Berlin is seeking to provoke a war with Poland. The present firm stand by the Polish Government enjoys the consolidated support of the people. Even if under the heading of conciliation the Polish Government conceded Danzig, for example, current mass courage and determination might conceivably give way to defeatism—and even cause the Government's or at least Beck's downfall. (c) In my opinion about only formula which might conceivably prove a solution would be Berlin's willingness to accept and Warsaw's willingness to grant a promise eventually to concede (1) modification in Danzig's status and (2) a single right of way (but not extraterritorial) over the Corridor provided Berlin agreed to defer further discussions thereon at least until present grave tension subsided.

BIDDLE

⁷¹ See telegram No. 149, March 25, 6 p. m., from the Chargé in the Soviet Union, p. 100.

⁷² Inspector General of the Polish Army, ranking immediately after the President.

860M.01 Memel/600

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Chief of the Division
of European Affairs (Moffat)*

[WASHINGTON,] March 29, 1939.

The Lithuanian Minister came to see me this morning. He said that when he had come, under instructions from his Government, to announce the cession of the Memel Territory, I had asked him certain questions as to constitutional procedure, which he had perhaps not answered very clearly.

For the sake of the record, therefore, he wanted to explain the constitutional factors involved:

Article 2 of the Constitution of Lithuania, which was promulgated on February 12, 1938, reads:

"The territory of the Lithuanian State is that which is defined by the International Treaties, signed by the Lithuanian State,⁷³ up to the present time. The territory cannot be alienated."

No alienation of territory was therefore constitutional, but a nation which is faced by a threat of extinction has to follow, even above the letter of the Constitution, the task of self-preservation. This was what impelled the Government to cede the Memel Territory.

After the cession, Lithuania signed a treaty with Germany regarding Memel.

This treaty was signed by virtue of Article 141 of the Constitution, which reads:

"The president of the Republic makes decisions regarding mobilization, war and peace, upon the recommendation of the Council of Ministers. When the Seimas (Parliament) is in session, the consent of the Seimas is mandatory concerning peace decisions."

The theory on which the Lithuanian Government was acting was that the treaty in effect made peace following a war which was not fought.

I thanked the Minister for his explanations, which, I said, would be made a matter of record. The Minister then reiterated that he was speaking without instructions.

He then referred to Mr. Welles' press conference⁷⁴ and the various newspaper accounts thereof. I explained that Mr. Welles' position could be summarized in the following sentence: "The attitude of the United States Government toward cessions of territory brought about by force or threat of force is well known; inasmuch, however, as the

⁷³ Peace treaty between Lithuania and the Russian Socialist Federal Republic, signed July 12, 1920, League of Nations Treaty Series, vol. III, p. 105; Memel Convention, signed May 8, 1924, League of Nations Treaty Series, vol. XXIX, p. 86.

⁷⁴ March 23, 1939.

Lithuanian Minister had informed the United States Government of the cession of Memel, the latter was constrained to accept it as a fact."

PIERREPONT MOFFAT

740.00/748

The Ambassador in Belgium (Davies) to the Secretary of State

[Extracts]

No. 261

BRUSSELS, March 30, 1939.

[Received April 7.]

Subject: General Observations on the European Situation Reflected from this Post.

SIR: With reference to the above entitled matter, I have the honor to submit herewith a short recapitulation of certain factors in the European situation as reflected from this post and as of this particular date.

General.

Pessimism is the darkest here that I have seen. War is regarded as inevitable. Hope only is expressed that hostilities may be averted for the next few months. This obtains in all circles: court, military, business, and diplomatic.

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Hitler and War or Peace.

Chamberlain's Birmingham speech⁷⁵ is held generally to have radically reversed the situation as to Peace prospects for the year. Peace this summer is not now protected by a British policy of appeasement. Hitler is considered to be faced with the decision of war or peace, now, when he is at the height of his power which relatively would be less later on. If he decides upon peace, he can have it only upon condition of disarmament preceding discussion, over the council table, as to colonies, etc. Disarmament for Germany, economically and socially, and probably politically, would be disastrous. There is no adequate local or foreign market for German manufactured goods, and hence no adequate demand for goods or for labor. Consequent thereon, unemployment would require enormous financial credits and gold reserves. Germany has neither. From this point of view, peace for Hitler would be the hard way out. It is feared that Hitler is thinking in the terms that war is the easier and safer way out. This is on the theory that he has a first class chance to win by a quick "putsch", and that even if he does not win, he nevertheless cannot be defeated because he is immune from blockade and with the

⁷⁵ March 17, 1939.

Siegfried line can hold off attack; and if worse comes to worst, he can still probably make peace. It is extraordinary that nowhere can you find any real confidence that Hitler has a will for peace. The little countries are scared to death.

Respectfully yours,

JOSEPH E. DAVIES

741.60c/43 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, March 31, 1939—2 p. m.

[Received March 31—noon.]

425. The Prime Minister this afternoon will answer the following question in the following manner:

“Question. To ask the Prime Minister whether he can now make a statement as to the European situation.

Answer. As I said this morning His Majesty’s Government have no official confirmation of the rumors of any projected attack on Poland and they must not therefore be taken as accepting them as true.

I am glad to take this opportunity of stating again the general policy of His Majesty’s Government. They have constantly advocated the adjustment, by way of free negotiations between the parties concerned, of any differences that may arise between them. They consider that this is the natural and proper course where differences exist. In their opinion there should be no question incapable of solution by peaceful means and they would see no justification for the substitution of force or threat of force for the method of negotiation.

As the House is aware, certain consultations are now proceeding with other governments. In order to make perfectly clear the position of His Majesty’s Government in the meantime before those consultations are concluded, I now have to inform the House that during that period in the event of any action which clearly threatened Polish independence, and which the Polish Government accordingly considered it vital to resist with their national forces, His Majesty’s Government would feel themselves bound at once to lend the Polish Government all support in their power. They have given the Polish Government an assurance to this effect.

I may add that the French Government have authorized me to make it plain that they stand in the same position in this matter as do His Majesty’s Government.”

I asked Cadogan⁷⁶ whether this meant if Poland fights Britain fights. He said of course if Poland itself committed an act of aggression it would not mean that but for the first time in the history of

⁷⁶ Sir Alexander Cadogan, British Permanent Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

Great Britain the latter has left the final decision as to their fighting outside of their own country to the other power.

I asked Cadogan could there be any hedging on the part of Great Britain as to whether Poland was fighting for "Polish independence"; he said absolutely not; that if Poland thought that any gesture of Germany's threatened their independence and they themselves are the judges of that, Great Britain commits itself to fight.

KENNEDY

740.00/724 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Poland (Biddle) to the Secretary of State

WARSAW, April 3, 1939—noon.

[Received 5:40 p. m.]

61. For the President and the Secretary. Judging from my observations on various aspects discernible from this angle Chamberlain's timely declaration⁷⁷ (a) is aimed to serve as an interim commitment somewhat as if Britain had taken out a "binder" on Poland pending Beck's London arrival to work out the details of a definite insurance policy, (b) marks a prelude to intended formation of an anti-aggression front, and (c) means that Britain and France have decided their front lines of defense east of Berlin lie not only at the Dardanelles (see my 39, March 22,⁷⁸ paragraph 1) but also definitely in Poland, possibly in Rumania if the military convention of the Polish-Rumanian alliance can be applied against a Western as well as an Eastern invasion.

2. Refer by telegram No. 51, March 26,⁷⁸ moreover signs indicate Chamberlain now pursuing a policy combining contentions of both camps, eliminating however idea that dealings with Rome should exclude efforts to enlist Moscow in anti-aggression front in capacity of a potential support for Poland's, Turkey's and possibly Rumania's positions.

3. Signs indicate moreover that London and Paris envisage Yugoslavia serving tactically as axis preferably in a play to cause a potential Rome-Berlin split. This would not necessarily mean, however, Paris and London would abandon Yugoslavia to eventual aggression. Accordingly it would seem that while leaving door open to Rome's possible change of heart, London and Paris may conceivably let Rome temporarily "stew in her own juice".

Section Two.

1. Referring paragraph 2, section one of this telegram, French Ambassador imparts that in order to overcome Poland's potential ob-

⁷⁷ House of Commons, March 31, 1939.

⁷⁸ Not printed.

jections to France's efforts to enlist Russia's support of Poland against German aggression, France offered formula conditioning extent and character of Russia's potential assistance upon Poland's specified requirements. Ambassador believed this would serve to allay suspicion such as was aroused here by Barthou's⁷⁹ Eastern Locarno proposal of April 1934⁸⁰ that France would insist upon Poland's granting passage to Russian troops. Moreover Ambassador gained distinct impression in conversation with Marshal Smigly-Rydz that latter and his associates would consider aforementioned formula acceptable.

2. French Ambassador concurred in my profound impression of Poland's admirable demonstration of united courage and patriotism as illustrated by costly mobilization and eagerness of masses to subscribe at great sacrifice to national defense loan. Moreover he stated Paris and London were likewise favorably impressed, a fact which together with French General Staff's highly favorable impression gained from recent inspection both of Poland's industrial area and military establishment would likely lead to material assistance from Paris and London.

3. According to Belgian Minister, Brussels recently received report from Belgian Legation, Moscow, indicating current signs of a Rome-Moscow flirtation apparently initiated by Moscow. This in my opinion might mean either that an Axis-imprisoned Rome was seeking friends outside or acting as Berlin's agent towards inveigling Moscow into political conversations with Axis.

4. Accordingly yesterday's report of Stockholm conversations of political character between Berlin and Moscow diplomats is significant. Pending further verification thereof, however, I am inclined to interpret report to mean either (a) Berlin's earnest intention to circumvent by a Berlin-Moscow *rapprochement* London's and Paris' reported efforts to align Moscow with anti-aggression front and/or (b) that Berlin deliberately inspired report to divert the course of London-Paris diplomatic maneuvers from Rome to Moscow or (c) that Moscow deliberately inspired report in order to worry Warsaw into an agreement to line up with Moscow against Berlin and to hasten a London-Paris commitment of definite character to Moscow.

5. In my opinion the vital importance in enlisting Moscow in anti-aggression front would be to preclude a possible Berlin-Moscow *rapprochement* and to enlist at least Moscow's air and material support for other Eastern and Central European participants of an anti-aggression front.

BIDDLE

⁷⁹ Louis Barthou, French Minister for Foreign Affairs.

⁸⁰ Presumably reference to plan contained in enclosure 1 to despatch No. 1067, July 24, 1934, from the Ambassador in Germany, *Foreign Relations*, 1934, vol. I, p. 498.

762.00/276

The Chargé in Germany (Geist) to the Secretary of State

No. 677

BERLIN, April 3, 1939.

[Received April 17.]

SIR: I have the honor to continue the comments on apparent trends in German foreign policy which have from time to time been supplied by this Mission.

The immense vitality of the German nation has given the development of National Socialist Germany something of the elemental quality of a natural force. As such, the energies aroused in this country seem liable to expand in a fashion not wholly predictable by logic or reason, but rather as forces determined to develop through seeking an outlet of least resistance. Accordingly, German political activity sometimes gives the impression of testing resistances on all sides with a view to discovering, by actual trial, the point or points where expansion may most readily be undertaken. This elemental force of expansion, coupled with the elusive character of the people's leader, renders political forecasting a hazardous undertaking.

However, the events of the latter half of March indicate the direction in which Germany's powers are being turned today. The armed absorption of Bohemia and Moravia, with the reduction of Slovakia to a position of complete dependency on the Reich, can best be explained on the ground that these areas must be controlled in a military, in addition to a diplomatic, sense prior to initiation of pressure to the east by German power, civil or, if need be, military. The sudden descent on Memelland, by similar means, points to the same objective. At the same time, it should not be overlooked that the spectacular display of might gratifies German delight in a feeling of power, so that dramatic measures may be employed, as in Austria a year ago, when a similar result might be gained by indirect means and without giving unnecessary offense to public sentiment abroad. The importance of consideration of foreign opinion, though, appears not sufficiently to impress itself on the mind of those in power in this country. Hence, use of the army in a startling manner may at times be for the very sake of exhibiting authority and not for any definitely purposeful objective.

Nevertheless, the recent moves to the north and south of Poland make it seem reasonably certain that Germany, at the present time, looks to the east of Europe as its first field of expansion into non-Germanic areas, unless interference on the part of the Western Powers should so exacerbate those in control of German policy as to induce them to try conclusions with the West as a condition precedent to oriental expansion. However, such a development seems improbable since, at least for the time being, Germany does not wish to risk a

“show-down” with the Great Powers of the West. (It is conceivable that opposition from the West might induce Germany to attempt a joint adventure in the company of Poland at the expense of their common neighbors.)

It is hardly to be believed, though, that the German expansive urge is motivated solely by economic considerations, powerful though such may be, and indeed undoubtedly are. The German possesses so much of mysticism as to cause a search for satisfaction of his material requirements to be supplemented by a powerful sense of mission and a desire to play a conspicuous part in the world. This missionary, or even messianic, impulse, joined to his love of displays of might for their own sake, renders it difficult to give full faith and credit to assurances by persons conspicuous in the official life of present day Germany to the effect that this country merely and understandably seeks a “Lebensraum” or area capable of providing its population with the bases for a good life in a material sense.

It is widely believed by foreign observers in Berlin that concessions to Germany merely serve to whet its appetite and that some pretext will be found to explain, if not to justify, seizures of neighboring real estate. The bland and unapologetic imperturbability with which the principle of self determination has been cast aside on ceasing to serve German interests, as in the case of Czechoslovakia, is an instance of this. A principle is merely a convenient tool so that when one tool is no longer serviceable, as that of self-determination, the “principles” of historical association or of geographical propinquity or of bald self interest lie comfortably at hand.

Accordingly, it is not easy to hold that Germany, which has readmitted Austria into the fold, and is apparently now engaged in reconstituting the former Austro-Hungarian empire under new management, will remain content even with very considerable territorial gains in neighboring areas, however adequate these may be from the economic standpoint.

It may be of interest in this connection to record a remark recently made to an officer of the Embassy by a diplomatic colleague concerning a conversation which the latter had had with a Party member occupying an important position. The Nazi official had explained Germany’s eastward moves as being occasioned by the need of raw materials and finally observed that what Germany could not find elsewhere it might take in Italy. That this remark showed a disbelief in the fixity of the “axis” was indicated by the German’s subsequent confusion.

On the other hand, it is possible to argue that, if German forces are given scope to expand toward the East, where at least they will affect no civilization superior to their own, and where they can find

economic satiety, they will gradually dissipate themselves, or will be neutralized by the emergence of the internal problems of a hastily organized empire of alien peoples.

At the moment of writing, the possible effect on the immediate future of Germany's external policy of Prime Minister Chamberlain's pronouncement of March 30 [31], by which British power was related to the independence of Poland, is obscure. The essentially land-locked situation of Poland, coupled with Italy's position athwart the Mediterranean may cause British and French proffers of assistance to be regarded with scant respect so long as the "axis" holds and thus prevents an approach to Germany through the Black Sea. It is such an attitude toward German aspirations on the part of the Western Powers, however, which might induce Germany suddenly to face west instead of east.

Respectfully yours,

RAYMOND H. GEIST

641.6231/190

*The British Board of Trade to the American Embassy in the United Kingdom*⁸²

MEMORANDUM

Mr. Oliver Stanley has considered Mr. Kennedy's memorandum of 23rd March⁸³ and is glad to have the opportunity of explaining the origin and purpose of the recent negotiations between the British and German industrial groups.

His Majesty's Government were receiving frequent and growing complaints from British trade interests of competition from their German competitors, particularly in export markets. These interests represented that it was impossible for them to maintain their trade against competition which was subsidised and backed by the whole resources of the State; they urged that competition of this character constituted an entirely new problem and that they were entitled to look to the protection and support of His Majesty's Government both in the home and export trades in meeting it.

His Majesty's Government could not but accept these arguments. They were reluctant, however, to contemplate extending assistance of a similar character to British export interests, with all that this course might entail. They were also of opinion that efforts for the reduction of barriers to trade generally were nugatory so long

⁸² Transmitted to the Department by the Ambassador in the United Kingdom as an enclosure to despatch No. 2416, April 6; received April 17.

⁸³ Not printed; the memorandum was presented in compliance with Department's telegraphic instruction No. 201, March 20, 6 p. m., p. 76.

as the uncertainties created by subsidised exports persisted. Accordingly, they pointed out that it was equally in the interests of German and British exporters that unhealthy competition should be eradicated. There emerged the programme of discussions between the industrial groups which culminated in the Joint Declaration signed at Dusseldorf. As Mr. Kennedy is aware, Mr. Stanley has expressed the opinion that action on this Declaration should be suspended in present circumstances.

Mr. Kennedy refers to paragraph 8 of that Declaration. In the understanding of His Majesty's Government the last sentence of that paragraph is intended to meet the obvious criticism (as set out in the first sentence of that paragraph) to which the Declaration is open, and tacitly admits that the industrial groups are not themselves in a position to deal with this contingency. His Majesty's Government would naturally give sympathetic consideration, within the general spirit of the Declaration, to cases where the legitimate efforts of industries in two or more countries to develop trade in accordance with the general principles of the Declaration were frustrated by the position taken up by the corresponding industry of some other country, particularly as the result would be to impede that reduction of undue barriers to trade which they have constantly at heart. Such cases would, of course, be considered on their merits and any action would be in harmony with those common principles of commercial policy which were so happily reaffirmed in the recent Trade Agreement between the two Governments. Indeed the general purpose was to restore trade to a healthy basis and so facilitate the reduction of trade barriers instead of allowing a general deterioration in the conditions of international trade.

It is known that what was particularly in the mind of the Federation of British Industries when paragraph 8 was drafted was the position in the United Kingdom market. The German Government had asked for reductions or stabilisations of United Kingdom Customs duties on various classes of goods which Germany exports to the United Kingdom. It had been pointed out to the German Government that some of these duties had been imposed following complaints of excessive imports of low-priced and possibly subsidised goods from Germany, and that if the cause of those complaints could be removed the difficulty of stabilising or reducing duties would be lessened. Some United Kingdom and German industries thought it might well be possible to make arrangements between themselves which would give assurance against undue competition in this market from German goods but they feared that if the United Kingdom Customs duties were in consequence reduced or fixed at a low level there might, as a consequence, be an increase of low-priced or subsidised imports from

other countries. Such imports would, of course, be imported at the low or reduced rate of duty and it was to meet such circumstances that the industries proposed to seek the help of their Governments.

Mr. Stanley will bear in mind Mr. Kennedy's suggestion that His Majesty's Government should reiterate their policy of working for the lowering of tariff barriers on most-favoured-nation lines. At the same time, it is, of course, desirable to take into account the danger of making any statement which might have the effect of extending the present political tension to the commercial sphere. He would be happy to discuss the matter further with Mr. Kennedy at any time.

[LONDON,] 4 April, 1939.

741.60c/58 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, April 5, 1939—10 p. m.

[Received April 5—6:47 p. m.]

447. Just had a conference with Beck. He told me that the situation tonight in relation to the negotiations is much better than this morning when the British were dissatisfied, as they felt he was not giving the cooperation they felt they must have. Beck's answer was: "There is no sense in getting the cheers in London and sweat blood tomorrow or when I get back to Poland; I shall not promise you anything I am not sure that I can deliver". However, after contacting Poland today and after further negotiations this afternoon they have come to a reciprocal agreement: England fights for Poland and Poland fights for England. The Prime Minister will give out a statement in the House of Commons tomorrow afternoon which will be their common statement. It will not contain full details as they are to be worked out in the course of the next 2 weeks. One of the most important points which will not be made public at this time is the agreement of Poland to fight to protect the sovereignty of its neighbors. Tonight Beck has agreed to this. Beck also agreed to use method at his command to work out an agreement with Germany contingent of course on (1) not losing national respect and (2) not being forced to accept a unilateral agreement with Germany. He feels that England's handling of Germany so far has been too much concession in fact and too little in theory. He realizes that some method must be found whereby if Hitler is to back down he is given an opportunity to do so gracefully and Beck says if he sees the slight-

est chance of that he will notify his old friend America and his new friend Britain at once. He made the point of old and new very decidedly.

My own impression after a very friendly conference is that he is more than happy to have England's support given in the way that it was, i. e., that Poland is the one to determine when England is to come to her rescue. He said the method by which Britain had handled this matter made it three times as easy to get Poland to agree to almost anything Britain wanted.

He tends to be most reasonable about Russian cooperation but had nothing definite to say on that. He does not want to be a tool for either Russia or for Germany. At the same time he does not want to be the direct cause of plunging the world into war and hence his willingness to do everything in reason to try and work out some plan with Germany.

Will wire you details of plans when I see Halifax tomorrow.

KENNEDY

740.00/741 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, April 6, 1939—3 p. m.

[Received 3:30 p. m.]

448. I have just seen Halifax. You will probably get Chamberlain's speech on the Polish situation from the newspapers before our despatch arrives, but we are sending it to you for the record. The things that do not appear in the speech are as follows:

1. Beck is definitely against making any tie-up with Russia beyond their normal trade commitments of the day. Halifax says Beck's strategy all along has been to stay friendly with both Germany and Russia without making any definite commitments and Beck is hopeful that while Hitler will be roaring mad at Poland's action in tying up with Great Britain, he will not be as mad as if Russia were in with Poland too. Halifax said he pressed Beck as to whether he would not want tanks, aeroplanes and ammunition, at least, from Russia if Poland were attacked and, even with that as a bait, Beck said no; that he has no confidence that conditions in Russia would permit any help that would be worth while.

2. As to Poland's helping Rumania, Beck said that if the Hungarian situation remains as it is, he would be averse to making any public commitment to help Rumania, but, if the Germans finally moved

into Hungary, then of course it would be a different matter. He is perfectly willing to say, without making any commitment except to the Prime Minister and Secretary of State, that he would go to the aid of Rumania if she were attacked.

Halifax told me today that Beck told him he considered Biddle one of his best friends and a very great help to him in Poland. Beck told me practically the same thing last night.

Halifax, in summing up the Russian situation, said that their own political situation here makes it difficult to do anything with them, but the general feeling is that Russia cannot be of any help at all outside of her own borders. They are going to try and go along with them. But are not very hopeful of any results.

As to the Italian situation, Halifax is convinced that Ciano was lying when he told Lord Perth that they were called into the Albania situation⁸⁴ in a more or less friendly manner; that Italian interests had been threatened there and that King Zog was not averse to the Italian moves, because the information the British Government gets from Albania is that King Zog has appealed to the Balkan Entente for help. The British Government is not at all sure what the move means or what it portends, but they definitely do not like the situation and it becomes all the more peculiar because, Halifax said, Ciano had dropped the suggestion that if the French representative would care to come around to the Italian Foreign Office to discuss the points of difference between their two countries, they would be glad to start discussions.

I asked Halifax what he thought of the Czech situation. He said he was inclined to believe still that neither Hitler nor Mussolini wanted to go to war. He thought they would do everything however to keep England in a state of jitters at least for a few months. He imagines the strategy of Hitler to be "I never wanted Poland and never had any intention of attacking her. This is merely an excuse for Great Britain to wreak vengeance on Germany; therefore I call on all our people to arm and prepare for the next 3 to 6 months." In that way he can maintain a state of jitters in the world; he can save his own house and keep up his armament rumpus, without being obliged to find an economic alternative. After Halifax finished this statement he said "and by night fall I may be proved to be wrong."

The Prime Minister is leaving for Scotland tonight for the next 4 days. Halifax is remaining in town until tomorrow night and hopes to get away then. I am remaining here to get whatever information there is.

KENNEDY

⁸⁴ See vol. II, Albania.

740.00/742: Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Geist) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, April 6, 1939—4 p. m.
[Received April 6—3: 10 p. m.]

237. According to reports from Paris and London informed circles there consider that war may break out in a week or ten days. No such indications exist here. Hitler returned to Berlin Tuesday and after a few hours' conference with Ribbentrop departed for Berchtesgaden. He was in a cheerful state of mind, saw a private movie and busied himself chiefly with plans concerning his birthday.

The opinion is held here in governmental circles that Beck will most likely sign a defensive alliance with England. If so, the severest pressure will be placed upon Poland for a voluntary solution of the Danzig, Corridor and Upper Silesian questions with the aim of finally choking Poland to death by eventually surrounding and cutting her off from access to the sea. The Germans are confident England will not guarantee the *status quo* of the territorial differences between Germany and Poland.

The Nazis consider relations with England have practically ceased to exist. The slogan is "Gott strafe England" and leaders are confident here that by playing on the words "encirclement" and "hunger blockade" a war spirit could be worked up which would be vocative enough to impress the world with the public approval back of Hitler in his campaign against England. It is not the intention however to precipitate a general struggle in Europe but to continue sapping and undermining the foundations of potential victims and enemies.

The Albanian Minister, formerly his country's Foreign Minister and considered well informed, states that despite denials of his own Government he has reason to fear imminent Italian attack on Albania as move to distract world from German contemplated aggression against Poland which he believes should shortly follow this Italian action.

While I cannot vouch for accuracy of story a reputable American just returned from Prague reports arrival there of German soldier casualties said to have been incurred in border fighting against Poles in Teschen area.

From available information there have been to date no troop concentrations along the Polish frontier although there is evidence of prior arrangements having been made for such an eventuality. Owners of various private cars were notified that they were to be commandeered this week and a new restricted area in southwestern Germany and east Prussia on the Polish border has been announced by the Foreign Office.

Military furloughs over Easter are being freely granted and leading officials of various Ministries are planning to leave Berlin for the holidays.

Presumably because of the concentration of the press against England and Poland less space is devoted to press criticism of the United States. In regard to the American attitude toward Germany a curious incident occurred yesterday when General Milch, Chief of the German Air Corps, asserted to the Military Attaché that it would be impossible for the United States ever again to send troops to Europe because 8,000 out of every 10,000 would be lost. Similar statements are understood to have been made by air officers to other individuals.

It is believed locally that the publicly announced meeting of the German commanding general and the Italian chief of staff at Innsbruck is intended as a demonstration of military solidarity and it is possible the meeting will be followed by a public affirmation in this sense.

GEIST

741.60c/62 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, April 6, 1939—9 p. m.
[Received April 6—8:55 p. m.]

665. Leger read to me this evening a telegram which he received today from Corbin, French Ambassador in London, giving the exact position of the Polish-British negotiations in London.

Beck promised that Poland would go to war on the side of Great Britain in case of an attack by any power on Great Britain in return for the similar promise by Great Britain.

Lord Halifax then said to Beck that Great Britain was pledged to go to the support not only of France but also of Switzerland, Belgium and the Netherlands in case of a German or other attack on those powers. Thus Great Britain might be drawn into war with Germany through an attack that was not in the first instance directed against Great Britain but touched vital neighboring countries. Halifax then asked Beck if the Polish promise to go to war on the side of Great Britain would cover a war provoked by invasion of the Netherlands, Belgium or Switzerland.

Beck said that he could not make any such promise without most careful thought, and has not yet replied. Beck will have a further talk with Halifax tonight and will presumably give an answer of one sort or another.

Beck also was most embarrassed when Halifax said to him that both France and England had made offers of mutual assistance agree-

ments to Rumania and that 4 days ago the Government of Rumania had replied that it would be glad to enter into such agreements.

Halifax requested Poland to enter into a similar agreement with Rumania.

Beck replied that, inasmuch as Poland had what amounted to a defensive alliance with Hungary, Poland would be most embarrassed if it were necessary to enter into a defensive alliance with Rumania that included defense against Hungary. Halifax continued to argue this point but Beck said he must reserve judgment.

The two undecided points mentioned above were those which prevented the signature of a pact of mutual assistance between Great Britain and Poland and supplementary agreements.

Leger asserted that if Poland should refuse to make a pact of mutual assistance with Rumania both France and England were prepared to withdraw their promises of assistance to Poland.

Corbin reported that Halifax still felt confident that he could obtain complete satisfaction from Beck on both these points.

Leger on the other hand said he believed that while Beck might accept the obligation vis-à-vis the Netherlands, Belgium and Switzerland he would refuse to accept the obligation vis-à-vis Rumania. Thus he could return to Warsaw and say to Moscicki⁸⁵ and Smigly-Rydz, "I did everything I could but the demands of the British were impossible" and could thus continue his old policy of working on the German side.

Inasmuch as Beck and Leger are mortal enemies I feel that Leger's opinion is not to be taken too seriously; but that the truth probably lies somewhere between Halifax's optimism and Leger's pessimism.

Beck has indicated that he would like to see me while his train is passing through France. I shall therefore spend an hour and a half with him tomorrow while traveling from Calais to Lille.

BULLITT

741.60c/64 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, April 7, 1939—11 p. m.
[Received April 8—11:10 a. m.]

678. I rode with Beck from Calais to Lille today. He was immensely pleased and flattered by his reception in England and repeated modestly that the British had been very "elegant elegant" in their attitude toward him.

Beck said that the discussions that he had had in London had been so detailed and exhaustive that he felt there was now complete under-

⁸⁵ Ignace Moscicki, President of Poland.

standing between the British and Polish Governments and that future collaboration between those countries would be easy and confident. It is difficult to exaggerate the impression that his reception by the British made on Beck. He was as pleased as a climber who for the first time has met a lord, and I feel that, at least for the present, British influence in Poland will be very great.

Beck said he knew that Hitler and all the other German leaders were furious with him. He had no exact idea what Hitler would do. Ribbentrop he considered a "dangerous imbecile". Ribbentrop unfortunately had acquired the complete confidence of Hitler because last September he had taken the position that in the end neither the Czechs nor the British nor the French would fight whereas almost all other advisers of Hitler had taken the position that the British, French and Czechs would fight.

Beck said he believed that Ribbentrop had been urging Hitler to take a menacing attitude toward Poland. It should be obvious now to Hitler that threats to Poland would get Germany nowhere. There was an area of negotiation which had definite frontiers. Within these frontiers Poland could negotiate but if Germany should step across one of them it would mean war and now Hitler should understand that.

Beck added that I should not be surprised if within the next 3 or 4 days he should receive with every appearance of amity the gentleman he had just described as a "dangerous imbecile." He would rather negotiate with Germany than fight Germany. He called my attention to the fact that up to date Hitler had taken no action against a strong state that was courageous enough to defend itself. He did not believe that in the end Hitler would decide to attack Poland.

Beck said that Halifax, Chamberlain and some of the other men in the British Foreign Office had attempted to persuade him to form at once a military alliance with Rumania to take effect in case of an attack on Rumania by Germany or Hungary.

He had refused flatly to do this for two reasons. In the first place although the Rumanians had asked the British and French to persuade the Poles to accord them such an alliance they had never asked Poland directly to make such an alliance. I asked Beck whether if Rumania should request such an alliance directly, he would accord it. He replied that he would discuss the matter but added that he felt that conclusion of an alliance between Poland and Rumania so long as Rumania and Hungary should remain unreconciled would thrust Hungary instantly into the hands of Germany. This was his second reason for refusing to sign an alliance with Rumania directed against Germany and Hungary. So long as there was one chance in a hundred of keeping Hungary out of the hands of Germany he would continue to struggle to keep Hungary out of German hands. He still

had hopes that he might be able to work out a reconciliation between Rumania and Hungary, and that the two states in close collaboration with Poland might form a real barrier to German advance.

Beck insisted that Halifax and Chamberlain understood fully his policy vis-à-vis Rumania and Hungary and approved it heartily.

I asked Beck whether if Germany should attack the Netherlands, Belgium or Switzerland, and Great Britain should enter war on that account Poland would march. He replied that the answer was to be found in the statement made by Lord Plymouth⁸⁶ in the House of Lords in which he had indicated that Poland was to be the sole judge of the question of whether or not her vital interests were involved. Great Britain likewise could judge in any given case whether or not her vital interests were involved and Poland would be faithful to her promises.

Beck said that he did not believe that Yugoslavia would give any support to Albania. He felt that Daladier's⁸⁷ recent speech dealing with Italy's claims had been a mistake. Mussolini before that speech had in his opinion been ready to draw away from Germany and Daladier had eliminated this possibility. I replied that I do not agree in the least as I felt certain there was no chance of breaking the Rome-Berlin Axis at the present time.

In connection with our discussion of this question and others I derived the impression that Beck is still most hostile toward France. His attitude in alluding to all French leaders is one of contemptuous superiority.

In conclusion Beck said with intense emphasis that he had made it clear to the British, who understood and approved entirely, that he was no more ready today than he had ever been to make Poland an instrument of either German or Russian policy. He believed that there was a chance still of preserving peace. Collective security had ceased to mean anything. Peace could only be preserved if every step from now on should be based on the real strength of nations which were ready to fight. His impression [of] Hitler, whom he had seen many times, was that at bottom the Fuehrer was a timid Austrian who would not risk war against determined and strong opponents.

BULLITT

[On April 8, 1939, the British Ambassador confidentially supplied the Secretary of State with copies of the summary of conclusions reached during the conversations held in London, April 4 to April 6, between the Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs and the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (740.00/1533). It was requested

⁸⁶ British Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

⁸⁷ President of the French Council of Ministers and Minister for National Defense.

that the document be forwarded to the President. For text, see *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939*, Third Series, volume V, page 47.]

740.00/754 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, April 9, 1939—10 p. m.
[Received April 10—9:25 a. m.]

686. I talked with Bonnet briefly tonight. He asked me to inform my Government that "it was five minutes before twelve". There might be war at any moment.

He could not predict where the first blow would be struck. Poland, Rumania, Yugoslavia, Greece or the French and British possessions in North Africa might be the scene of the first attack. It was clear, however, that Germany and Italy had decided to rush their attacks and it was now merely a question of where and when general war would begin.

Today's consultations between the French and British Governments as well as the meeting of the French Permanent Committee of National Defense had been concerned with the question of Albania and the Italian threat to Greece. The French and British had anticipated an Italian attack on Corfu and both the French and British Admiralties had given orders to their fleets with a view to meeting this eventuality.

He had just heard from Rome that Ciano had assured Lord Perth that Italy would not attempt to seize Corfu and would not attack Greece.

In view of the assurances that Ciano had given Perth during the past week this assurance reassures Perth but no one in Paris.

I venture to suggest that in your calculations for the future you should not exclude the possibility that decay in resistance to Germany and Italy among the smaller states of Europe may continue and that England, France and Poland may in the near future face war under desperate circumstances.

BULLITT

741.60c/65 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, April 9, 1939—11 p. m.
[Received April 10—9:44 a. m.]

687. The Polish Ambassador, who traveled as far as Brussels with Beck, asked to see me urgently as soon as he returned to Paris.

He said that Beck had asked him to say to me that the shortness of the period that I was on his train had made it impossible to explain his views to me in as detailed a manner as he had wished.

Beck had been embarrassed by my questions with regard to the obligation of Poland to go to the assistance of England in case of a German attack on Holland, Belgium or Switzerland, for the simple reason that his plenipotentiary powers gave him the right to agree to an alliance in case of direct attack on Great Britain but not in case of an indirect attack. He had been obliged therefore when in England to take the personal responsibility for saying that he was certain that his Government would agree to fight in case Great Britain should judge an attack against the Netherlands, Belgium or Switzerland, to be an attack against the vital interests of Great Britain. He had not wished to make any statement to any one on this subject until he had seen Moscicki and Smigly-Rydz and had received full authority to make this promise officially on behalf of the Polish Government.

The Polish Ambassador added that Beck was certain that the Polish Government would approve his action and would promise officially and at once to go to war on the side of Great Britain in case of any conflict which Great Britain judged should menace its vital interests.

The Polish Ambassador said that Beck also wanted him to explain further to me his thoughts with regard to Rumania. When the Rumanian Minister in London had called on him he had asked the Rumanian Minister flatly for an explanation of the Rumanian Government's request to the Governments of France and England to arrange for Rumania a defensive alliance with Poland directed against Hungary and Germany. The Rumanian Minister had replied evasively and had said that his Government had given him no explanation of its failure to approach Poland directly. Beck's own opinion was that the *démarche* which he had made in Budapest in which he had indicated that if Hungary should attack Rumania, Poland would be obliged to assist Rumania, to which the Hungarian Government had replied in most reassuring terms that Hungary had no intention whatsoever of attacking Rumania, had convinced the Rumanians that they were today enjoying all the benefits of an alliance with Poland without any of the burdens. If the Rumanians should ask Poland for a defensive alliance against Hungary and Germany the Poles certainly would ask Rumania to agree to go to war in case of a German attack on Poland. Beck felt therefore that the reason why the Rumanians had not approached Poland directly was because they desired to avoid giving any promise to go to war at once on the side of Poland in case of a German attack on Poland.

The Polish Ambassador was extremely depressed and apprehensive with regard to the entire situation. He said that his most recent in-

formation indicated that there were German troop movements which might be interpreted as preparation for an immediate German attack on Poland. The position of Poland if war should not break out at once would be greatly strengthened by the British-Polish alliance but if war should break out at once no real assistance from England could be given. The British had no army and Poland would be cut off from British supplies. The Polish Army was in desperate need of airplanes, tanks and heavy artillery.

Beck had instructed him to see Bonnet yesterday and he had done so. He had requested the shipment immediately of military supplies from France to Poland and especially airplanes. I said to him that he must know that France had so few airplanes today that it would be impossible to send any to Poland. He said that unfortunately this was true. He hoped however that a similar request which his colleague in London had made to the British Government might result in the shipment of planes to Poland.

The Polish Ambassador said that Beck had instructed him to say to Bonnet also that he felt it was time for the Polish-French alliance to be placed on the same basis as the British-Polish alliance, that is to say each country should be the sole judge of the moment when its vital interests were attacked and declarations of war should be automatic. The Polish Ambassador went on to say that unless the French Army could retain on the French frontier at least two-thirds of the German Army the position of Poland would be hopeless. I called his attention to the fact that the highest military circles here estimate that the Germans on the Siegfried line could hold up the entire French Army with one-third of the German Army. The Polish Ambassador said that he feared this was true; therefore the position of Holland, Belgium and Switzerland would become most important.

Unless the French Army should be able to attack Germany by way of Belgium it would be possible for Germany to throw an overwhelming mass of troops against Poland.

The Polish Ambassador asked me if it might not be possible for Poland to obtain financial help and aeroplanes from the United States. I replied that I believed that the Johnson Act⁸⁸ would forbid any loans from the United States to Poland but added that it might be possible for England to purchase planes for cash in the United States and turn them over to Poland.

Lukasiewicz, throughout our conversation, was laboring under the burden of the thought that within a very few weeks his country might be removed from the map of Europe by German invasion.

BULLITT

⁸⁸ Approved April 13, 1934; 48 Stat. 574.

740.00/759 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, April 10, 1939—7 p. m.

[Received April 10—7 p. m.]

693. Personal for the President and the Secretary. At this moment words no matter how wise have small effect on Hitler and Mussolini. They are still sensitive to acts. I realize fully that public opinion in the United States is not yet acutely aware of the ultimate menace to the American continents involved in the present activities of Germany, Italy and Japan. I venture to suggest for your consideration nevertheless the following unless this—with the full realization that at this distance I cannot judge whether or not they are within the realm of political possibility:^{88a}

1. I trust that you will put into effect immediately the measure designed to prevent all payments to Italy which we discussed in draft form when last I was in Washington.

2. I believe that in considering the question of the defense of the United States and the Americas it would be extremely unwise to eliminate from consideration the possibility that Germany, Italy, and Japan may win a comparatively speedy victory over France and England. Under those circumstances the British and French fleets might fall into the hands of our enemies. If in view of this possibility you are thinking of asking Congress to increase either the army or the navy, or both, I believe that such a request at this moment would have an immediate chilling effect on Hitler and Mussolini.

3. I am entirely uninformed as to your strategic plans for our fleet but I venture to suggest that if the fleet should be sent now either to Honolulu or the Philippines the Japanese would not dare to send an expedition against Singapore.

4. The influence of the United States in Bulgaria is I believe still strong. I believe it might be most important if you should instruct Atherton⁸⁹ to say to the Bulgarian Government, and keep on saying, that we, as friends of the Bulgarian people, hope that the Bulgarian Government will not again choose the side of early victories and ultimate defeat in a great international conflict.

5. I believe the British are digging their own grave by refusing to introduce conscription and by continuing to count on the good faith of Mussolini. If you agree with this opinion I think it might be most helpful if you should ask the British Ambassador in Washington why the British Government has not introduced conscription and why it has not sent ships to Corfu.

BULLITT

^{88a} This sentence apparently garbled.

⁸⁹ Ray Atherton, Minister in Bulgaria.

751.60C/138 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, April 11, 1939—4 p. m.

[Received April 11—2:49 p. m.]

699. Daladier said to me this morning that the Polish Ambassador had stated to him that he would leave for Warsaw tomorrow evening and had asked to see him before departure to talk about putting the French-Polish alliance on the same basis as the British-Polish alliance. Daladier said that he had not the slightest idea what this meant and asked me if I could inform him. Since the Polish Ambassador had told me that Beck had instructed him to make this *démarche*, I was able to do so.

You will recall that under the agreement between Poland and Great Britain each country is to be the sole judge of what constitutes its own vital interests. If in defense of what it considers its vital interests it goes to war, the other party to the alliance is obligated to go to war at once without question.

The Polish Ambassador in Paris will propose to Daladier that the French-Polish alliance should be placed on this basis. The Poles are anxious to have this promise from France because they feel that if Germany should attack Poland or if Poland should be compelled to enter the Danzig area and Germany should then march against Poland a French declaration of war against Germany might be delayed for some time while the French Parliament was discussing the question.

When I had explained the proposal which the Polish Ambassador will make, Daladier after considering the matter said that he believed the Polish position was sound. He thought it would be to the advantage of France and Poland to know that the other party to the French-Polish alliance would be obliged to go to war automatically.

Daladier said that he would therefore tell the Polish Ambassador this evening that France would agree to let Poland be the sole judge of its vital interests and would go to war by the side of Poland immediately if Poland should fight in defense of its vital interests—in return of course for a promise from Poland to France of the same nature.

BULLITT

740.00/774 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, April 11, 1939—8 p. m.

[Received April 11—5:55 p. m.]

462. My 459, April 10, 9 p. m.⁹⁰ I have just seen Halifax. The Prime Minister on Thursday will strongly state that if Italy touches Greece in any manner, England will fight. They are attempting by cable to get Turkey interested in fighting if either Italy touches Greece or Germany touches Rumania and they hope to have a favorable reply before Thursday with an agreement to fight at least for Greece. The Foreign Office is also urging Turkey to enter into a reciprocal agreement with Great Britain⁹¹ on the ground that, in the event of war between Great Britain and the dictators, and if Great Britain and France are beaten, Turkey's number is up. They are also urging Turkey to use her influence with the Bulgarians to come into a like agreement. Halifax heard this morning that Rumania proposes to fight if she is attacked. This comes from Tilea, the Rumanian Minister, who may or may not have it authoritatively.

In the meantime the Government is urging Beck to work as fast as he can with the Rumanians in order to get their position stated. Halifax saw Maisky⁹² this morning and still completely distrusts him. He found Maisky cynical about the whole situation and rather of the opinion that the fat is in the fire as far as everybody is concerned with Russia sitting on the sidelines. Halifax hesitates to tell Maisky very much, because he is convinced that what he tells him is given over to the enemies.

I asked Halifax if there were any probability of postponing the visit of the King and Queen to America.⁹³ He said he was firmly of the opinion that they should go because if the King had to declare war, he could declare it in Canada as well as in England, so I judge that, unless there is an absolute war situation, they propose to send the King and Queen. I thought the President might be interested in this.

I found Halifax strangely optimistic with the reservation that "this may all change before nightfall". He told me today that he does not expect war. He said he hesitates always to tell me this because he feels I think he is "burying his head in the sand" and he admits that

⁹⁰ Not printed.

⁹¹ Treaty of mutual assistance between the United Kingdom, France, and Turkey, signed at Angora, October 19, 1939, League of Nations Treaty Series, vol. cc, p. 167.

⁹² Ivan Maisky, Soviet Ambassador in the United Kingdom.

⁹³ King George VI and Queen Elizabeth left England May 6, 1939, for a tour through Canada. They included a short visit to the United States and returned June 22, 1939.

up to date he has been a little bit wrong. I do not know whether their judgment is based on facts that do not come to our attention or on Mussolini's notes to England regarding the Albanian situation, but he is convinced that Mussolini does not want to go to war with England and the English intend to ask Mussolini very soon, to test his attitude, why the Italians are not withdrawn from Spain, now that the war is over.

They are moving their soldiers out of Palestine back to Egypt to help make the Egyptians feel better and keep that situation a little more settled and he added smilingly to make more trouble for Malcolm MacDonald⁹⁶ in Palestine.

The Government here may be all wrong again, but Mussolini's attitude as expressed to the Government over the Albanian matter has not increased their concern. It has rather made them feel that the situation is not as hopeless as everybody else seems to think it is.

KENNEDY

740.00/797

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Chief of the Division
of European Affairs (Moffat)*

[WASHINGTON,] April 12, 1939.

The French Ambassador⁹⁶ called this afternoon to talk over developments in Europe. He said that he had dined the previous evening at the White House with the President who had made no secret that the French Government was more alarmed than it had ever been. The tenor of his own telegrams this morning showed the same state of worry. He himself was unable to account for this and asked if I could throw any light. I did not desire to give him the substance of Mr. Bullitt's telegrams, as he undoubtedly wished, and contented myself with saying that I thought the French were very much upset that the British seemed to be attaching more value to Italian assurances with regard to the future than the French felt was justified.

The Ambassador then went on to say that he was very concerned over the debates on neutrality in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.⁹⁷ He had spoken to the Secretary about this yesterday in an informal way, as should he take up the matter officially and it become known, it might react against French interests. Nevertheless, Paris was very concerned over the delay and although they had perfect

⁹⁶ British Secretary of State for the Colonies.

⁹⁶ René Doynel, Count de Saint-Quentin.

⁹⁷ See *Neutrality, Peace Legislation and Our Foreign Policy: Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, 76th Cong., 1st sess., April 5-May 8, 1939* (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1939).

confidence that ultimately matters would work out, any prolongation of the period of discussion and uncertainty was bound to have unfavorable repercussions.

PIERREPONT MOFFAT

740.00/785 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, April 12, 1939—6 p. m.
[Received April 12—5 p. m.]

710. Rochat said this afternoon that in the past 24 hours the situation has certainly not become worse. The declaration which Chamberlain and Daladier will make tomorrow will mark the beginning of a new phase. There will be a guarantee of Greece and "perhaps" one of Rumania. The case of Turkey is not quite ripe yet and negotiations are continuing.

From the military point of view the Foreign Office's information indicates that there are no military movements of special significance in Germany but in Italy there is a greater concentration of troops at Brindisi and more troops and war material being transported to Albania than would seem warranted if it is merely a question of maintaining order in the latter country. What concerns the French particularly at present is the question of Italian forces in Spain.

The assertion that they are being maintained there to take part in the parade early in May is regarded as the flimsiest of pretexts. Moreover, the French Government has definite proof that, between April 1 and April 10, 5,000 additional Italian troops landed at Cadiz. Marshal Pétain's efforts to obtain an explanation of this situation have proved entirely unsuccessful as have the efforts made by the British.

Rochat expresses the opinion that the British are unquestionably right in not denouncing the Anglo-Italian agreement:⁸⁸ admitting that any further "assurances" from the Italians are utterly worthless, nevertheless the agreement furnishes a lever which may prove of value in the effort to get the Italians out of Spain. In the meanwhile it is essential to take all necessary precautions of a military and naval character so as not to be caught unawares and this the French Government is doing discreetly and effectively.

BULLITT

⁸⁸ Signed at Rome, April 16, 1938, League of Nations Treaty Series, vol. cxcv, p. 77.

751.60C/139 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, April 12, 1939—9 p. m.

[Received April 12—8:13 p. m.]

713. The Polish Ambassador informed me this afternoon that he had talked with Daladier on the subject reported in my No. 699, April 11, 4 p. m., and that Daladier had said to him that he would be glad to have the French-Polish alliance placed on the same basis as the British-Polish alliance; that is to say each nation would be exclusive judge of the moment when its vital interests were engaged and the partner to the alliance would be obliged to come to its assistance automatically. The Polish Ambassador added that he had as a matter of information found Daladier so calm and determined and that he felt that the general attitude of France today was far finer than it had ever been in his experience.

BULLITT

740.00/783 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, April 12, 1939—10 p. m.

[Received April 12—7:35 p. m.]

470. My 467, April 12, 6 p. m.⁹⁹ and 462, April 11, 8 p. m., first paragraph. Following communicated by the Foreign Office in strict confidence.

British Ambassador to Turkey was instructed this afternoon to make a proposal to the Turkish Government along the following lines: to point out the obvious solidarity of the Berlin-Rome Axis in the policy of aggression against other countries; that wherever one member strikes, the other is there in support; that another act of aggression in the Mediterranean will be a grave menace to the security and independence of all Mediterranean countries; and to offer the Turkish Government a guarantee of assistance by Great Britain in the event of an attack by Italy, in return for a reciprocal guarantee by Turkey to Great Britain should she be the object of an Italian attack. Proposal follows the model of the Anglo-Polish agreement for reciprocal assistance in the event of an attack by Germany. It is hoped here that this offer will, besides serving other purposes, encourage Turkey to hasten a favorable reply to the British proposal for guarantee of Greece.

⁹⁹ Not printed.

The Turks are being urged at the same time for an expression of their views and intentions regarding problem of Rumanian security and for their views as to how Bulgaria might be integrated into a plan of Balkan solidarity.

KENNEDY

740.00/791 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, April 13, 1939—8 p. m.
[Received 8:06 p. m.]

724. In discussing with Rochat this afternoon the declaration made by Daladier and Chamberlain of a Franco-British guarantee of Greece and Rumania, he stated the following: When after the German seizure of Czechoslovakia on March 15 the French and British Governments began consultations with a view to preventing further acts of aggression their immediate preoccupation had been Rumania which appeared to be next in line for an attack by Germany. In working out their policy, however, they were forced by the course of events to begin with the British guarantee of Poland.

The Italian aggression on Albania then called for a guarantee of Greece and Turkey (the guarantee of Turkey has already been agreed upon and should be announced before long; the delay Rochat said has been due to the fact that "the British started their talks in Ankara a bit late"). A guarantee of Poland, Greece and Turkey with nothing said about Rumania would have been a virtual invitation to Hitler to go ahead against Rumania and would thereby have defeated the primary objective of the Franco-British policy namely to keep Rumania with its oil resources out of Hitler's hands. The British had at first wished to delay the Rumanian guarantee until Poland would give a like guarantee.

The French, however, had felt that this would be placing Rumania's safety in Beck's hands and that Beck might be tempted to save his own country by allowing German aggression to be directed against Rumania. The British had finally agreed to join the French in the guarantee of Rumania without making this dependent upon action by Poland.

Rochat said that undoubtedly the German and Italian Governments had expected that Greece would be covered by the French and British declaration. The guarantee of Rumania, however, will come as a distinctly disagreeable surprise and it may be expected that there will be a violent outburst on the theme of "encirclement." Whether Hitler's reaction will take a more dangerous form remains to be seen.

We inquired what the position of Yugoslavia would be now that Greece, Rumania, and for all practical purposes, Turkey are covered by the Franco-British guarantee. Roehat said that while France and Great Britain would have to consider what they could do in the event of a German move against Yugoslavia the situation of that country appeared to be a difficult one. He spoke of the errors of Stoyadinovitch's¹ "realistic" policy in seeking to play off first Germany against Italy and then Italy against Germany. He also referred to the deterioration of Yugoslavia's military strength and of the uncertain political situation of the country. The French Government, however, has received no information leading it to believe that Germany intends any immediate action against Yugoslavia.

BULLITT

740.00/809 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, April 14, 1939—8 p. m.
[Received April 14—5:07 p. m.]

741. Daladier said to me this afternoon that he considers the dispatch of the German naval vessels to Spanish waters as extremely serious. He regards it as a move taken in preparation for war.

BULLITT

IV. PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT'S MESSAGES OF APRIL 14 TO GERMANY AND ITALY REQUESTING REASSURANCE THAT NEITHER POWER CONTEMPLATED MILITARY AGGRESSION

740.00/817a : Telegram

*President Roosevelt to the German Chancellor (Hitler)*²

WASHINGTON, April 14, 1939.

You realize I am sure that throughout the world hundreds of millions of human beings are living today in constant fear of a new war or even a series of wars.

The existence of this fear—and the possibility of such a conflict—is of definite concern to the people of the United States for whom I speak, as it must also be to the peoples of the other nations of the entire Western Hemisphere. All of them know that any major war,

¹Milan Stoyadinovitch, former Yugoslav Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs.

²By instruction of the President, the text of this message, *mutatis mutandis*, was communicated on the same date to Benito Mussolini as Chief of the Italian Government (740.00/817b). The origin and development of the President's *démarche* is described in *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull* (New York, The Macmillan Company, 1948), vol. I, p. 620.

even if it were to be confined to other continents, must bear heavily on them during its continuance and also for generations to come.

Because of the fact that after the acute tension in which the world has been living during the past few weeks there would seem to be at least a momentary relaxation—because no troops are at this moment on the march—this may be an opportune moment for me to send you this message.

On a previous occasion I have addressed you in behalf of the settlement of political, economic, and social problems by peaceful methods and without resort to arms.³

But the tide of events seems to have reverted to the threat of arms. If such threats continue, it seems inevitable that much of the world must become involved in common ruin. All the world, victor nations, vanquished nations, and neutral nations will suffer. I refuse to believe that the world is, of necessity, such a prisoner of destiny. On the contrary, it is clear that the leaders of great nations have it in their power to liberate their peoples from the disaster that impends. It is equally clear that in their own minds and in their own hearts the peoples themselves desire that their fears be ended.

It is, however, unfortunately necessary to take cognizance of recent facts.

Three nations in Europe and one in Africa have seen their independent existence terminated. A vast territory in another independent nation of the Far East has been occupied by a neighboring state. Reports, which we trust are not true, insist that further acts of aggression are contemplated against still other independent nations. Plainly the world is moving toward the moment when this situation must end in catastrophe unless a more rational way of guiding events is found.

You have repeatedly asserted that you and the German people have no desire for war. If this is true there need be no war.

Nothing can persuade the peoples of the earth that any governing power has any right or need to inflict the consequences of war on its own or any other people save in the cause of self-evident home defense.

In making this statement we as Americans speak not through selfishness or fear or weakness. If we speak now it is with the voice of strength and with friendship for mankind. It is still clear to me that international problems can be solved at the council table.

It is therefore no answer to the plea for peaceful discussion for one side to plead that unless they receive assurances beforehand that the

³ See the President's message to Hitler, September 26, 1938, *Foreign Relations*, 1938, vol. 1, p. 657, and his message to Mussolini conveyed in the Department's telegram No. 91, September 27, 1938, 3 p. m., to the Ambassador in Italy, *ibid.*, p. 677.

verdict will be theirs, they will not lay aside their arms. In conference rooms, as in courts, it is necessary that both sides enter upon the discussion in good faith, assuming that substantial justice will accrue to both, and it is customary and necessary that they leave their arms outside the room where they confer.

I am convinced that the cause of world peace would be greatly advanced if the nations of the world were to obtain a frank statement relating to the present and future policy of governments.

Because the United States, as one of the nations of the Western Hemisphere, is not involved in the immediate controversies which have arisen in Europe, I trust that you may be willing to make such a statement of policy to me as the head of a nation far removed from Europe in order that I, acting only with the responsibility and obligation of a friendly intermediary, may communicate such declaration to other nations now apprehensive as to the course which the policy of your Government may take.

Are you willing to give assurance that your armed forces will not attack or invade the territory or possessions of the following independent nations: Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, The Netherlands, Belgium, Great Britain and Ireland, France, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Poland, Hungary, Rumania, Yugoslavia, Russia, Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey, Iraq, the Arabias, Syria, Palestine, Egypt and Iran.

Such an assurance clearly must apply not only to the present day but also to a future sufficiently long to give every opportunity to work by peaceful methods for a more permanent peace. I therefore suggest that you construe the word "future" to apply to a minimum period of assured non-aggression—10 years at the least—a quarter of a century, if we dare look that far ahead.

If such assurance is given by your Government, I will immediately transmit it to the governments of the nations I have named and I will simultaneously inquire whether, as I am reasonably sure, each of the nations enumerated above will in turn give like assurance for transmission to you.

Reciprocal assurances such as I have outlined will bring to the world an immediate measure of relief.

I propose that if it is given, two essential problems shall promptly be discussed in the resulting peaceful surroundings, and in those discussions the Government of the United States will gladly take part.

The discussions which I have in mind relate to the most effective and immediate manner through which the peoples of the world can obtain progressive relief from the crushing burden of armament which is each day bringing them more closely to the brink of economic disaster. Simultaneously the Government of the United States would be prepared to take part in discussions looking towards the most practi-

cal manner of opening up avenues of international trade to the end that every nation of the earth may be enabled to buy and sell on equal terms in the world market as well as to possess assurances of obtaining the materials and products of peaceful economic life.

At the same time, those governments other than the United States which are directly interested could undertake such political discussions as they may consider necessary or desirable.

We recognize complex world problems which affect all humanity but we know that study and discussion of them must be held in an atmosphere of peace. Such an atmosphere of peace cannot exist if negotiations are overshadowed by the threat of force or by the fear of war.

I think you will not misunderstand the spirit of frankness in which I send you this message. Heads of great governments in this hour are literally responsible for the fate of humanity in the coming years. They cannot fail to hear the prayers of their people to be protected from the foreseeable chaos of war. History will hold them accountable for the lives and the happiness of all—even unto the least.

I hope that your answer will make it possible for humanity to lose fear and regain security for many years to come.

A similar message is being addressed to the Chief of the Italian Government.

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

740.00/817d : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Cuba (Wright)*⁴

WASHINGTON, April 14, 1939—8 p. m.

48. The President is tonight sending the following identic messages to the Chancellor of the German Reich and to the Chief of the Italian Government.

The texts of these messages will be released to the press in Washington at 10:30 a. m. April 15, Washington time.

⁴ Sent at the same time to the Minister in Canada as Department's No. 24; to the Chiefs of all Missions in the other American Republics, as follows: Argentina (No. 62), Bolivia (No. 8), Brazil (No. 60), Chile (No. 61), Colombia (No. 33), Costa Rica (No. 17), Dominican Republic (No. 24), Ecuador (No. 11), El Salvador (No. 4), Guatemala (No. 13), Haiti (No. 35), Honduras (No. 6), Mexico (No. 76), Nicaragua (No. 20), Panama (No. 29), Paraguay (No. 5), Peru (No. 25), Uruguay (No. 21) and Venezuela (No. 26); and with the omission of the last paragraph, to the Ambassadors in the United Kingdom (No. 261), Italy (No. 28) and France (No. 265).

The Ambassador in France was instructed on April 15 (Department's telegram No. 267, 3 p. m., not printed) to repeat the text of the Department's telegram No. 265 to the Missions in Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Rumania, Soviet Union, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, and Yugoslavia, and at Beirut and Jerusalem.

[Here follows the text of the President's message to the German Chancellor, printed *supra*.]

Please proceed as early as possible Saturday⁵ to secure and cable Department any comment on the foregoing by the highest available official in the government to which you are accredited.

HULL

[For the messages from the Governments of all the other American Republics and Canada endorsing the President's statement to the German Chancellor and the Chief of the Italian Government, which were transmitted to the Department pursuant to the last paragraph of the telegram sent on April 14, *supra*, see Department of State, *Press Releases*, April 22, 1939, pages 323 ff.]

740.00/823 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, April 15, 1939—9 p. m.
[Received April 15—8:50 p. m.]

751. For the President and the Secretary. As I reported in my No. 748, April 15, 6 p. m.,⁶ Daladier⁷ asked me to call on him at 6:00 o'clock this afternoon to receive a personal message which he desired to send to the President on behalf of the French Government giving the reaction of the French Government to the President's communication to Hitler and Mussolini. I called on him and in my presence he wrote personally a note of which the following is a translation:

"The French Government received from the Ambassador of the United States a copy of a message addressed by President Roosevelt to the Fuehrer—Chancellor of the Reich and to the Chief of the Italian Government.

Without waiting for the replies which will be addressed by them to the President of the United States, France desires to convey to President Roosevelt her felicitations for his noble initiative which would have the greatest repercussions in the world.

The French people, like the American people, desires peace. Like the American people, the French people is faithful to the ideals of liberty and human solace, and desires ardently peace with independence for all nations not because of fear or weakness but because of reason and love for the human race. The French people therefore hopes that the proposals of President Roosevelt may assure to the world a period of peaceful collaboration.

⁵ April 15.

⁶ Not printed.

⁷ President of the French Council of Ministers and Minister for National Defense.

The French Government is happy to offer its complete collaboration to the effort to establish a period of guaranteed non-aggression of 25 years, to the progressive reduction of armaments, and to the search for every possible means to assure, in equality, the participation of all nations in the revival of international commerce."

Daladier said to me that he positively would not make public this note but added that if the President should desire to make it public he would be glad to have it made public when, if, and as the President might desire.

Since Daladier did not consult the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with regard to this reply I venture to suggest that if you find it in any way inadequate and if you will transmit to me your ideas with regard to any sort of reply that you may prefer the French Government will be glad to supply it.

Once again Daladier expressed to me in the warmest possible terms his thanks for the efforts of the President to preserve peace. In commenting on the possibility that Hitler and Mussolini might accept the President's proposal he said "Of one thing I am certain. At any conference we can be sure that there will be an absolute identity of views between France and the United States."

BULLITT

740.00/834 : Telegram

The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, April 16, 1939—11 p. m.

[Received April 16—8:11 p. m.]

184. Following is the text in translation of telegram from Kalinin⁸ to the President released to the press tonight:

"Mr. President: I consider it a pleasant duty to express to you deep sympathy as well as hearty congratulations in regard to the noble appeal which you have sent to the Governments of Germany and Italy. You may be sure that your initiative finds the warmest response in the hearts of the peoples of the Soviet Socialist Union who are sincerely interested in the preservation of universal peace. Signed Kalinin."

KIRK

740.00/897 : Telegram

The Chargé in Ireland (MacVeagh) to the Secretary of State

DUBLIN, April 17, 1939—2 p. m.

[Received 2:18 p. m.]

9. Am advised orally that Irish Government is very much hurt because Ireland was not mentioned as separate country in the Presi-

⁸ President of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the Soviet Union.

dent's telegram to Germany and Italy but was included with England in phrase "Great Britain and Ireland" indication impairment of sovereignty.⁹ Brennan¹⁰ has been instructed to protest to Department and Dulanty¹¹ in London will discuss matter informally with Kennedy.¹² Because of this and because no copy was sent to Irish Government De Valera¹³ will issue no statement although the telegram has received favorable editorial comment. Irish Government advised Brennan that copies were only sent to England and France besides Latin American Republics and Canada.

In a speech delivered yesterday afternoon De Valera emphasized Ireland's sovereignty and determination to remain neutral in case of war. He said "We have established the unquestioned sovereignty of the Irish people over 26 counties of the national territory" and "we have full and undivided control over our affairs, internal and external" and "there is no rule, there is no test, which has ever been laid down for a complete and sovereign state, which our state does not fully possess." After urging enlistment in the volunteer force he stated "The desire of the Irish people, and the desire of the Irish Government is to keep our nation out of war. The aim of government is to maintain and preserve our neutrality in the event of war. The best way, and the only way to secure our aim, is to put ourselves in the best position possible to defend ourselves, so that no one can hope to attack us, or violate our territory, with impunity." His only reference to the President's telegram was a question asking whether it were possible to refuse such a request for non-aggression guarantees.

New Irish passports omit any mention of the King and are issued on sole authority of De Valera as Minister for External Affairs. Irish Ministers will remain in Berlin and Rome in case of war and Ireland will endeavor to maintain neutrality. Besides the strong sentimental reason for dissassociation with England, the maintenance of her neutrality in case of war impels the Irish Government to insist upon it now.

Repeated to London.

MACVEAGH

⁹ For statement regarding this subject made by the Secretary of State to the press on April 20, 1939, see Department of State, *Press Releases*, April 22, 1939, p. 330.

¹⁰ Robert Brennan, Irish Minister in the United States.

¹¹ John W. Dulanty, Irish High Commissioner in London.

¹² Joseph P. Kennedy, American Ambassador in the United Kingdom.

¹³ Eamon de Valera, Irish Prime Minister and Minister for External Affairs.

740.00/899 : Telegram

*The Consul at Geneva (Bucknell) to the Secretary of State*GENEVA, April 17, 1939—4 p. m.
[Received April 17—2 p. m.]

82. The President's message to Hitler and Mussolini has been hailed in Geneva as one of the most important events in current history. Observers generally speak of the personal courage and foresight required by the President's action and say that perhaps the immediate and major results of the message are (a) that totalitarian claims of encirclement and of the impossibility of satisfying their legitimate needs by peaceful methods has now been exploded; (b) that a greatly strengthened moral basis for a united democratic opposition to further gangster methods has been established; (c) that the United States has now declared in unmistakable terms its opposition to and abhorrence of war as a means of settling differences between nations and its determination to "do its part" to end the safe use of aggression to enforce demands, legitimate or otherwise; (d) that however much the message may be misinterpreted in the totalitarian press or in official statements in these countries, it must have an inevitable even though delayed effect on the people of these states.

It is generally felt that Hitler and Mussolini will not accept the President's proposals, but opinion varies as to what form the refusal will take. Some basing their opinion on current comment in the German and Italian press feel that a flat "no" will constitute the reply.

Others feel that an attempt will be made to appeal to the isolationist sentiment in the United States and that the reply will be milder than might be expected from Axis press comment and that an effort will be made to depict the Axis as the injured party who far from having any aggressive intentions [*intentions?*] toward anyone is being attacked and encircled by enemies who refuse and will refuse at a conference or otherwise to permit Germany and Italy to exist on an equal basis with other free and sovereign powers. All circles, however, believe that the replies will be negative, however couched, and that in spite of recognized Italian hesitation will be identic.

Observers pointed out that only a few "safe" or relatively "safe" points for aggression in Europe remain and list them as Hungary and possibly Lithuania and Yugoslavia. With regard to the last, Avenol¹⁴ spoke of it today as having betrayed itself into the hands of the Axis. Even aggression in these areas, however, is becoming more dangerous as a result of: (a) The reported progress in Franco-

¹⁴ Joseph Avenol, Secretary of the League of Nations.

British negotiations particularly with Russia, and (b) the position of the United States as indicated in the President's message. For these reasons observers are of the opinion that in the event of a refusal from the Axis the message may tend to hasten events and that the period of calm mentioned by the President may soon be brought to an end.

BUCKNELL

740.00/901: Telegram

The Minister in Norway (Harriman) to the Secretary of State

OSLO, April 17, 1939—4 p. m.

[Received April 17—2: 23 p. m.]

15. I saw the Foreign Minister this morning and unofficially gave him the text of the President's message contained in Department's telegram 265, April 14.¹⁵ Koht stated that he was very glad the President had taken this statesmanlike step which at least would bring Mussolini and Hitler into the open. He was positive, however, that their answer would be equivalent to no. He was very pessimistic as to the future as well as his conviction that since the last Czechoslovak crisis nothing could avert war. It was just a question of a few months of the present so-called peace before the catastrophe.

In commenting on current discussion that England and France in the event of war would lose unless the United States sent troops in addition to giving them full economic support, the Foreign Minister expressed the opinion that troops would not be necessary for the reason that a blockade would starve Germany out. Germany had suffered terribly last time and this time she would start in much worse condition than before.

HARRIMAN

740.00/911: Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Geist) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, April 17, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received April 17—2: 25 p. m.]

256. I learn that last night Ribbentrop¹⁶ conferred with Hitler for about an hour before the latter's departure from Berlin regarding President Roosevelt's message and it was finally decided to answer the message in a speech before the Reichstag on April 28. This method

¹⁵ See second paragraph of footnote 4, p. 133.

¹⁶ Joachim von Ribbentrop, German Minister for Foreign Affairs.

of replying to the President's telegram was chosen in order to assure Hitler of a wide hearing before the world.

Informed German official sources state that Hitler will endeavor to drive home two points: First, to parry Roosevelt's maneuver of placing upon Germany the war guilt in respect of a possible future war, and, second, to disprove Roosevelt's imputation that the totalitarian states are imbued with ill-will against other nations in Europe and are planning aggressive acts against them.

The official German attitude toward the President's message is now clearly exemplified in the official and unofficial press comment which I am informed truly reflects the official attitude. Hitler I understand will answer the President's message *in extenso* turning the arguments point for point against not only the President and American policy in particular but against the democracies generally.

Judging from the comments of German official sources indirectly reported to me the message has not contributed in the least to a relaxation of tension as the German attitude is increasingly aggressive and belligerently confident.

At the end of next week staff talks are scheduled to take place here between German, Italian and Spanish generals during which military plans and eventualities covering a large area are to be discussed. About 10 Italian generals and naval officers will take part in the conversations. General Moscardo will be among the Spanish officers present.

In reference to the first paragraph above the evening press has just announced the meeting of the Reichstag on April 28th for the purpose stated.

GEIST

740.00/908 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, April 17, 1939—7 p. m.

[Received April 17—3:25 p. m.]

500. When I saw the Prime Minister, aside from his great appreciation of the President's message in the cause of world peace, he only had two items of information that might be of interest: (1) His still more or less unfailing belief that Mussolini intends to live up to his agreement to withdraw his troops from Spain. Most of his Cabinet do not believe this, but Chamberlain is still convinced. (2) He feels he can make a deal with Russia at any time now, but is delaying until

he definitely gets the Balkan situation straightened away, because it has been intimated to him that to bring Russia in before the Balkan deals are all completed might cause trouble.

He has failed more in the past week than he has in the past year. He walks like an old man and yesterday talked like one.

He is a shade more hopeful of peace.

KENNEDY

740.00/907 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, April 17, 1939—7 p. m.
[Received April 17—4:40 p. m.]

762. Daladier said to me this afternoon that he felt that the fact that Hitler had decided to answer the President's message by the speech to the Reichstag on the 28th of April indicated merely that after conferring with Mussolini he did not dare to reject the President's proposals without proposing some alternative—however specious.

Daladier went on to say that his own belief was that Hitler in his speech on the 28th would reply that he would be glad to give guarantees of non-aggression and to enter into discussions of disarmament and the reconstruction of international trade after the settlement of certain political questions which did not in any way concern the United States.

He thought that Hitler would then propose another Munich conference with all powers excluded except Germany, Italy, France and England.

He, Daladier, would, of course, be obliged to reject any such proposal and he hoped that the President would stick to the position that the promise of non-aggression should come first so that all questions might be discussed in a calm atmosphere and not at the point of a pistol. He, Daladier, positively would not talk about concessions to Germany and Italy under threat of war as at Munich.

BULLITT

740.00/936 : Telegram

The Consul at Geneva (Bucknell) to the Secretary of State

GENEVA, April 18, 1939—4 p. m.
[Received April 18—12:45 p. m.]

85. My No. 82, April 17, 4 p. m. While opinion in general in Geneva continues pessimistic as to the possibility of an Axis accept-

ance of the President's proposals, the following view is held in certain quarters: It is thought that the tremendous implications of the President's message together with the reported continued success of current French-British-Soviet negotiations for a defensive air pact and almost completed negotiations with Turkey must make it apparent to even the most stubborn dictator that the chances of confining hostilities to a short victorious struggle are rapidly dwindling and that further aggression may this time end in a protracted war. It is felt therefore that the Axis must decide, and that quickly, whether (a) in spite of current press attacks upon the President to accept the way out offered or at least to reply with some counter-proposals which will not slam the door and which may make an eventual compromise possible, or (b) to move rapidly to secure further strategic advantages before general hostilities take place.

In support of the first view observers point to the decision to put off an answer to the President's message until the 28th and the fact that while Axis press comment particularly in Germany still bitterly attacks the President personally some circles in Geneva and France believe that the idea of a conference may gain ground. Those holding the other view say that Hitler always moves between speeches, point to certain predictions regarding possible German action in Danzig, mention the possibility that Hitler is still unconvinced France and Great Britain will not "back down" at the last moment, and feel that in any case Hitler has gone so far that he will not now draw back.

All feel however that the message has brought the final Axis decision for peace or war much nearer and say that events in the immediate future may well prove decisive in this regard.

BUCKNELL

740.00/940 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the
Secretary of State*

LONDON, April 18, 1939—5 p. m.
[Received April 18—1:10 p. m.]

512. Just saw Halifax.¹⁸ He read me very disquieting despatches from Perth¹⁹ and the British Military and Naval Attachés at Rome, all to the effect that German troops were entering Italy in large numbers and that there seems to be an idea in the back of the Military and Naval Attachés' minds that the movement is directed towards Egypt, Corfu, Suez and Gibraltar. They cannot make out just where,

¹⁸ British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

¹⁹ British Ambassador in Italy.

but they consider that movement large enough and serious enough to call it to the Government's attention. Halifax still believes that Mussolini will not make any surprise move. The Government have arranged for the Egyptian Government to place guns on the Suez Canal to protect the oil tanks there. Some of their secret service messages from Germany do not indicate any surprise move; others indicate a movement against Yugoslavia in conjunction with Italy. Halifax is of the opinion that all of these rumors are calculated to try and break the nerve of France and England with the hope of accomplishing results without going to war.

He told me today in great confidence that he favors conscription somewhat in opposition to the Prime Minister who feels that conscription should not be put in unless the trade unions are willing. With that in mind Chamberlain is seeing the trade unions today to see if they will agree. Halifax wants him, whether they agree or not, to bring in a bill before the Commons and he does not think the trade unions will dare to oppose it. He thinks the morale of the outside friends of England will be helped tremendously if they put it in. Of course if conscription goes in, it will be all inclusive. It will include industry as well as capital.

KENNEDY

740.00/944 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, April 18, 1939—7 p. m.
[Received April 18—4 p. m.]

773. Leger²⁰ read to me today a telegram which he had just received from the French Embassy in Berlin. This telegram stated that it had been learned from a high official of the German Foreign Office who in the past had proved to be an entirely reliable source of information that Hitler's first reaction to the President's message had been one of violent rage and that he had decided at once that he would make no reply but merely have the German press insult the President in every possible way.

News of the profound impression which the message had made in all quarters of the world including the impression that it had made among those Germans who had heard it through the transmissions in German of the London and Strasbourg radios finally convinced Ribbentrop and Hitler that a reply must be made.

It had been decided therefore that the proposal of the President should be rejected on the ground that while Germany had the highest

²⁰ Alexis Léger, Secretary General of the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

respect for the American people and wished them nothing but good, no communication from so contemptible a creature as the present President of the United States could be taken seriously by the German Government and that so long as President Roosevelt should remain President of the United States no friendly relations could exist between Germany and the United States.

Leger said that he could not believe that 9 more days would pass without the Germans realizing that such a reply as this would be disastrous folly. He had been informed that the Italians wished the Germans to reply—and wished to reply themselves—along the lines predicted by Daladier yesterday to me (see my 762, April 17, 7 p. m.).

Leger said that he feared the reply would finally be that Germany and Italy would be prepared to give guarantees for the future after the settlement of certain political questions. Hitler would propose another Munich conference to meet under threat of war.

Leger said he feared that Chamberlain might favor such a conference and he hoped that if the German reply should take this form, the President would be prepared to meet the unjust attack.

BULLITT

~~SECRET~~

740.00/985 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Turkey (MacMurray) to the Secretary of State

ANKARA, April 19, 1939—3 p. m.
[Received April 19—1:50 p. m.]

47. 1. The Secretary General of the Foreign Office called me in this morning to tell me in strictest confidence that yesterday afternoon the German Chargé d'Affaires had requested an immediate interview with the Minister for Foreign Affairs and had posed to him two questions: first, whether Turkey considered herself menaced and, second, whether the Turkish Government had requested President Roosevelt to send his message to Hitler and Mussolini? To both questions the Minister naturally answered negatively.

2. Numan Bey further said that he construed this *démarche* to be one of a series addressed to all the countries for which the President's message had requested assurances and as designed to elicit negative replies to questions which had been so framed as to make it possible for the German Government in the very near future to announce that its inquiries had disclosed that the President's action was gratuitous and unwelcome to the countries mentioned.

3. He went on to offer the friendly suggestion that the American Government might anticipate this maneuver by immediately addressing to the governments in question inquiries as to their attitude towards the message—which inquiries he felt sure would put our

Government in a position to announce that the message had been welcomed. He assured me that in case of such an inquiry being made to the Turkish Government it would promptly reply that it considered the message to be in the interests of world peace.

Repeated to London and Paris.

MACMURRAY

740.00/989 : Telegram

The Minister Resident in Iraq (Knabenshue) to the Secretary of State

BAGHDAD, April 19, 1939—3 p. m.

[Received April 19—2:16 p. m.]

20. I presented to the Prime Minister the text of the President's message to Hitler and Mussolini suggesting that he might like to make some comment for transmission to my Government. I have today received from him the following:

"The Iraqi Government has followed with increasing anxiety the course of recent events in Europe, culminating in the termination of the independence of the small Moslem state of Albania. The constant threat of war and the crushing burden of expenditure on armaments have gravely prejudiced what it conceives to be its principal duty, to work for the progress and happiness of all classes of its people.

The policy of Iraq is to live not only in peace but on terms of the closest collaboration with all countries especially its neighbors. It therefore welcomes the magnanimous initiative of the President of the United States and is ready to cooperate without reserve for the realization of his aims."

The Prime Minister subsequently informed me verbally that the text of the above comment has been transmitted to the other members of the Saadabad pact.²¹

KNABENSHUE

740.00/995 : Telegram

The Minister in Greece (MacVeagh) to the Secretary of State

ATHENS, April 19, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received April 19—2:12 p. m.]

63. The Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs has asked me to communicate confidentially that the reaction of the Greek Government to

²¹ Signed at Teheran, July 8, 1937, by Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, and Turkey; League of Nations Treaty Series, vol. cxc, p. 21.

the President's appeal is one of enthusiastic approval but that it hesitates to make a public announcement of this fact in view of Greece's exposed position. He said that he expects that Hitler's eventual reply will not be wholly unfavorable. He told me that Germany has, since the publication of the President's message, asked the Greek Government to say categorically whether it feels menaced by Germany, and that forcibly the reply has had to be no. Mr. Mavroudis therefore thinks that part of Hitler's reply will be that Germany is menacing nobody, quoting statements to this effect by many of the states mentioned by the President. In addition he thinks Hitler may claim to be the originator of the idea of a 10 or 25 year peace and express approval of its subject to satisfaction of certain German claims such as those in regard to colonies and raw materials. Mr. Mavroudis expressed the thought that British and French assurances to Turkey should be given unilaterally as Turkey is in the same situation as Greece, with a large part of her economy in German hands and an Italian military concentration on her flank. In this latter connection and in reference to my telegram No. 53, April 13, 7 p. m.,²² American eye witnesses report continued landing of Italian troops at Rhodes together with artillery and trucks as well as tanks. The number of the latter now in the islands they estimate as several hundred.

Repeated by telegraph to Paris and Istanbul.

MACVEAGH

740.00/988 : Telegram

The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State

HELSINKI, April 19, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received April 19—2:18 p. m.]

56. Minister of Foreign Affairs informed me this afternoon that German Minister had called on him yesterday and inquired officially with reference to President Roosevelt's message of April 14 to German and Italian Governments, first, whether Finland expected attack from Germany and, secondly, whether Finnish Government had been consulted in advance regarding the President's message. Minister of Foreign Affairs said he had answered both questions in the negative. German Minister's call was the one referred to in my telegram No. 53,

²² Not printed.

April 18²³ as expected by the Minister of Foreign Affairs who told me incidentally that the German answer in the Aaland [Islands] matter²⁴ was not touched upon.

SCHOENFELD

740.00/991 : Telegram

The Minister in Lithuania (Norem) to the Secretary of State

KAUNAS, April 19, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received 6:25 p. m.]

19. On invitation of the Foreign Minister I called upon Mr. Lozoraitis to receive a copy of the Lithuanian reply given to Germany in connection with the recent peace proposal of President Roosevelt. Mr. Lozoraitis acting for the Foreign Minister confided that Mr. Zechlin, the German Minister, dictated portion of this reply. He stated that Herr Hitler was very angry over American interest in world peace and that he expected an angry reply to be made on the 28th. He stated that Lithuania did not expect any good results from the recent move. A translation of the text of the answer follows:

"The Government of Lithuania states with great satisfaction that, in the relations between Lithuania and the German Reich, the use of force by both countries as also the support of the use of force from a third party against one of the two states is excluded and that through this a solid basis is furnished for a friendly development of relations. There is therefore no occasion for Lithuania to feel itself threatened.

In so far as the general situation is concerned, it is to be pointed out that the existing tension in the international situation, the symptoms of which are generally known, fills the public of Lithuania with care that, as the result of a conflict between third powers, dangers could arise to the integrity of the territory of Lithuania or to the free development of its sovereign rights. The Lithuanian Government is therefore interested in the highest degree in the maintenance of peace and welcomes every effective measure that can lead with general agreement to the relaxation of the usage [*tension?*].

In reply to the further question of the Government of the Reich, it is stated that the step of the President of the United States took place without the participation of the Lithuanian Government."

Same text in the German language handed to British and French representatives by the Foreign Office.

NOREM

²³ Not printed.

²⁴ Presumably regarding Finnish-Swedish agreement for the fortification of the Aaland Islands which was to be presented to Council of the League of Nations.

740.00/1053a : Circular telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Chiefs of Certain American Diplomatic Missions in Europe and the Near East*²⁵

WASHINGTON, April 20, 1939—7 p. m.

Please call on the appropriate official and after informally leaving a copy of the President's message of April 15th to Chancellor Hitler (if you have not already done so) suggest that a message or statement to the general effect that it was welcomed as a constructive move in the promotion of world peace would be of help in building up a public opinion against aggression and war. For your information, all of the Governments on this Hemisphere have sent messages of approval and others are now being received from Europe and the Near East.

HULL

740.00/963 : Telegram

President Roosevelt to the President of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the Soviet Union (Kalinin)

WASHINGTON, April 21, 1939.

I have received your friendly message and am glad to learn that your views with regard to my efforts on behalf of world peace are similar to those expressed to me by the heads of numerous other states.

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

740.00/1066 : Telegram

The Minister in Egypt (Fish) to the Secretary of State

CAIRO, April 21, 1939—noon.

[Received 12:15 p. m.]

41. This morning the Egyptian Foreign Office informed me that yesterday the German Chargé d'Affaires made the following inquiry:

"Egypt having been mentioned in the message addressed to the Fuehrer by President Roosevelt, the Government of the Reich would

²⁵ Sent to the Chiefs of Missions in Belgium (No. 19), Bulgaria (No. 9), Denmark (No. 9), Egypt (No. 21), Estonia (No. 5), Finland (No. 29), Iran (No. 18), Ireland (No. 8), Latvia (No. 19), Lithuania (No. 9), Luxemburg (No. 6), Netherlands (No. 25), Norway (No. 13), Poland (No. 13), Portugal (No. 8), Rumania (No. 45), Sweden (No. 6), Switzerland (No. 21), Turkey (No. 31), and Yugoslavia (No. 17).

Instructions to the telegraph room on the file copy of this telegram contained the following notations: "Not to be sent to London, Paris, Moscow, Greece, or Baghdad, because they have already sent such a message. Not to be sent to Spain, Budapest, because they have committed themselves against it. Not to be sent to Lichtenstein, The Arabias, Syria, or Palestine, because we have no mission there or because they are mandates."

like to receive from His Excellency, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, authentic information (verbally) whether the Egyptian Government authorized President Roosevelt to make this statement or whether Egypt on any occasion might have induced President Roosevelt to make this proposition on the ground that the Egyptian Government felt itself threatened by Germany."

To which the Foreign Office replies as follows:

"In the present atmosphere charged with anxieties and grave possibilities the Egyptian Government, already bound to Great Britain by a treaty of alliance, has received with satisfaction the gesture of President Roosevelt which, without having been prompted by Egypt, extends the network of agreements for the respect of its independence and in a more general manner tends to strengthen the realm of world peace to which Egypt has always been firmly attached."

In view of the above information does the Department still desire me to comply with the instructions contained in its telegram 21, April 20, 7 p. m.?²⁶

FISH

740.00/1059 : Telegram

The Minister in Yugoslavia (Lane) to the Secretary of State

BELGRADE, April 21, 1939—1 p. m.

[Received April 21—11 a. m.]

98. Department's 17, April 20, 7 p. m. When I saw the Prince Regent on April 17 I handed him the text of the President's message. While he praised the President's move to me I feel confident that he would make no public favorable comment, nor would the Government do so. In fact as reported in my 94,²⁷ the official Government reaction is pessimistic on value of the President's move. On the return of the Prime Minister from Zagreb I shall sound him out on the possibility of making a statement along the lines desired but I feel reasonably certain that the answer will be negative.

As a result of my conversations of this week I feel that there is no longer any question of what Yugoslavia's attitude is with regard to the international situation: there is no official attitude, other than one of expectant fear, aggravated by defeatism. The future course to be pursued by Yugoslavia will in my opinion not be formulated

²⁶ The Department replied in telegram No. 22, April 24, 7 p. m.: "In view of the statement made to you by the Egyptian Foreign Office you may disregard the Department's telegram 21, April 20, 7 p. m."

²⁷ Dated April 19, 12 a. m., not printed.

here but in Berlin or Rome, and Yugoslavia will do what she is told by the Axis powers.

We believe that Ciano²⁸ will broach to Cincar-Markovic²⁹ at Venice the formation of a bloc of Hungary, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Albania and that the proposal will be accepted. While such a move would virtually destroy the Balkan Entente its effect would be more of a moral than a practical nature.

Repeated to Paris and Rome.

LANE

740.00/1076 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Belgium (Davies) to the Secretary of State

BRUSSELS, April 21, 1939—4 p. m.

[Received April 21—12:15 p. m.]

52. Department's telegram No. 19, April 20, 7 p. m. Accompanied by Counselor Wilson, had conference with Minister for Foreign Affairs, discussed subject matter and left *aide-mémoire*. Text of the President's message had already been transmitted by me. Minister stated would submit the matter to the Cabinet today and inform the Embassy of any decision that may be reached. He said that Belgian people appreciated deeply President Roosevelt's efforts to preserve peace adding that the United States was the last and most important bulwark for the preservation of our present civilization, liberty and ideals. He stated that in the opinion of the Belgian Government their best service to European peace and civilization was to maintain neutrality and thereby avoid converting Belgium into a battlefield. They were desirous of affording no pretext for aggression.

He asked what specific form replies of other countries particularly smaller European states had taken. Attention was called by me to the direct statements which English, Canadian, New Zealand and other Prime Ministers had made, I also intimated that any statement consistent with their position approving the general idea of a conference as proposed by the President as being a desirable means to avert war would be helpful. He spoke very frankly and in a friendly and appreciative spirit but with the understanding that his remarks were to be considered confidential for the present.

DAVIES

²⁸ Galeazzo Ciano, Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

²⁹ Yugoslav Minister for Foreign Affairs.

740.00/1074: Telegram

The Ambassador in Poland (Biddle) to the Secretary of State

WARSAW, April 21, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received 5:45 p. m.]

80. For the President and Secretary.

1. Official circles here greeted with unexpressed but discernible disappointment Mussolini's insolent and scornful utterances regarding President Roosevelt's appeal in that among other features it served further to bear out recent disturbing reports indicative of Hitler's efforts to make Mussolini an Axis prisoner. In this connection my informants' reports indicate (a) honeycombing of Fascist Government structure by Nazi officials and (b) (still unconfirmed) interspersion of Italian Army (especially in north Italy) by German troops. Moreover Polish intelligence officer assigned to Italy confidentially observed that Hitler, lacking confidence in Mussolini, was doing all possible to isolate Mussolini from all outside connections other than Berlin. Beck,³⁰ however, in trying to interpret Mussolini's underlying reaction to the President's appeal, feels that notwithstanding insolence of Mussolini's phraseology, Mussolini might conceivably have meant his expressed lack of confidence in large international conferences to serve as a bid for conference of limited scope.

2. According to Beck's reports, Hitler had already addressed inquiry to following governments of states listed in President Roosevelt's appeal, asking (a) whether they felt threatened by Germany and (b) whether they had received advance notice of the President's appeal: Belgium, Holland, Norway, Denmark, Rumania, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Esthonia. Warsaw had not yet received this inquiry. Beck believed Berlin was trying to impress Warsaw that Berlin no longer considered Warsaw neutral.

3. It is obvious that Hitler, counting upon reluctance of certain states to annoy Germany at this time, expects replies to serve him on April 28th as means of discrediting the President's appeal. This aim together with Mussolini's utterances marks part of an energetic but diplomatic maneuver to counter President Roosevelt's appeal.

BIDDLE

³⁰ Józef Beck, Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs.

740.00/1080 : Telegram

The Minister Resident in Iraq (Knabenshue) to the Secretary of State

BAGHDAD, April 21, 1939—10 p. m.

[Received April 21—5:50 p. m.]

23. My 20, April 19, 3 p. m. The British Chargé d'Affaires has informed me that the Iraqi Minister for Foreign Affairs expected to be asked today the two following questions by the German Minister: (1) Did Iraq authorize President Roosevelt to mention her among the list of countries cited in his message? (2) Was Iraq afraid of Germany?

The Minister for Foreign Affairs informed the Chargé d'Affaires that he has concerted replies to these two questions with the Saudi-Arabian Minister, who is to be similarly questioned, in the following sense: (1) Although Iraq had not authorized the President to speak on her behalf she, as a member of the League of Nations, welcomes his action and thoroughly approves it. (2) Iraq has seen three states in Europe and one in Africa disappear and naturally feels apprehensive of the aggressive policy pursued by Germany. Iraq's only desire is to develop her independence in security.

KNABENSHUE

740.00/1089 : Telegram

The Minister in Denmark (Owsley) to the Secretary of State

COPENHAGEN, April 22, 1939—1 p. m.

[Received April 22—9:45 a. m.]

19. Legation's April 18, 4 p. m.,³¹ and Department's telegram April 20, 7 p. m. Danish Government remains silent with regard to President's message and no comment is promised.

German Government has inquired of Danish Government whether latter fears its security menaced by the former and whether the Danish Government requested action taken by the President or was consulted in advance with regard thereto. Danish Government has replied no to the first question and that it did not know of the President's action in advance or was its opinion asked.

My opinion is that the Danish Government will follow the lead of the Swedish Government with regard to the President's message and developments arising therefrom.

OWSLEY

³¹ Not printed.

740.00/1096 : Telegram

The Minister in the Netherlands (Gordon) to the Secretary of State

THE HAGUE, April 23, 1939—2 p. m.

[Received April 23—1:50 p. m.]

47. My 45, April 21, 1 p. m.³² The Foreign Minister has just given me the text of a statement formulated in consultation with the Queen, the Prime Minister and other high officials. After requesting me to convey to the President the thanks of the Netherlands Government for communicating to it the text of the message of April 15 the statement reads as follows:

“The President’s readiness to help in promoting where necessary better and especially more neighborly international relations has found deep appreciation in the Netherlands. In case this initiative would prove the right way of opening prospects for a real betterment of the world situation, it will have the wholehearted support of the Netherlands Nation and Government.”

In the discussions of the matter it was strongly urged that in view of this country’s delicate situation vis-à-vis Germany it would be preferable to issue no statement at all; however, the opposing view which prevailed was that the Netherlands should at least have the courage to issue a statement of this nature! I trust the Department will agree that under the circumstances this constitutes as good a response to our suggestion as could have been hoped for.

GORDON

740.00/1391

*The Emperor of Ethiopia (Haile Sellassie) to President Roosevelt*³³

[Translation]

FAIRFIELD, BATH.

It is with a sense of admiration that I learnt of your recent message to the Head of the German State and the Head of the Italian Government, requesting assurances of their peaceful intentions. I greatly appreciate your efforts to avert the catastrophe of a great European war and sincerely hope that they will be successful.

It was with satisfaction that I observed in your message that you recalled the monstrous injustice committed against my country. The Ethiopian people in their tragic plight turn towards the peace loving

³² Not printed.³³ Transmitted to the Department by the Ambassador in the United Kingdom in his despatch No. 2553, April 29; received May 9. By instruction No. 738, May 25, the Ambassador in the United Kingdom was directed to make appropriate acknowledgment of the receipt of this communication by the President.

nations in the hope that these will one day liberate them from their present bondage.

My people know that the great American nation is firmly attached to the principle of national independence; and they gratefully know that your Government, true to the spirit of the Briand-Kellogg Pact ³⁴ and to the declaration of the American States not to recognise the acquisition of territories made by force, has refrained from recognising the Italian decree of annexation of Ethiopia.

The Ethiopian people, determined not to lose permanently their independence, are still successfully resisting the invader in several parts of the country; and reports received by me show that the Italians have been obliged recently to withdraw still more of their outlying posts leaving large stretches of the country under Ethiopian control.

I feel sure, whenever the opportunity may offer, you will desire to use your great influence to secure the restoration to my people of their freedom and complete independence.

Written at the City of Bath, 15th Mazia 1931 in the Year of Grace.
(23rd April 1939.)

HAILE SELASSIE I., *Emperor*

740.00/1107: Telegram

The Chargé in Iran (Engert) to the Secretary of State

TEHRAN, April 24, 1939—9 a. m.

[Received April 24—9 a. m.]

40. Legation's 39, April 21, 4 p. m.³⁵ Minister for Foreign Affairs told me last night "The President's message has made a very favorable impression here."³⁶

Not for quotation he added that in return for a durable peace many nations would doubtless be glad to make substantial concessions but the incentive must be something higher than even patriotism. To his question whether the President's telegram did not mean an important departure from our traditional policy, I said I did not think so as we had pretty consistently held the views I summarized in paragraph 7 of my 25, March 23, 9 a. m.³⁵ I said we disliked all sword rattling intensely and the convulsions which are shaking Europe and the Far East could not leave us indifferent, in the first place be-

³⁴ Treaty for the renunciation of war signed at Paris, August 27, 1928, *Foreign Relations*, 1928, vol. I, p. 153.

³⁵ Not printed.

³⁶ In telegram No. 49, May 4, 9 a. m., the Chargé in Iran reported that the Afghan Minister for Foreign Affairs on a visit to Tehran had also expressed a favorable opinion of President Roosevelt's message (740.00/1336).

cause they threatened to disrupt all our normal economic connections but especially because the American people would never accept military pressure as a substitute for diplomacy.

ENGERT

740.00/1100 : Telegram

The Minister in Norway (Harriman) to the Secretary of State

OSLO, April 24, 1939—noon.

[Received April 24—8:55 a. m.]

19. My 18, April 22, 1 p. m.³⁸ Foreign Office informs me that the Foreign Minister replied orally in the negative to the German Minister's questions whether Norway felt itself threatened by Germany and whether the Norwegian Government had "authorized" or in other way had occasioned the President's message but that the Foreign Minister had added that obviously Norwegians, Norway knew, would be in danger if there were a general war and that therefore Norway was putting its neutrality guard in readiness.

HARRIMAN

740.00/1112 : Telegram

The Chargé in Bulgaria (Millard) to the Secretary of State

SOFIA, April 24, 1939—4 p. m.

[Received 8:09 p. m.]

25. My 24, April 22, 10 a. m.³⁸ The Chief of the Political Section informed me today that in response to my request for a statement on the President's message he was now authorized by the Prime Minister to inform me of his Government's views which he then enumerated as follows: (1) Bulgaria is a pacific nation; (2) Bulgaria's wars had been fought only to liberate Bulgarians living under foreign domination; (3) Bulgaria is grateful to the United States for her frequently demonstrated attitude; (4) Bulgaria was despoiled of her territory by the peace treaties which however provided for revision; (5) Bulgaria has always hoped for the peaceful adjustment of her frontier claims in accordance with the treaties; (6) the Bulgarian Government recognizes and approves the humanitarian ideal which the President's message contained.

He then stated that, keeping in mind the first five points outlined above he wished to observe that if it was the intention of the message to crystallize the *status quo* then of course Bulgaria would be dis-

³⁸ Not printed.

pleased. Except for uneasiness lest the message might later be used by those wishing to deprive Bulgaria of her revisionist hopes, the Bulgarian Government approves of it.

In the discussion which followed Mr. Altinoff acknowledged that the message had specifically suggested that interested governments could at the same time undertake such political discussions as they might consider necessary or advisable but observed that he was not authorized to deviate from the points enumerated above.

He said that the Foreign Office would give no publicity to the above outline of his Government's views and requested that it not be given out by the Department without again consulting with his Government since he might wish to "re-edit" it. For the present the Foreign Office preferred to leave the matter in the foregoing form and declined to formulate a more precise statement.

It was clear that the German Government has approached the Bulgarian Government in connection with this message but Mr. Altinoff chose not to discuss this point.

MILLARD

740.00/1157 : Telegram

The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State

HELSINKI, April 25, 1939—4 p. m.

[Received April 25—1:25 p. m.]

62. Your telegram No. 29 and my No. 59.⁸⁹ In response to my inquiry today Minister of Foreign Affairs told me that Finnish Government looked upon the President's message as important contribution to peace in that the head of a powerful nation should at this time hold out an offer of negotiation for settlement of pending differences. He said that he had reports from Stockholm and Copenhagen that this was also the view of the Governments there but he had no report from Oslo. He added that according to information Hitler's forthcoming speech in response to the President's message would be "very strong" but would not close the door to further discussion since it was becoming more evident that British patience was coming rapidly to an end and that public opinion in Britain might force the Government to drastic action which he did not define.

I did not bring up the suggestion that Finnish Government might issue a public statement along the lines of your telegram No. 29 and elicited the foregoing by what I said was a personal inquiry.

SCHOENFELD

⁸⁹ Latter not printed.

740.00/1153 : Telegram

The Chargé in Latvia (Packer) to the Secretary of State

RIGA, April 25, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received April 25—12: 19 p. m.]

39. Legation's 38, April 25, 4 p. m.⁴⁰ Following is statement referred to.

"Deeply conscious of the ardent desire of their people for peace, the Latvian Government have constantly pursued a policy of good will and friendly intercourse with all nations and given their unreserved support to the principle of pacific international collaboration. They do not conceal their anxiety and apprehension as to the present state of international relations, and they consequently welcome every effort in the promotion of a better understanding between the peoples of the world.

With particular reference to the action of President Roosevelt in sending his message to the Chancellor of the Reich and to the head of the Italian Government, the Latvian Government hesitate to enter into an exchange of views with which they have not been associated from the outset, but they express their fervent hope that the results of the President's move may prove beneficial to the whole community of nations."

[PACKER]

740.00/1164 : Telegram

The Minister in Switzerland (Harrison) to the Secretary of State

BERN, April 25, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received April 25—4 p. m.]

38. In further reference to your telegraphic instructions 21, April 20, 7 p. m.

1. Mr. Bonna⁴¹ asked me to call this afternoon and told me that after presenting your suggestion to Federal Councilor Bauman the matter had been considered today by the Federal Council and that he had been authorized to make the following informal and oral reply:

"The effort of President Roosevelt with a view to lessening the international tension has called forth a sympathetic echo in our country, profoundly attached to peace. In conformity with Switzerland's traditional neutrality, the Federal Council must, however, confine itself to taking note of the message of the President of the United States."

⁴⁰ Not printed.

⁴¹ Pierre Bonna, Chief of the Division of Foreign Affairs in the Swiss Political Department (Foreign Ministry).

2. Bonna went on to say that while every right-minded Swiss welcomed the President's initiative the Government did not feel that they could pronounce themselves in view of the special situation of Switzerland. He repeated that he hoped this would be understood and that they had the highest regard for the President and the Government of the United States.

3. Bonna also said that it was not his intention to inform the press but if it became necessary to do so he would give out the oral reply as quoted above.

4. I asked him if there would be any objection should you wish to give out his reply to me as quoted above. He replied that he had no objection provided his reply is included with replies from other countries and provided it is not published separately. He added that he would appreciate being given ample advance notice of publication.

HARRISON

740.00/1177 : Telegram

The Minister in Rumania (Gunther) to the Secretary of State

BUCHAREST, April 26, 1939—4 p. m.

[Received 7:55 p. m.]

91. Your 45, April 20, 7 p. m. The following is a translation of notes I made of the Prime Minister's statement as conveyed to me by the Secretary General of the Foreign Office.

"The Rumanian Government follows with the keenest interest all efforts made with a view to assurance of peace. In view of the fact, however, that the message of the President is addressed direct to the Chancellor of the German Empire and to the Chief of the Italian Government we feel that, as they have not yet replied to this appeal, any declaration from us would be in the nature of an intermeddling in the discussion between the United States and the great powers in question and this we do not consider customary."

The Secretary General of the Foreign Office prefaced the above by reminding me of the reply made by the Rumanian Government to that of Germany communicated to you in my telegram 87, April 21, 3 p. m.,⁴² and observed that it should be quite clear from this reply and from the general reception accorded the President's message that it was not an unwelcome step. I should add that the delay in answering has been due to the Rumanian Government's having felt it desirable to consult beforehand with its allies.

GUNTHER

⁴² Not printed.

740.00/1206 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Geist) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, April 28, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received April 28—2:20 p. m.]

296. This morning after Mr. Heath⁴³ and I had left for the Reichstag an official of the Foreign Office communicated with the Embassy a half hour before meeting of Reichstag and stated that the official text of Hitler's speech was available and requested that I call. The official was informed that I had already left for the Reichstag. In my place Mr. Patterson⁴⁴ called at the Foreign Office and received the official German text with an English translation.⁴⁵ It was not made clear to Mr. Patterson at the moment that the handing of a copy of the German text constituted the final official reply to the President. A statement of the Deutsches Nachrichten Bureau this afternoon however said that the delivery of the copy to the American Chargé d'Affaires made clear the final official answer to the President.

After my return to the Embassy I immediately telephoned to the Foreign Office and was informed by the same official that the delivery of the copy this morning represented the final answer to the President. In my conversation with the Foreign Office official I gave no indication that I accepted this copy as an official reply to the President's message.

Are there any instructions in the premises which the Department desires to give? ⁴⁶

GEIST

740.00/1212 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Geist) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, April 28, 1939—7 p. m.

[Received April 28—4 p. m.]

297. The Associated Press Bureau here informs the Embassy that it has cabled the verbatim English translation of Hitler's speech furnished by the Propaganda Ministry as well as translations of the German notes to Great Britain and Poland denouncing respectively the naval agreement⁴⁷ and the 10-year pact.⁴⁸

⁴³ Donald R. Heath, First Secretary of Embassy.⁴⁴ Jefferson Patterson, First Secretary of Embassy.⁴⁵ *New York Times*, April 29, 1939, p. 9.⁴⁶ In telegram No. 128, May 1, 4 p. m., the Department replied: "We do not contemplate issuing any instructions in the premises."⁴⁷ Signed June 18, 1935, British Treaty Series No. 22 (1935); see also *Foreign Relations*, 1935, vol I, pp. 162 ff.⁴⁸ Signed January 26, 1934, *British and Foreign State Papers*, vol. CXXXVII, p. 495.

For the time being the address must perhaps be left to speak for itself, the immediate reaction in diplomatic circles being that the portions dealing with Great Britain and Poland were intended to be the main burden of the speech whereas the passages referring to the President's message represented what might be called a form of sarcastic raillery. This impression was borne out by the reaction of the Reichstag itself which shouted with indignation at the references to Great Britain and Poland and acclaimed by rising from their seats Hitler's statement of his case against these countries. On the other hand the attacks upon the President's message elicited chiefly cries of derision and malicious laughter.

I consider that Hitler in contradistinction to the manner in which he generally handles international problems attempted to deal with the President's message and with the international problems as far as America was concerned in a lighter vein of oratory. I had the impression that the general intention was not to augment any feeling of hatred in the United States and not to single out the Administration as an object of vicious attack and that he attempted rather in the manner of delivery and the handling of the audience of deputies to cast ridicule not only upon America's present role in international politics but also on America's role in the past. In my opinion Hitler judging his manner of delivery felt less sure of himself and was for this reason probably less convincing to his audience as he enumerated the successive points in answer to the President's message. The attempt was so consistently in the humorous vein as to lack the convincing weight of sincerity. Nevertheless, he attempted to destroy the message and the effect of it on the German people and on the world by ridiculing it by alleging contradictions in its various points with the actual situation and America's own record.

GEIST

740.00/1207: Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, April 28, 1939—7 p. m.
[Received April 28—2:40 p. m.]

846. I discussed Hitler's speech to the Reichstag with Leger shortly after its delivery.

Leger said that three thoughts in particular had occurred to him.

The President had asked Hitler to guarantee not to attack any other country and Hitler had replied by tearing up the only promise which he had made not to attack another country; to wit: his non-aggression pact with Poland.

2. He had reinforced this belligerent attitude by denouncing his naval agreement with England.

3. Hitler had talked volubly about justice and right but had not indicated his intention to permit justice and right to interfere with the enslavement of the Czechs and the Slovaks. Leger expressed the opinion that in the near future the statesmen of all the democratic states should call Hitler's attention to the fact that virtue with him should begin at home with Czechoslovakia.

4. Leger felt that in spite of the gnashing carnivore tone of Hitler's speech, the absence of concrete proposals indicated that Hitler was not certain that he could strike with success.

Leger was inclined to believe that while Hitler might attack Poland in the near future he probably would not; but would attempt by threats to reduce Poland to a state of quivering fear, so that the Poles themselves would sign away their rights and interests in the manner of Hacha⁵⁰ and the Czechoslovaks.

The French Government is most pleased by the conversations which Daladier, Bonnet⁵¹ and Leger have had with Gafencu⁵² and feels that it will not be long before the entire system of mutual aid involving Poland, Rumania, Turkey and the Soviet Union will be established.

The present position of France and England vis-à-vis the Soviet Union is as indicated in my telegrams number 810, April 24, 2 p. m., and 818, April 25, 5 p. m.⁵³ The French have been unable to convince the British that their proposal is better than the British proposal, and the Soviet Union has not yet replied to either proposal.

The French Foreign Office has received information from both Greece and Rumania today to the effect that the Yugoslav Government has assured the Rumanian and Greek Governments that it has not entered into and does not intend to enter into a pact with Italy, Germany, Hungary and Bulgaria designed to break up the Balkan Entente.

BULLITT

740.00/1219 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Belgium (Davies) to the Secretary of State

BRUSSELS, April 29, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received April 29—4:25 p. m.]

61. Foreign Minister yesterday afternoon requested conference this morning relative to Department's telegram 19, April 20. He stated that :

⁵⁰ President of Czechoslovakia, November 30, 1938–March 15, 1939.

⁵¹ Georges Bonnet, French Minister for Foreign Affairs.

⁵² Rumanian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

⁵³ *Post*, pp. 240 and 241.

1. The pressure incident to the reorganization of the Government and to procuring legislative special powers had prevented earlier reply.

2. The Belgian Government had deepest appreciation for the initiative and the great moral stratagem of the President in messages to Hitler and Mussolini and was grateful for the inclusion of Belgium in the list of countries for which assurances of non-aggression were asked.

3. The Belgian Government, however, could not give public expression thereto as Belgium was in a most delicate position and his Government was required to act with the greatest caution.

4. Belgium had received German guarantees in 1937⁵⁴ and any action by the Belgian Government casting doubt upon the validity of that promise in any public statement would be ill-advised and dangerous and might be taken by Germany as evidence of a distrust by Belgium of Germany's guarantee. He stated further that in his opinion if that guarantee were now kept intact and if in future emergency it were to be violated by Germany as occurred in 1914 such a development would be of great value in serving to mobilize world forces against aggression.

5. Nevertheless, Belgium would vigorously and firmly protect her frontiers and resist aggression even "though Brussels were razed to the ground"; that orders had already been given for automatic self-executing mobilization and defense "if a single enemy soldier were to cross the frontier."

In response to my reply he stated that:

1. He could appreciate any suggestion that the flight of gold from the smaller countries to London and the United States indicated that the smaller countries actually believed their real safety lay with Western democracies and that there might be danger that the enthusiasm of their real friends might be chilled by their failure to openly support the President's suggestion and thereby help themselves.

2. That there was force in the suggestion that Hitler's speech served to still further terrorize the smaller countries and enable him to solidify his position making him stronger for possible future direct action. But he emphasized again the necessity for extreme caution, the manifest delicacy of their situation, and their preparedness and determination to fight to the last man and "not to be another Czechoslovakia."

Despatch follows.⁵⁵

DAVIES

⁵⁴ See memorandum by the Assistant Secretary of State, October 13, 1937, *Foreign Relations*, 1937, vol. I, p. 145.

⁵⁵ Despatch No. 302, May 2, not printed.

740.00/1327

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Chief of the Division of
European Affairs (Moffat)*

[Extracts]

[WASHINGTON,] April 29, 1939.

The French Ambassador⁶⁶ called this morning to talk over the Hitler speech. He said that he was worried largely because it was clear that Hitler was trying to deal separately with all his neighbors rather than to give any collective guarantees.

He asked for my impressions. I told the Ambassador that in the first place it struck me that Hitler had distorted the purpose for which the President sent his message and treated it as a "trick" rather than as a genuine appeal in the interest of peace. In the second place, it struck me that Germany was according herself a freer hand and a greater area of diplomatic maneuverability by the abrogation of her pacts with Great Britain on navies and with Poland on non-aggression. In the third place, it struck me that Hitler was developing a new conception; he no longer talked of reuniting Germans with the Fatherland, but he talked of a German Empire and its need for room, wealth, colonies, et cetera.

The Ambassador agreed with these comments. He added, however, that he felt the speech was a defensive speech and showed a certain defensive mentality vis-à-vis his own public opinion. He thought that large sections of it had been written here in Washington by either the German Embassy or the German News Service. The argumentation followed too closely the line of the opposition press in this country. I replied that while the dialectic was adroit, it was based on a false premise, namely, that there was an analogy to be drawn between a conference which ended a war (Versailles) and a conference before a war, which was designed to prevent a war.

All in all, the Ambassador felt that history would write the President's move down as a constructive move. At the very worst, it gave a two weeks' breathing spell; probably it accomplished a lot more, which would become apparent only gradually.

PIERREPONT MOFFAT

⁶⁶ René Doynel, Count de Saint-Quentin.

740.00/1328

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Chief of the Division of
European Affairs (Moffat)*

[WASHINGTON,] May 1, 1939.

The Portuguese Chargé⁵⁷ came in to explain that whereas the American Government had very kindly supplied the Portuguese Government with the official text of the President's message to Chancellor Hitler, and suggested that some sort of statement or comment would be useful, this had occurred at the very same time that the Portuguese Minister in Washington had orally expressed to the Secretary of State admiration for the President's initiative. The Portuguese Government felt that the Minister's remarks in effect complied with the suggestion of the American Minister at Lisbon.

I asked the Chargé whether he had any news about the reported visit of the German Fleet to Lisbon. He replied that he had none, but that Portugal, despite press reports to the contrary, was not alarmed at the course of events.

PIERREPONT MOFFAT

740.00/1249: Telegram

The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State

TOKYO, May 1, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received May 1—9:49 a. m.]

208. 1. The Foreign Office spokesman issued today a statement of which the following is our translation:

"In an extended speech Chancellor Hitler has eloquently made manifest to the world the firm and unshakeable attitude of the German Reich. We entirely associate ourselves with his complete denial in a few words of the right of the United States and Great Britain to interfere in international affairs of which he cited, as examples, British policy in Palestine and American policy in Central and South America.

To this end countries which imagine themselves to be the strongest countries in the world have unreasonably tried to regulate the world's affairs by process of centralization of authority. They have manipulated a robot institution from behind the scenes and they have given vent to their selfish desires. But there is an invisible spirit more lofty than anything else which commands us to set up machinery by which political authority would be decentralized. It is only under the aegis

⁵⁷ João de Deus Ramos.

of such machinery that the world can through progress, prosperity and fellowship proceed smoothly toward welding itself into one body and bring about universal and lasting peace.

Further, Chancellor Hitler proclaimed the establishment of the closest relations among Japan, Germany and Italy. The Anti-Comintern Pact was originally concluded by Japan and Germany,⁵⁹ it was later adhered to by Italy,⁶⁰ and it then became one of the great world forces. There is now no doubt that with the subsequent adherence of Manchukuo, Hungary and Spain, ours is now a strong camp."

2. The meaning of this extraordinary juxtaposition of words is not clear. We believe that it was deliberately intended to be obscure but we desire to reserve comment.

GREW

740.00/1278 : Telegram

The Minister in Yugoslavia (Lane) to the Secretary of State

BELGRADE, May 2, 1939—8 p. m.

[Received May 2—8 p. m.]

117. Department's 17, April 20, 7 p. m. The Minister for Foreign Affairs said to me this morning that Yugoslavia is too much "exposed" to be able publicly to support the President's message to Hitler. He expressed the personal opinion that the message did a great deal of good and had a great psychological effect as proven by the tone of Hitler's speech which was not necessarily [more?] hostile than generally anticipated.

He said that purpose of his Berlin visit was to make sure that Germany has no hostile intentions against Yugoslavia. Ribbentrop, Hitler, and Goering assured him on this point. He said he is convinced that there is no danger whatever from Germany or Italy. In the event of war, he continued, Yugoslavia would remain neutral. He had so advised German Government. In reply to my inquiry whether Yugoslav neutrality would not be in the interest of Germany, Cincar-Markovic said he did not know; but he did know that unless Yugoslavia maintained its neutrality it would lose its independence.

In reply to my question he said that the Anti-Comintern Pact had been mentioned in the course of conversations at Berlin. It had even been intimated that Yugoslavia should sign. Cincar-Markovic had replied that there is no reason for Yugoslavia to sign the Pact, it having always been opposed to communism and it having been the

⁵⁹ Signed November 25, 1936, *Foreign Relations*, Japan, 1931-1941, vol. II, p. 153. For text of the secret agreement, see *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, Series D, vol. I, p. 734, footnote 2a.

⁶⁰ Protocol of November 6, 1937, *Foreign Relations*, Japan, 1931-1941, vol. II, p. 159.

one country in Europe which had never recognized the Soviet Union. He had pointed out that signature of the Pact would merely create uneasiness in Yugoslavia and would serve no useful purpose. His explanation apparently satisfied his hosts who exerted no pressure upon him.

As to the general situation he said that a *détente* now exists and that there will not be a general war. He was impressed in Berlin by the anti-war feeling even in Government circles. He said that Hitler certainly would not risk the loss of all that he had gained which would be the case if Germany were to provoke a general war.

Cincar's credulity regarding German assurances toward Yugoslavia may be attributed to his pro-German attitude, which is decidedly different from that of his colleagues in the Government and of Army officers. Latter are particularly outspoken in distrust of Germany.

LANE

740.00/1309 : Telegram

The Minister in Sweden (Sterling) to the Secretary of State

STOCKHOLM, May 3, 1939—3 p. m.

[Received 6:38 p. m.]

26. In reply to the suggestion contained in Department's telegram No. 6, April 20, 7 p. m., the Minister for Foreign Affairs stated to me yesterday in conversation that while Sweden sincerely appreciated the President's untiring efforts to promote world peace he did not feel himself in a position to say more than that officially in connection with the message to Hitler; that in regard to the German Minister's inquiries (Legation's telegram No. 23, April 21, 4 p. m.⁶¹) he had made no official statement.

The facts are in reality that in Sweden's firm determination to maintain absolute neutrality both in speech and action as between the democracies and the totalitarian powers, the Foreign Minister was placed in a delicate position by the suggestion especially as it arrived after antagonistic reports from Germany; therefore Sweden's official approval would have been considered unneutral. Undoubtedly, however, the sympathies of Sweden are with the democracies.

In further conversation on the general situation during which the Minister was more communicative than usual he stated that Hitler's speech changed it but little although by reason of the recent determined stand of Great Britain as well as the position against aggression taken by the United States and the American Republics, Hitler

⁶¹ Not printed.

had now been forced to pause in his plans and was somewhat on the defensive. The Minister saw no reason to believe that war was inevitable provided Hitler showed a willingness to negotiate amicably.

The two danger spots, he said, were Poland and the Near East. As regards the former he entirely understood and sympathized with the Polish rejection of the German demands. If Danzig were ceded Germany would doubtless make of it a fortified naval base as was being done at Memel and the demand of an extraterritorial cross corridor was preposterous.

Rumania he felt was not a united strong people with its divers elements and could not be counted on to make much resistance to aggression. Yugoslavia is making every effort to maintain a neutral position and is otherwise being aided in that respect by the conflicting ambitions of Italy and Germany.

As to Sweden's reaction to Hitler's invitation to conclude non-aggression agreements with the countries enumerated by the President, Sandler replied that such an offer warranted consideration. This morning's press carries despatches from Berlin to the effect that the German Government has now issued such invitation to the northern countries. In the afternoon press it is stated that the four Foreign Ministers of the northern countries are expected to meet this week to discuss the invitation.

STERLING

740.00/1558

*The Luxembourg Minister for Foreign Affairs (Bech) to the American Ambassador in Belgium (Davies)*⁶²

[Translation]

LUXEMBOURG, May 3, 1939.

MR. AMBASSADOR: I have the honor to acknowledge to Your Excellency the receipt of the *Aide-Mémoire* which you were kind enough to hand me with regard to President Roosevelt's message to Chancellor Hitler.

The Grand Ducal Government would be happy if President Roosevelt's initiative could lead to an accord among the Powers with a view to the establishment of a definitive peace régime in Europe and in the world.

As a small neutral and disarmed state, which can but keep aside from the conflicts and differences of opinion which may arise between

⁶² Transmitted to the Department by the Ambassador in Belgium in his despatch No. 312, May 9; received May 22. The Ambassador in Belgium was also accredited as Minister in Luxembourg.

the Great Powers, the Grand Duchy nevertheless wishes to thank President Roosevelt very sincerely for having included Luxembourg among the countries of which the security would be assured within the framework of a general settlement to be arranged. This gesture on the part of President Roosevelt can but draw closer the bonds which unite our two countries and increase the gratitude of the people of Luxembourg toward the people of the United States.

I gladly take [etc.]

BECH

740.00/1350 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Italy (Phillips) to the Secretary of State

ROME, May 5, 1939—7 p. m.
[Received May 5—3:40 p. m.]

174. My 146, April 20, 6 p. m.⁶³ During a conversation with Ciano this afternoon I asked whether Mussolini's Campidoglio speech was his reply to the President's message. Ciano said that it was in fact the reply although he indicated the possibility that Mussolini might reach another decision in this respect at a later date, but his reservation seemed to me somewhat vague.

Ciano referred to the fact that the policy of the Italian Government was dedicated to "peace"; to more than peace, he added, to "tranquillity", to which he thought Italy was entitled after several years of warfare. I said I was delighted to have this reassuring statement and that I hoped he might find an opportunity on Saturday during his conversations with Ribbentrop to advance these ideals. Ciano did not indicate the reasons for his meeting with Ribbentrop other than to say that they would naturally discuss many different subjects of mutual interest.

In reply to my inquiry as to whether the Italian Government had in fact taken any steps in Berlin or in Warsaw towards a peaceful solution of the German-Polish controversy Ciano replied that it was difficult for the Italian Government to take any such action without having been invited to do so. On the other hand he stood ready whenever the opportunity presented itself to do everything he could in this connection and he emphasized again that the future policy of Italy was directed towards peace.

PHILLIPS

⁶³ Not printed.

740.00/1438 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Italy (Phillips) to the Secretary of State

ROME, May 12, 1939—noon.
[Received May 12—8:15 a. m.]

189. At the State banquet for the Prince Regent of Yugoslavia at the Quirinal last evening I had an opportunity to speak with Mussolini. In the course of our conversation he referred to American "interference" in European affairs and asked me "Why should you interfere?" I replied that we were naturally vitally interested in Europe because we were all of us descended from Europeans and we had the closest ties with European countries but that the real concern of the American people was for peace and a peaceful adjustment of problems. We stood ready to help in any way along these lines and if he, the Duce, ever had any suggestions as to the way in which we could contribute to the cause of peace I hoped that he would tell me. He spoke about America being largely controlled by Jews to which I replied that it was a great error to believe that the Jews were in control of the United States, that it was true that there were great numbers of them and that they were influential in some of our large cities but the voice of America was not that of the Jews.

Mussolini gave me the impression, although he did not say so in so many words, that he believed the democracies were preparing to attack the Axis, for he turned to me and said "No one will think of attacking the Axis now because it is too strong. If the British and French policy of encirclement continues the situation will become very grave" and he concluded his remarks by saying "It is grave now".

PHILLIPS

V. INCREASING GERMAN PRESSURE ON POLAND, APRIL 15-
AUGUST 21, 1939

741.60c/68 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, April 17, 1939—10 p. m.
[Received April 17—4:31 p. m.]

505. The Foreign Office informs me that the British Ambassador at Warsaw has been advised by Beck⁶⁴ that he was authorized to state Great Britain can count on the assistance of Poland if she is involved in a war with Germany by reason of an attack made on any of the

⁶⁴ Józef Beck, Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs.

smaller western European countries such as Belgium or Holland. At Beck's request this communication is not to be made public.

KENNEDY

841.2222/39 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, April 19, 1939—midnight.
[Received April 20—6:53 a. m.]

785. Personal for the President. Sir Eric Phipps, British Ambassador in Paris, said to me this evening that he had transmitted to Chamberlain⁶⁵ today a most impassioned appeal from Daladier⁶⁶ for the introduction of conscription in Great Britain before Hitler's speech on April 28.

The British Ambassador said that he entirely agreed with this appeal and felt that it was essential that conscription should be adopted in order to prove to the people of Central and Eastern Europe that Great Britain really was in earnest and to silence the voices in France and throughout Europe which were beginning to say (he believed as a result of German propaganda) that England was ready to fight for the liberties of Europe until the last Frenchman was dead.

He asked me what was your point of view with regard to this matter.

I replied that I was certain you believed that at the present time it was of the highest importance that Great Britain should introduce conscription. He said that no such indication had reached the British Government through Ambassador Kennedy. I replied that it should be obvious that it was difficult for you to send your Ambassador to the British Prime Minister to state your opinion on this question. Phipps asked me if I was certain that your opinion was as I had stated and I replied that I was.

I was informed by Blum⁶⁷ this evening that he has great hopes that his conversations with the British Labor Party would result in the Labor Party withdrawing its opposition to conscription. There will be a meeting in London on Thursday, April 27, of representatives of the British and French trade unions and the British Labor Party and the French Socialist Party to decide this question.

⁶⁵ Neville Chamberlain, British Prime Minister.

⁶⁶ Édouard Daladier, President of the French Council of Ministers and Minister of National Defense.

⁶⁷ Léon Blum, member of the French Chamber of Deputies and Leader of the Socialist Party; formerly Premier.

Because of doubts throughout Europe as to Chamberlain's determination to implement his pledges—doubts which have been expressed to me by representatives of nearly every country in Europe during the past few days—there is a growing feeling that Great Britain can not really be counted on for active help. In the period of intense diplomatic activity before Hitler's reply to your message⁶⁸ it is vital that this doubt should be eliminated. It can be eliminated only by the introduction of conscription.

I believe, therefore, that it is intensely important that you should telegraph to Ambassador Kennedy personally and immediately instructing him if he should be asked for your private and personal opinion with regard to the question of conscription in England to reply that you believe that it is of the highest importance that conscription should be introduced before Hitler's speech.

BULLITT

740.00/1031 : Telegram

The Chargé in Latvia (Packer) to the Secretary of State

RIGA, April 20, 1939—1 p. m.

[Received April 20—1 p. m.]

34. Rossing, German Military Attaché, informed our Military Attaché this morning that he considers war absolutely inevitable but believes it will not occur until the harvest this fall.

PACKER

841.2222/39 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Bullitt)

WASHINGTON, April 20, 1939—2 p. m.

283. Personal from the Under Secretary. Your 785, April 19, midnight. The President has asked me to let you know that while of course under existing conditions it would seem logical for every country which believed itself to be in danger of attack to take all possible steps to utilize in the most effective way its man and woman resources as well as its resources of other kinds, nevertheless, he believes that the question of conscription in England must be regarded as purely a question of British internal policy involving British decisions as to British national defense, and for that reason he does not consider it possible for him to express any opinion with regard thereto.

HULL

⁶⁸ See telegram of April 14 from President Roosevelt to the German Chancellor, p. 130.

762.71/85 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Geist) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, April 21, 1939—1 p. m.
[Received April 21—11:30 a. m.]

267. From reliable sources I learn that the Rumanian Foreign Minister⁶⁹ after his talk with Hitler considered German-Rumanian relations satisfactory from the Rumanian point of view. Hitler complained to the Rumanian Foreign Minister regarding the attitude of Poland over the Danzig question. He stated that he had made a very substantial offer to Poland for Danzig. The Chancellor was bitterly resentful of Poland's intransigent attitude for which he blames the British and gave Gafencu to understand that he intended to have Danzig at all costs sooner or later. Hitler gave expression to his disquietude over the attitude of Polish local officials towards German nationals in their jurisdiction.

GEIST

740.00/1084 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, April 21, 1939—8 p. m.
[Received April 21—4:18 p. m.]

538. Personal for the Secretary and Under Secretary. The Ambassador being absent in Edinburgh today, Sir Alexander Cadogan⁷⁰ sent for Johnson⁷¹ this afternoon to convey the following highly secret information which he said the Prime Minister requests be communicated to the President also.

On Wednesday April 26 the Prime Minister will announce, probably under the guise of "a state of emergency", military measures of the first importance, including conscription. The territorial army will be integrated into the regular army for a period probably of 3 months. At the same time a certain number of reservists will be mobilized and trained to take over from the territorial army at the end of the period, the territorial army being then returned to its normal occupations and regular training prescribed for those forces. At the end of another 3 months (the exact length of time has not been fixed) the mobilized reservists will in turn be released and their places taken by the new cadres of young conscripts who by that time will have received their training.

⁶⁹ Grigore Gafencu.

⁷⁰ British Permanent Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

⁷¹ Herschel V. Johnson, Counselor of the Embassy.

The decision on conscription doubtless will have unfavorable repercussions in Germany. The Government with a view therefore to "softening the blow" proposes to send Sir Nevile Henderson⁷² back to his post on Sunday or Monday next with instructions to communicate the information to the German Government perhaps 24 hours in advance of announcement here. The Government feels it important to have the Ambassador back in Berlin before the announcement is made on Wednesday and it is for this reason only that his return has been moved up from the original scheduled date of April 28. The Under Secretary said that they feel sure that his accelerated return will be interpreted in some quarters as a reversion to the policy of "appeasement" of Germany and he was quite emphatic in saying that the Ambassador's return at this particular time had no meaning at all other than the one above given. I understand that the French Ambassador is likewise returning to Berlin about the same time and in advance of his original schedule.

At the time of the German occupation of Czechoslovakia the Prime Minister announced in the House of Commons that the trade negotiations with Germany would be broken off. Cadogan says that a reference will probably be made to this in the announcement on Wednesday; that they will try to work in some sort of statement to indicate to the Germans that this Government would welcome a resumption of the interrupted trade talks.

The Under Secretary stated that few people were informed of the foregoing and that the Government attaches great importance to its not becoming public before the event. The British Ambassador in Paris has had, however, to advise Prime Minister Daladier and M. Bonnet,⁷³ and the Under Secretary expressed his doubt that entire secrecy could be kept; British Foreign Office experience of the ability of responsible French officials to keep secrets has not been an encouraging one.

KENNEDY

740.00/1088 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, April 22, 1939—2 p. m.
[Received April 22—8:35 a. m.]

542. In view of indications of increasing Polish intransigence since conclusion of the Anglo-Polish guarantee agreement,⁷⁴ the Brit-

⁷² British Ambassador in Germany.

⁷³ Georges Bonnet, French Minister for Foreign Affairs.

⁷⁴ British Cmd. 6106, Misc. No. 9 (1939) : *Documents Concerning German-Polish Relations and the Outbreak of Hostilities between Great Britain and Germany on September 3, 1939*, doc. Nos. 17, 18, and 19, pp. 36-39.

ish Ambassador at Warsaw has been instructed to bring to Foreign Minister Beck's attention that because of the British guarantee of Poland, Great Britain expects Poland to approach the problem of Danzig in a reasonable manner and to keep this Government fully informed of developments. The Polish Ambassador here has also been advised of this Government's views.

KENNEDY

760C.62/528: Telegram

The Ambassador in Poland (Biddle) to the Secretary of State

WARSAW, April 24, 1939—9 p. m.

[Received 11:45 p. m.]

85. For the President and Secretary.

1. Polish Government greeted with calm reserve Ambassador Lipski's cable from Berlin that Rumanian Foreign Minister Gafencu had imparted his concern over sharpness with which Hitler had expressed himself regarding Poland and Poland's "rejection" (of March 26) of Hitler's "proposals" (of March 21 regarding Corridor passageway, Danzig's incorporation in Reich and demand that Poland clarify its position in connection with Soviet)⁷⁵ which Hitler petulantly stated no longer held good. However, at conclusion of conversation Hitler without implying war threat insisted upon early solution for the German differences.

2. While Ribbentrop⁷⁶ obviously aiming to create dissatisfaction between London and Warsaw vigorously wages propaganda to effect (a) that Poland's stiffening and subsequent "rejection" were due to Britain's pledge; (b) that Poland would in final analysis not resist Danzig's incorporation in Reich; and (c) that neither London nor Paris would consider Berlin's insistence upon Danzig's incorporation a fighting issue, Poland's position, according to Beck and associates, is as follows.

Previous to Britain's pledge, Poland mobilized and sent not a rejection but counter-proposal (in effect stating possible willingness to consider independent but not incorporated status for Danzig). Poland and Britain decided to call halt to Hitler. Forfeiture of Danzig would not necessarily spell final satisfaction of Hitler's growing appetite. German militarization of an incorporated Danzig would spell eventual German domination over Gdynia as well as Danzig. Besides a public opinion roused as at present against concessions would make a potential compromise settlement along no matter what lines a delicate task for Polish Government.

⁷⁵ Polish White Book, doc. Nos. 61 and 63, pp. 61 and 66.

⁷⁶ Joachim von Ribbentrop, German Minister for Foreign Affairs.

3. Moreover, I discern that latitude usually enjoyed by Beck, who within certain limits might previously have been more inclined than many of his associates towards conciliation, is now restricted during present emergency period by necessity to consult the Marshal⁷ and other Government associates less conciliatorily inclined.

4. Together, according to Beck and the Marshal, they must all take into consideration the currently roused fighting spirit of the Polish people who, if caused to feel "sold out" or "let down", might go defeatist, an attitude which in turn might easily reflect itself unfavorably in other anti-aggression states.

BIDDLE

760C.71/137: Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, April 25, 1939—9 a. m.
[Received April 25—8:40 a. m.]

816. I had a long talk with Count Raczynski, Polish Ambassador to London, and Lukasiewicz, Polish Ambassador to Paris, last night. Raczynski had just come from London where he had talked with Gafencu, Foreign Minister of Rumania.

Raczynski insisted that Rumania and not Poland was the stumbling block to the conclusion of a Polish-Rumanian alliance. He said that while Gafencu had made no promises in Berlin he had had a talk with Hitler which had frightened him extremely. Hitler had poured out a violent monologue threatening Rumania with immediate invasion if Rumania should "join in the encirclement of Germany".

Presumably Gafencu did not wish to do anything which might excite the tiger. He desired to leave Polish-Rumanian relations exactly where they are.

Gafencu appeared to be confident that in case of an attack on Rumania even though Poland might not be bound to give military assistance at once to Rumania the giving of assistance to Rumania by France and England would oblige Poland also to give immediate assistance. On the other hand if Poland should first be attacked Rumania would not be obliged to come to the support of Poland.

Both the Polish Ambassadors expressed the opinion that if France and England had not been in such a hurry to guarantee Rumanian independence it might have been possible to arrange a Polish-Rumanian alliance; but both expressed the belief that there was no possibility of arranging such an alliance at the moment.

⁷ Marshal Edward Smigly-Rydz.

Inasmuch as the Rumanians insist that they have asked for an alliance and the Poles have refused it the exact attitude of Gafencu and Beck remains somewhat obscure.

BULLITT

740.00/1218 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, April 28, 1939—8 p. m.

[Received April 29—9:25 a. m.]

848. I had a long talk with Gafencu, Rumanian Minister for Foreign Affairs this afternoon.

Gafencu said that he was now satisfied with the present relationship between Poland and Rumania. He said that he felt certain that if Rumania should be attacked Poland would come to the aid of Rumania and without saying so implied that the understanding for mutual assistance between Poland and Rumania had been reached.

This impression was reenforced when he said that he was sure there would be no further difficulties in respect of Turkey's commitments to France and England. He insisted that the Turks were now entirely satisfied with regard to Rumania's policies. Since the Turks have been insisting that an arrangement between Poland and Rumania should precede their arrangements with France and England, the inference that the agreement had been reached between Poland and Rumania was clear.

Gafencu talked at length about the point of view of Rumania with regard to the Soviet Union. He said that he had small belief that any promise that the Soviet Union might make to France and England would be respected. He could not possibly enter into any direct defensive agreement with the Soviet Union. Hitler had stated to him a few days ago that if Rumania should enter into a pact with the Soviet Union it would be the end of friendly relations between Germany and Rumania and had implied that Germany would attack Rumania at once.

Gafencu added that Rumania would be most embarrassed if either England or France should make pacts with the Soviet Union guaranteeing Rumania against attacks as such pacts might be in themselves sufficient to provoke Hitler to attack Rumania. Nevertheless he had taken the attitude both with Chamberlain and Daladier that if France and England should desire to make arrangements with the Soviet Union which would guarantee Rumania without mentioning Rumania he would not object.

Gafencu went on to say that owing to the deficiency in armament of the Rumanian Army it might become vital to Rumania to receive supplies of arms and munitions and airplanes from the Soviet Union.

In case of an attack by Germany he would of course make any military arrangement he could with the Soviet Union.

He added that he did not believe that the Soviet Union had any intention of sending the Red Army under any conditions across any frontier in Europe. The policy of the Soviet Union would remain to become involved as little as possible in any European war in the hope that at the end of such a war in an atmosphere of complete destruction and exhaustion the Red Army might sweep the Continent in the interest of Bolshevism.

Incidentally in discussing the needs of the Rumanian Army Gafencu asked me if I thought Rumania could obtain aeroplanes, anti-aircraft guns and anti-tank guns in the United States. I replied that my impression was that our supplies of these three instruments of war were exceedingly low and that I did not believe there were any stocks available at the present time.

Gafencu instructed the Rumanian Minister in Paris, Tatarescu, who was present during our conversations, to give me a list of the things that Rumania needed with a request for American assistance in obtaining them.

Gafencu also said that he was intensely interested in increasing trade between Rumania and the United States, and asked me if I had any ideas on this subject. I replied that I had none but that I thought that Mr. Henry Grady,⁷⁸ who had visited Rumania recently and was now on his way to the United States, had developed certain ideas.

I gathered the clear impression from a long conversation that Gafencu may be counted on to play the game with France and England but that he will continue to make gestures of friendliness, especially in the economic field, toward Hitler. In this connection he said that Hitler had convinced him that if Rumania should refuse in time of peace to allow Germany to obtain Rumanian oil, wheat and other products, Hitler would not hesitate to attack Rumania at once.

BULLITT

760C.82/535 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Poland (Biddle) to the Secretary of State

WARSAW, April 28, 1939—9 p. m.

[Received April 29—1:20 a. m.]

88. For the President and the Secretary.

1. Referring to my No. 85, April 24, 9 p. m., Poland's resistance to Germany's demands as declared in Hitler's speech⁷⁹ represents

⁷⁸ Chairman, Committee for Reciprocity Information, United States Tariff Commission.

⁷⁹ For extract from Hitler's speech to the Reichstag, April 28, 1939, regarding Poland, see Polish White Book, doc. No. 75, p. 77.

not a stand in terms of technicalities but in principle to protect the dignity and equilibrium of the system of Europe. To my mind Poland's acceptance under current conditions of terms expressed by Hitler would undoubtedly destroy the spirit of resistance created by Britain's, France's and Poland's conception of an anti-aggression front. In fact this conception represents the first and only sign of calling a halt to the hypnotic effect of the boa constrictor tactics of Axis diplomacy.

It is obvious that Hitler is exerting his utmost towards circumventing the real purpose of Poland's resistance, as well as the French backed position of London as the bilateral pivot of an anti-aggression front.

It is well to bear in mind however that Poland would be willing at the proper time to discuss with Germany a solution however [upon *an?*] equitable basis. In other words if Poland submitted to Hitler's terms under the present circumstances I [*it?*] would sell Europe short.

BIDDLE

740.00/1230 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, April 28, 1939—10 p. m.
[Received April 29—2: 13 p. m.]

850. Daladier dined with me alone tonight and talked at length about the present situation. He said he believed that Hitler's speech had been designed to create in Poland the same sort of fear of German attack that it had been possible to create in Czechoslovakia in the hope that the Polish spirit of resistance might disintegrate. Daladier said that so far as he and France were concerned Poland would receive full support in resisting any and all German demands presented at the point of a gun.

He felt that Hitler had also hoped to obtain a withdrawal of British support for Poland in the matter of the Corridor and Danzig. He was not sure that Chamberlain would not again pursue the same course that he had pursued with regard to Czechoslovakia. He would not feel absolutely sure of the British will to resist Germany until Chamberlain should have close to him someone like Winston Churchill.

Yesterday the British Ambassador had come to see him and had said that in his opinion Hitler's speech left the way open for fruitful negotiations for a peaceful settlement between Poland and Germany.

In his, Daladier's opinion this was dangerous nonsense. If the British should be so foolish as to tell the Poles now that in spite of the promise they had made to Beck to go to war in case Germany should attempt to annex Danzig they were of the opinion that Poland should

give up Danzig, the result would be a disintegration of the spirit of resistance in Poland. Danzig would merely be the first step for a German domination of Poland just as the Runciman negotiations⁸⁰ had been the first step for the disintegration of Czechoslovakia.

I need scarcely add that I entirely agree with this point of view. Poland will remain a great asset in resistance to Germany just so long as the Poles feel certain that they will have full British and French support.

As you know the French Government has been taking the most active steps recently in many quarters of the world and has been attempting to persuade the British Government to become as active.

Daladier alluded to his decision to send 40 French Army officers to Chiang Kai-shek's⁸¹ headquarters and to his decision to give a loan to China.

He also said that he had been attempting to get the British to station the major portion of their home fleet at Lisbon since it was obviously unnecessary in view of the absence of the major portion of the German fleet to keep the entire British home fleet in the North Sea. The British however were reluctant to withdraw a single ship from the North Sea and were urging him again to send the *Dunkergue* and *Strasbourg* to the North Sea to reenforce the British fleet. He had decided to send both these ships to Lisbon.

Daladier's general policy will be the following: to continue the development of resistance to Germany by increasing to the greatest possible extent French military preparations; by pushing actively the negotiations to establish a bloc to the eastward consisting of Poland, Rumania, Turkey, and the Soviet Union; by showing readiness to support with military force any state guaranteed which dares to resist Germany.

BULLITT

760C.62/546 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Geist) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, May 3, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received May 4—6:20 a. m.]

310. I have information from a source found in the past to be reliable that active preparations are now being carried on by the Germans to make a sudden military coup in Poland within the next 14 days. I am informed that it is planned to make the invasion

⁸⁰ See telegram No. 699, July 29, 1938, 6 p. m., from the Ambassador in the United Kingdom, *Foreign Relations*, 1938, vol. I, p. 537.

⁸¹ Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, Chairman, Chinese National Military Council.

through Lithuania and Latvia though I am not clear why Latvian territory should be utilized. Certain military leaves have been canceled. My informant further stated that if this is not done within the next 14 days it would be postponed for at least 4 months. Furthermore, if the military coup is made the Germans will demand Danzig and the Corridor.

In evaluating this information I am sure that the preparations reported are being made; and that the German-Polish deadlock which is the source of greatest anxiety here in diplomatic circles has caused Hitler to consider seriously risking a sudden military movement against Poland still believing (as my informant stated) that the Western powers will not intervene. Whether or not the blow will be struck as my informant indicated depends upon the development of events during the next few weeks, particularly on the attitude of Poland.

GEIST

740.00/1355 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, May 6, 1939—4 p. m.

[Received May 6—1:30 p. m.]

897. Daladier said to me today that the Papal Nuncio had called on Bonnet yesterday and had said to him that the Pope had decided to summon immediately a peace conference to consist of representatives of France, Italy, Germany, Great Britain, and Poland. As soon as Bonnet had transmitted this information to him he, Daladier, had sent for the Papal Nuncio and had stated to the Papal Nuncio that France would not participate in any conference held under threat of German guns. He had added that such a conference would be foredoomed to failure.

The Papal Nuncio had replied that he regretted to inform him, Daladier, that the Pope had already decided to make an appeal for such a conference and that it was too late to change this project. Daladier said that he had answered that he regretted this; that France would refuse to participate; and that he felt the Pope would destroy by such action the immense influence in the world which had been obtained for the church by the last Pope since it would be clear to every one that the Pope would be engaged merely in pulling Italian chestnuts out of the fire and preparing a new Munich.

After some hours the Papal Nuncio had again seen Bonnet and had informed him that he had been mistaken. The decision of the Pope was not irrevocable and the opinion of the French Government would have great weight in the Papal decision.

Daladier went on to say that he believed this action of the Pope had been inspired by Mussolini whose position was becoming more and more difficult due to the opposition of the King, the Prince of Piedmont, Badoglio,⁸² Balbo⁸³ and a large portion of the army, and a large section of the population of Italy. It might be possible that Poland had inspired this move by the Pope but no intimation to this effect had reached him.

We discussed at great length the Russian position and Daladier repeated to me the information that I transmitted in my telegram No. 893 of May 5⁸⁴ last night to the effect that he had telephoned to Corbin⁸⁵ and given him orders to make the strongest representations possible to the British Government with a view to obtaining assent to the French proposal.

In conclusion, he said that he would this afternoon have instructions sent to the French Chargé d'Affaires in Moscow, Payart, in order to make certain that the Soviet Government was still prepared to accept the French proposal.

In this connection Daladier once again expressed his distrust of Bonnet and said that he might replace him in the immediate future by Champétier de Ribes, Minister of Pensions, in whose integrity and loyalty he had complete confidence.

In commenting on the general situation Daladier said that he had considered Beck's speech⁸⁶ admirable and that if the Soviet Union could now be brought into the circuit he believed there was a considerable chance of preserving peace. If on the other hand the Russians should withdraw into complete isolation the situation would become tragic and untenable since all resistance to Hitler in Eastern Europe would collapse.

Daladier went on to say that this morning in Ministerial Council before Lebrun⁸⁷ at the Elysées he had put the question of French policy very flatly. He had stated that the alternative policies for France today were the following: (1) To withdraw behind the Maginot Line and to disregard all events to the east of the Maginot Line. Such a policy would certainly purchase for France at least a year of peace. The alternative policy was (2) to go to war at once in case Hitler should attack Poland or any other state in Eastern Europe. This policy might bring war at once and if any one in the Cabinet should be convinced that this policy, which was his own, was unwise, and that Hitler, having swallowed the states of Eastern Europe would not turn against France he wished he would speak out immediately. He

⁸² Marshal Pietro Badoglio, Italian Chief of Staff.

⁸³ Italo Balbo, member of the Italian Grand Fascist Council.

⁸⁴ *Post*, p. 248.

⁸⁵ Charles Corbin, French Ambassador in the United Kingdom.

⁸⁶ For text of speech of May 5, 1939, see Polish White Book, doc. No. 77, p. 84.

⁸⁷ Albert Lebrun, President of France.

added that at this moment he had looked pointedly at Lebrun, at Bonnet, and at Chautemps.⁸⁸

No one raised his voice in favor of the policy of permitting Hitler to swallow the states of Eastern Europe and the Balkans.

The question of Italy was also discussed. Daladier stated that he had said that, if any man in the Cabinet believed that by giving Mussolini a free port in Djibouti and a seat on the Suez Canal, and the 1896 statute in Tunis,⁸⁹ Mussolini could be persuaded to abandon the Axis he wished he would speak out. No one spoke.

Daladier then said that he believed that it was never good policy to pay blackmail to a bandit. He was certain that Mussolini in spite of minor concessions would cling to the Axis and would demand further concessions specially with regard to Tunis. He therefore was opposed to making any concessions to Mussolini at the moment. He said that the Cabinet had supported him unanimously in taking this position.

Daladier went on to say that he was convinced that Mussolini was in serious difficulties and that the reason why so many prominent German officers and members of the German Government to say nothing of members of the Gestapo were in Italy at the present moment was because of the fear in Germany that Mussolini might be set aside by the opponents of the Axis policy.

BULLITT

740.00/1372 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Poland (Biddle) to the Secretary of State

WARSAW, May 8, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received 5:21 p. m.]

104. For the President and Secretary.

1. I am aware that, supported by the Holy See, a move is now afoot to sound out Paris, London, Berlin, Rome, and Warsaw on holding a five-power conference looking to peaceful settlement of outstanding differences.

2. Though approached by Nuncio only at noon today Polish Government since first indications of this move has been and is still wary of the potential implications of such a conference in existing highly charged atmosphere. Moreover, I am aware that inner-government circles here feel that unless it were ascertained in advance what might be accomplished along equitable and practical lines (a) there would be little use in calling a conference envisaging merely French

⁸⁸ Camille Chautemps, Vice President of the French Council of Ministers.

⁸⁹ Signed at Paris, September 28, 1896, *British and Foreign State Papers*, vol. LXXXVIII, p. 717.

concessions to Italy and Polish concessions to Germany, and (b) such a suggestion might cause embarrassment between Polish Government and Vatican.

3. Recalling Beck's statement that France better serve her own interests by settling French-Italian differences through bilateral channels than at a multi-power conference which would necessitate France's attendance with a blank check in hand, I believe Beck would regard in similar light Poland's position in regard to a potential conference envisaging settlement of Polish-German differences.

Moreover, my strictly confidential discussions with several informed officials disclosed (a) their impression that the aforementioned move suspiciously smacked of another Munich—again at the expense of the smaller powers; (b) their disinclination to believe as reported that the Vatican would support such a move for the price of maintaining the Vatican-Berlin Concordat of 1933,⁹⁰ for they felt the Vatican was too wise to place much value on a check from Hitler; (c) their hopes that their impression was unfounded that traces of the British hand were discernible in the aforementioned move, for were their impression correct it would demonstrate the difficulties entailed in alliances between a larger and a smaller power whereby the larger was apt to sacrifice the interest of the smaller to come to terms with the potential adversary of the alliance.

3. [*sic*] In connection with reports that Ribbentrop continued to look for London to respond to another appeal for an appeasement gesture based on his information from London, my informants expressed the hope that such reports were unfounded.

4. While Polish public opinion approves Beck's speech it goes far beyond it in terms of a firm determination to maintain Poland's stand. Moreover, official as well as public opinion here now have what amounts to a religious conviction that "Danzig" is no longer a question of technicalities in the light of Hitler's one-sided demands but one involving the principle of protecting the dignity and equilibrium of the European system.

BIDDLE

740.00/1404: Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, May 9, 1939—7 p. m.

[Received 7:20 p. m.]

914. Leger⁹¹ said to me this evening that Daladier had sent for him and Bonnet together this morning in order that there might be no

⁹⁰ Signed July 20, 1933, *British and Foreign State Papers*, vol. CXXXVI, p. 697.

⁹¹ Secretary General, French Foreign Office.

mistake about the reply of the French Government to the Pope's proposal. They had discussed the question from all angles. It had been their unanimous opinion that a formal rejection of the Pope's proposal should be sent at once.

Their reasoning was the following: At a conference such as that proposed by the Pope the question of German relations with Poland and French relations with Italy which had nothing essential to do with each other would be tied together and both France and Poland would be expected to make concessions to Germany and Italy with the Pope as arbitrator and Great Britain as super-arbitrator.

Neither France nor Poland would make any concessions at the point of a German gun.

The French Government believed that any establishment of good relations between France and Italy could be achieved only by direct negotiations between France and Italy and was as unwilling today as it had always been to accept the arbitration of any foreign power. Similarly the French Government was certain that the Polish Government would not accept the arbitration of any foreign power in the matter of Germany's demands.

A conference such as that envisaged by the Pope must result either in complete failure or in the extortion of concessions from France and Poland without any corresponding concessions on the part of Germany and Italy.

The British Government had sensed that at such a conference German demands for British colonies might also be brought up. Halifax⁹² therefore had replied to the Papal Nuncio in London that he believed the French Government would not accept such a conference and that in consequence Great Britain could not favor it. But he had made a counterproposal which showed clearly that once all question of discussions of British colonies should be eliminated Great Britain would be very glad to arbitrate away the possessions and interests of her associates, France and Poland.

Halifax had proposed to the Papal Nuncio in London that there should be no conference; but that the Pope should offer to arbitrate the dispute between Germany and Poland, and the dispute between Italy and France, and had indicated that the British Government would support the Pope in such an arbitration.

Leger was engaged in preparing a draft of a note to the British Government saying that Halifax's proposal would be just as unacceptable to the French Government as the Pope's proposal.

The French Government has received no new information from Moscow today and Leger said that the British Government had in-

⁹² British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

formed the French Government this afternoon that it had as yet received no reply to the proposals made by the British Ambassador in Moscow yesterday to Molotov.⁹³

BULLITT

740.00/1416 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

[Extracts]

PARIS, May 10, 1939—7 p. m.
[Received May 10—5:12 p. m.]

920. Bonnet informed me today that the Papal Secretary of State Maglione had said last night to Charles Roux, French Ambassador to the Vatican, that in view of the replies the Pope had received which seemed to indicate that there was no immediate danger of war the Pope had decided to withdraw his suggestion. Bonnet said that Roux had added that the Vatican now desired to let the proposal die quietly and preferred to have the Pope's action described not as a proposal but as a mere inquiry to test the ground.

The Papal Nuncio in Paris this afternoon confirmed to me that this was the attitude of the Vatican saying that the Pope would take no further action and that after all he had been merely taking soundings.

Both Bonnet and the British Ambassador are optimistic with regard to the future. They both believe that the inclusion of the Soviet Union, Turkey, Rumania and Poland in the front against German aggression, plus the increasing in military strength of England and France, plus the growing economic and financial difficulties in Germany and Italy, will make it evident in another 2 months that the balance of force is definitely against Germany and Italy. They believe that Germany and Italy are already so uncertain about the balance of force that they will not dare to make war. They both expect a number of crises in the coming month; but believe that in the end Germany and Italy will be compelled to negotiate on approximately the basis proposed by the President in his message to Hitler and Mussolini.

Incidentally the British Ambassador said to me today, as he has said to me twice recently, that his Government had only one fear at the present moment.

⁹³ Vyacheslav Mikhailovich Molotov, Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the Soviet Union, and People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs. For correspondence concerning the Anglo-French-Soviet negotiations, see pp. 232 ff.

Ribbentrop, to the certain knowledge of the British Government, was engaged in attempting to prove to Hitler that Germany could make war on France and England with impunity since it was certain that England and France could not even obtain military supplies from the United States. The recent debates on the Neutrality Act⁹⁴ were being cited [by] Ribbentrop as proof that the United States in case of war would sell no military supplies or airplanes to France and England. The British Government therefore considered it of the highest importance that the modification of the Neutrality Act should if possible be brought about in the near future. Such a modification of the Neutrality Act would end all chance that Ribbentrop might persuade Hitler to risk immediate war. Bonnet said the same thing to me last night.

BULLITT

740.00/1457: Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, May 13, 1939—11 a. m.
[Received May 13—9:25 a. m.]

355. Within the last few days I have held brief conversations with the representatives here of Argentina, France, Great Britain, Japan, Poland, Russia, Turkey, as well as of certain smaller countries. They all emphasize the critical state of affairs in Europe and manifest pessimism as to the possibility of avoiding a conflict but although they point to the element of surprise which is always present in the tactics of Germany they all appear to agree in professing a belief that immediate action on the part of Germany against Poland need not be expected.

In view of this state of uncertainty indications of possible manifestations of German policy in immediate prospect are sought in those concrete factors within the country which would be involved in any such manifestations and in this regard the present status of war preparations in Germany are considered of special importance. I therefore submit the following brief résumé of those preparations as of today which has been prepared from information available to the Military and Naval and Air Attachés to this Embassy:

The present status of the German Army gives no positive indication of a contemplated use of military force for the next few days. Under the system of training, however, which is now in progress in Germany, there are a minimum of 1,500,000 men under arms and in organized units. Both the size of this force and the location of the

⁹⁴ See pp. 656 ff.

troops is such that a swift move to seize and hold Danzig and the Corridor could be made with no previous warning and could be followed by a general mobilization within a period of 4 days to a week. There have been within the last 2 days evidences of slightly more than usual military activity but these cannot be attributed directly to any concentration of troops. Furthermore there have been no indications to date of the assembling of civilian transportation in the quantities essential for active armed operations as was the case in September 1938 although this may be partially attributed to the large amount of military transport made available through the seizure of Czech equipment. The most significant feature of the present military situation is the fact that the *S. S. Leibstandarten Adolf Hitler* which normally does not form a part of the peace time army is now in the field in the vicinity of Neustettin in the German defensive line. There is no indication, however, of any troop concentration within 30 kilometers of the Polish border.

As regards aviation more air activity has been apparent since the beginning of May than at any previous time since the German air force was restored and this activity apparently may be attributed in part at least to the intensive training with the latest types of combat air craft of reserve and commercial pilots as well as to military pilots of the regular air force.

As regards naval preparations there is no present indication of any special activities which may not be attributed to the maneuvers which usually take place at this time of year.

In conclusion it may be stated that insofar as may be ascertained the war preparations as of today have not in every respect reached the stage marked during the crisis of September last. The impression prevails, however, in foreign military circles here that a move by Germany against Poland could be undertaken at any moment and that any development which might be regarded by the German Government as indicating a weakening of the position of the non-aggression powers and especially of England would constitute an important factor in precipitating such a move.

KIRK

740.00/1501a

The Under Secretary of State (Welles) to President Roosevelt

WASHINGTON, May 16, 1939.

MY DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: Father Carroll, the Assistant to Monsignor Ready⁹⁵ who is at the moment out of Washington, called to

⁹⁵ Msgr. Michael J. Ready, general secretary of the National Catholic Welfare Conference.

see me this morning at the request of the Apostolic Delegate.⁹⁶ The Delegate had yesterday received a telegram from the Papal Secretary with a request that its contents be communicated to this Government.

The message was as follows:

The Pope desired you to know that because of his belief that the peace of Europe was gravely endangered, he had on May 3 approached the governments of Great Britain, France, Poland, Germany, and Italy and had inquired of them whether they believed the peace of Europe to be in imminent danger, and second, whether those governments believed a peace conference to be attended by the representatives of the five powers mentioned to settle outstanding problems would be feasible. The Vatican had been informed as a result of the approaches made that none of the five governments believed the situation to be precarious and that the general impression was that a conference of the type proposed would not at that time be expedient.

In conclusion, the Apostolic Delegate was instructed to let you know that if later on such a conference appeared to be expedient, the Pope would communicate with you before any final steps were taken.

I asked Father Carroll to tell the Delegate that I deeply appreciated the message received and that I would immediately communicate its contents to you.

Believe me [etc.]

SUMNER WELLES

707.1160F/2: Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, May 17, 1939—4 p. m.
[Received May 17—1:45 p. m.]

384. Secretary of Slovak Legation which has recently been established here has asked orally for an appointment for his Minister to call on me to discuss some matters affecting trade between the United States and Slovakia the precise nature of which was not stated. As Embassy does not appear to have any definite instructions in regard to the conduct of any relations with Slovak representatives I have withheld a reply to this request and would appreciate the Department's instructions in the premises.

I understand that British and French Embassies here have as yet had no relations with the present Slovak Legation in Berlin and have asked their Governments for instructions.

KIRK

⁹⁶ Most Rev. Amleto Giovanni Cicognani.

762.65/594 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Italy (Phillips) to the Secretary of State

ROME, May 17, 1939—5 p. m.
[Received May 17—3:38 p. m.]

196. In response to an inquiry regarding the purposes of the new Italo-German alliance⁹⁷ Ciano told me this morning that the alliance was one hundred percent stronger politically, economically and militarily than might be thought and that it was the result of the "encircling action" against Germany and Italy. He mentioned in this respect the recent British-Turkish agreement⁹⁸ which he said was directed particularly against Italy.

I asked him specifically regarding the Italian attitude in the event of a German-Polish crisis and he replied definitely and with complete assurance that the Italian Army would be behind that of Germany. He then said he had informed Poland that the Italian Government hoped for a peaceful adjustment of the Danzig affair, that Italy stood ready to mediate if its services should be requested by both countries but that should the problem remain unsolved Poland must recognize that Italy's position would be the same as Germany's. When I said I understood that the German Government did not intend to press Poland for an early settlement Ciano stated that this was also his understanding of the situation but the question would have to be solved sometime. He said that Danzig was a German city and gave me the impression that it would eventually have to pass to Germany. He then mentioned the absurdity of the Polish Corridor and said that it was impossible to keep Prussia and East Prussia separated in this way.

He then told me that the alliance would be signed on Monday morning May 22 and that he himself was leaving for Berlin on the 20th.

I learn that the Belgian Ambassador was similarly informed by Ciano as regards the character of the alliance.

Repeated to Berlin.

PHILLIPS

707.1160F/2 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Chargé in Germany (Kirk)

WASHINGTON, May 19, 1939—4 p. m.

179. Your 384, May 17, 4 p. m. As this Government has not recognized a Slovakian Government, your relations with the Slovakian

⁹⁷ Signed May 22, 1939, Martens, *Recueil de traités*, vol. 133, p. 323.

⁹⁸ Announced in British House of Commons, May 12, 1939, by the Prime Minister; see United Kingdom, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Commons, 1938-39, 5th series, vol. 347, p. 952.

Minister in Berlin should be purely personal and not official. The Department would not perceive any objection to your receiving the Minister if he called in a personal capacity.

Please consult Department's confidential mail instruction no. 161 of December 22, 1938⁹⁹ concerning relations with "Manchukuo" officials.

HULL

751.60C/146 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, May 22, 1939—1 p. m.

[Received 3 p. m.]

978. My 965, May 19, 2 p. m.¹ A most curious and unfortunate development has prevented the signature of the political agreement between the French and Polish Governments² referred to in the second and third paragraphs of my telegram under reference.

The text of the agreement has been accepted by both Governments and the documents had been drawn up and compared in final official form and the time of signature had been fixed by Bonnet for 3 o'clock Saturday afternoon. At 1 o'clock Bonnet telephoned to the Polish Ambassador and said that he did not wish to sign the agreement until after his return from Geneva.

Owing to the extremely bad relations between Poland and Germany the Polish Government was naturally opposed to this delay and the Polish Ambassador at once saw both Daladier and Bonnet. The explanation given him was that the French desired to sign their political agreement with Poland at the same time that the British should sign their political agreement with Poland. Inasmuch as Bonnet had not mentioned this factor during a week of intimate conversations with the Polish Ambassador and the Polish Minister of War General Kasprzycki and had fixed the hour for signature the Polish Govern-

⁹⁹ Not printed. The instruction enclosed a paraphrase of the Department's telegram No. 12, January 31, 1933, 5 p. m., to the Embassy in Japan for guidance of the Consul General at Seoul in his relations with "Manchoukuo" consular officials. In his capacity as senior officer of the consular body at Seoul, no objection was perceived to his communicating with the "Manchoukuo" officials in question solely on ceremonial or procedural matters; in such communications he was not to use any phrase indicative of his own representative capacity as American Consul General. Although he was neither to enter into any official relationship with "Manchoukuo" consuls nor to cultivate social relations of the character usually attendant upon official intercourse, the Department did not disapprove an informal acquaintance with such consular officers, provided that these personal and private relations did not incur social obligations or make conspicuous the fact of this association. (707.1193 Manchuria/8)

¹ Not printed.

² See telegram No. 713, April 12, 9 p. m., from the Ambassador in France, p. 128.

ment was intensely disturbed by this development and began searching for an ulterior motive.

I have just obtained the explanation of Bonnet's extraordinary action. Bonnet had conducted the negotiations with the Polish Ambassador and the Polish Minister for War personally and had not kept Leger or any of the regular services of the Quai d'Orsay informed of the progress of the negotiations and had had all documents prepared in his private office. After Bonnet had set the hour for signature a member of his staff informed him that the British had not yet signed their political accord with Poland. Bonnet was astonished to hear this and in explaining later to Daladier said that he had been convinced that the British had signed their political accord with Poland because of a remark made by Mandel, Minister of Colonies. As soon as he had ascertained that in truth the British had not yet entered into serious negotiations for a political accord with Poland, Bonnet flatly refused to sign the agreement until the British should have prepared an exactly similar agreement with the Poles.

As a result of this astonishing mishandling of the negotiation, the Poles at the moment feel they have been insulted and are extremely irritated.

Moreover, although Bonnet on Friday informed the British Ambassador that he was confident that the French Government would give Poland a guaranteed credit of one billion francs for purchases in France and an outright loan of one billion francs, Daladier on Saturday informed the Polish Ambassador that while France would give the billion guaranteed credit, the outright loan could not amount to more than 135 million francs.

Furthermore when Gamelin³ who had signed the military accord ascertained that the political accord had not been signed he sent a note to General Kasprzycki, Polish Minister of War, stating that of course the military accord could not come into effect or have any binding value until after signature of the political agreement since it must be subordinated entirely as a technical instrument to the political accord.

When Halifax arrived Saturday night Leger, Daladier and Bonnet without explaining fully the position to him asked him when Great Britain intended to negotiate a political accord with Poland. Halifax replied that Great Britain did not expect to negotiate such an accord until the close of the present negotiations with the Soviet Union and the present negotiations with Turkey; that is to say in about 2 months.

Daladier urged Halifax to have an immediate study made by his services of the text which had been agreed upon by the Polish and

³ Gen. Maurice Gustave Gamelin, Vice President of the French Supreme War Council.

French Governments for the Franco-Polish political accord and desires him if possible to obtain the agreement of his Government to negotiate immediately a similar accord with Poland.

Leger stated to me this morning that Halifax had agreed to do this.

BULLITT

760C.62/620 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, May 30, 1939—9 p. m.
[Received May 31—7:55 a. m.]

1034. The Counselor of the German Embassy who returned to Paris a few days ago from Berlin said to Wilson⁴ this noon that his Government had determined to settle definitively the question of Danzig before the summer was over. He remarked that it was a pity that Beck had refused the proposal made to him by Hitler when he visited Berchtesgaden last January for the reincorporation of Danzig in the Reich and a "narrow" corridor across the Corridor.⁵

The German Counselor said that he was at a loss to understand why Beck had turned down this offer. Wilson remarked that it was doubtless because the Poles had no desire to have the same fate befall them as had befallen the Czechs. The German Counselor said that this was absurd and that Hitler's offer had been made in good faith in an effort to settle the last serious problem affecting Germany in Europe. Wilson said that what might have seemed a reasonable proposal last December, of course, would seem something quite different after the event of March 15.⁶ The Counselor said that he must admit that this was undoubtedly the view generally held in other countries.

Upon inquiry as to exactly how Hitler intended to settle the Danzig problem before the summer was over the German Counselor professed ignorance. Wilson remarked that it was generally believed that the German plan was about as follows: a vote by the Danzig Senate for incorporation in the Reich which would be followed by the entry of Polish troops into Danzig. Germany would then go to the defense of Danzig and would make war upon Poland believing that Great Britain and France would fail to fulfill their pledges of assistance to Poland on the ground that Poland had committed the act of aggression. The German Counselor said that it was a fact that his Govern-

⁴ Edwin C. Wilson, Counselor of Embassy in France.

⁵ For German proposal made to Colonel Beck on January 5, 1939, see German White Book, doc. No. 200, p. 205.

⁶ German occupation of Czechoslovakia; for correspondence regarding the situation, see pp. 34 ff.

ment was convinced that if events should take place in the matter [*manner?*] outlined Great Britain and France would refuse to assist Poland and Germany would be left to deal with Poland alone.

At the close of the conversation the German Counselor reiterated his statement that the Führer would "settle" Danzig before the end of the summer.

BULLITT

740.00/1682: Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, June 8, 1939—11 a. m.

[Received June 8—4:30 a. m.]

800. Personal for the Secretary of State. Halifax told me last night that the British Minister at the Vatican had been told by the Pope that the Germans and Italians had definitely told him war was absolutely inevitable and they saw no means of avoiding it. Halifax thinks this of course may be another part of the nerve-breaking pressure the Germans and Italians are using.

KENNEDY

740.00/1686: Telegram

The Ambassador in Italy (Phillips) to the Secretary of State

ROME, June 9, 1939—7 p. m.

[Received June 9—4:04 p. m.]

219. During a conversation with Ciano⁷ this morning he remarked apparently with confidence that Europe was entering upon a "long period of peace." In reply to my inquiry as to whether his statement included the Danzig problem as well as the Italo-French difficulties he intimated that Germany had no intention of pushing the former to a solution and that the Italian Government was equally prepared to postpone the solution of their problems with the French. There had always been unsettled problems in Europe he added and there was no reason why these to which I had referred should not await their turn.

The Minister is preparing to leave for Madrid on or about June 20 on a visit to General Franco. He said that no military alliance between Spain and the Axis powers was being considered at the present time but added that possibly it might come later.

PHILLIPS

⁷ Count Galeazzo Ciano, Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

760C.62/680

The Chargé in France (Wilson) to the Secretary of State

No. 4573

PARIS, June 24, 1939.

[Received July 5.]

SIR: I have the impression that a second Munich, this time at the expense of Poland, may be in the making. The position of Daladier and the official position of the French Government remain, of course, that France will support Poland if the latter resists aggression against Polish vital interests. It is, furthermore, possible that Germany will try to settle the Danzig question with such a heavy hand as to leave no way open for the French and British to attempt further "appeasement." Nevertheless my impression grows that many of the influences which were at work in France and England last September are coming to life again, and have determined that a trial of strength with Germany must again be avoided, and that if necessary Danzig must go the way the Sudetenland went.

Among the factors which contribute to the foregoing impression are:

(1) The appearance of a sense of weariness over the continued tension in Europe. This comes out at times in conversation with French people. Recently inquiries were made of Daladier by members of parliament, who had received complaints from constituents, as to how much longer reservists who had been called to the colors would be kept on active duty. Daladier has announced that he intends to liberate by September 1st the reservists serving in the Maginot Line, and by October 1st other reservists, adding that if the situation permitted he might advance these dates.

(2) One hears it said at times by French people that France must not allow itself to be dragged into war over Danzig. Such opinions were not expressed a few weeks ago. There is criticism that Poland intends to force France into war.

(3) A feeling, probably widespread, that after all the present set-up of Danzig and the Corridor is unsound and not worth a war in order to perpetuate it.

(4) A deep-seated dislike and distrust of Beck in French governmental circles.

(5) Failure of the British and French Governments, after weeks of discussion, to give any effective financial assistance or to furnish arms to Poland. Failure of the British and French Governments to conclude the definitive political accords with Poland.

(6) The possibility that the Anglo-French negotiations with the Soviet Union will fail. Failure to reach agreement with the Soviet Union would give a further argument to the "appeasers", namely, that France and Britain cannot go to war for Poland unless the Soviet Union comes in.

(7) Impossibility, in the case of war, of rendering effective military assistance to Poland. France would be obliged alone to attempt

to break through the Siegfried Line. It is doubtful whether the British could get ships into the Baltic. Of course, in the long run France and Britain would win—but would it be worth it? (One hears such statements).

(8) Concern in France over the role which Spain might play in case of a general war.

(9) The terrible cost of continuing rearmament and the burden of financing the rearmament of Poland, Rumania, Turkey, Greece, etc.

(10) Demoralizing effect of developments in the Far East: weakening of British prestige; realization that if war breaks out France's Far Eastern Empire would, for the time being at least, be lost. If British fears over the Far East should limit British assistance to Poland in case of war to economic measures, such as an attempted blockade of Germany, that would strengthen the "appeasers" in France.

(11) Persistence of the feeling in influential circles that after all France should abandon central and eastern Europe to Germany, trusting that eventually Germany will come into conflict with the Soviet Union, and that France can remain secure behind the Maginot Line. This feeling went under cover on March 15th last. It continues to exist, however.

Yours respectfully,

EDWIN C. WILSON

741.61/734 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

[Extract]

PARIS, June 28, 1939—9 p. m.
[Received June 28—7: 20 p. m.]

1214.

Bonnet said that he felt certain that Germany would provoke a crisis of the most dangerous sort in the near future on the issue of Danzig. He believed that the critical moment would come just as soon as the Germans should have completed the mobilization which would take place under the guise of summer army manoeuvres. His information was that this moment would arrive about the first of August.

He added that the Germans were pouring soldiers into Danzig disguised as civilians and he thought the Germans might make a surprise assault on the city in the belief that once it had been seized Poland would not dare to declare war on Germany. He said that he dare not think the Germans could be so stupid as to believe that if Poland should declare war on Germany under such circumstances France or England could or would stand aside. Both France and England certainly would march.

His feeling was that the chance of war about the first of August was fifty-fifty; but when he tried to justify even this degree of optimism he could not justify it reasonably. He could see no way out for Hitler but war.

Bonnet added that if Germany should go to war with Poland on the issue of Danzig his personal belief was that Italy would not go to war on the side of Germany. After the signature of the Italian alliance with Germany Ciano had approached François-Poncet, French Ambassador in Rome, and had asserted that all differences between France and Italy could be settled peacefully if France would give Italy the railroad from Djibouti to Addis Ababa, a free port in Djibouti, a seat on the Suez Canal Board and a promise that the statute of equity in Tunis would be maintained indefinitely. The French Government had made no reply because it was felt that concessions of this nature to Italy at the present time would be interpreted merely as a sign of weakness and that no promise of the Italian[s?] could be taken seriously. Nevertheless his information indicated that hostility to war with France was so widespread in all classes of the population of Italy that he believed Mussolini at the last moment would not go to war on the side of Germany.

BULLITT

760K.62/63 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, June 28, 1939—10 p. m.
[Received June 29—8:55 a. m.]

1215. The Polish Ambassador stated to me yesterday that German troops disguised as tourists were being concentrated in Danzig in such numbers that he and his Government feared an attempt by Germany to seize Danzig in the very near future. He expressed the opinion that there were at least eighty chances in a hundred that Germany and Poland would be at war before the 15th of August and stated that he feared the Germans might make some move in Danzig which would provoke the entry of Polish troops and war by the 15th of July.

He added that recently there had been many flights of German airplanes over the Polish military port at Gdynia. In the opinion of his Government these flights were for the purpose of taking photographs of the exact positions of Polish artillery and so that a mass bombing attack could be made with precision in case of an outbreak of war.

BULLITT

740.00/1821 : Telegram

The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Grummon) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, June 29, 1939—9 a. m.

[Received June 29—9 a. m.]

349. I am informed in strict confidence by a member of the Polish Embassy here that, following Molotov's speech on May 31,⁸ the Ambassador inquired here as to the attitude of the Soviet Government in the event of a German attack on Poland and that Molotov gave the Ambassador the most formal oral assurances that in the event of such a conflict the Polish Government could count upon economic support from the Soviet Union. It was added that similar assurances had been given by Mikoyan⁹ recently during conversations in connection with certain economic questions such as transit rights arising out of the Polish-Soviet commercial agreement.¹⁰ My informant stated that similar assurances had been given by Potemkin¹¹ to Beck during the former's visit to Warsaw last spring. He indicated that these assurances of support involved little more than the right to obtain certain raw materials from Soviet Union and to enjoy transit facilities through the port of Murmansk in the event of a conflict. It was added that the Polish Ambassador here and the Polish Government were inclined to accept these assurances at their face value as representing the real interests of the Soviet Union which in the last analysis coincide with those of Poland in resisting German expansion eastward.

GRUMMON

760C.62/668 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, July 1, 1939—4 p. m.

[Received 4 : 20 p. m.]

1241. I talked at luncheon today with the British Ambassador and Lord De la Warr, British Minister of Education, who arrived in Paris this morning. Both said in terms which were convincing that if Germany by any maneuver whatever should attempt to take Danzig, and Poland should resist, Great Britain would declare war on Germany at once.

⁸ For outline of speech, see telegram No. 282, June 1, from the Chargé in the Soviet Union, *Foreign Relations, The Soviet Union, 1933-1939*, p. 764.

⁹ Anastas Ivanovich Mikoyan, People's Commissar for Foreign Trade of the Soviet Union.

¹⁰ See Polish communiqué of February 19, 1939, Polish White Book, doc. No. 162, p. 182.

¹¹ Vladimir Petrovich Potemkin, Assistant People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union.

Both said that the information of the British Government from Germany indicated that Ribbentrop had convinced Hitler that England and France would not fight in support of Poland. They both believed therefore that it was essential that Great Britain and France by some act or acts should place their determination to support Poland beyond doubt at once. The British Government would give a loan to Poland for this purpose in the immediate future of approximately 15,000,000 pounds.

They also had under consideration other measures which might possibly involve the sending of certain French and British military forces to Poland.

(In this connection Leger said to me yesterday that Daladier wished to send a small fleet of French and British ships to Gdynia but that he, Leger, considered that such an act would provoke the sending of the German fleet to Danzig in overwhelming force and might precipitate immediate war.)

De la Warr also said that the British were considering sending British troops to France for maneuvers. He assured me that both Chamberlain and Halifax felt that the only chance of saving peace was to convince Germany that any attack on Poland would be followed by instant declarations of war on Germany by France and England.

The British Ambassador said that his Government continued to believe that it might be possible to use Mussolini to restrain Hitler from an attack on Poland if France would make the concession to Italy which Ciano had suggested to François-Poncet (see my telegram 1214, June 28, 9 p. m.). Indeed he could tell me confidentially that if the present Danzig crisis should be followed by a period of calm he expected to receive immediate instructions from his Government to try to persuade the French to take action in this sense. He expected, however, to find Daladier still adamant.

BULLITT

760C.62/702 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Poland (Biddle) to the Secretary of State

WARSAW, July 12, 1939—4 p. m.

[Received 4:13 p. m.]

142. 1. Whereas Danzig Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman, Dr. Boettcher was somewhat guarded in our December conversations¹² and struck me as a "repressed imperialist" he manifested comparatively marked aggressiveness during our conversation of July 9 in Danzig, as illustrated by his remarks that Danzig from Ger-

¹² Report of these conversations not found in Department files.

many's point of view was only a part of the whole question which also included the Corridor and Upper Silesia (see Marshal Smigly-Rydz' remarks my despatch No. 1115, June 24,¹⁸ page 2, paragraph 2). This was Germany's policy and had to be accomplished regardless of Poland's wishes. It was unfortunate that Britain continued in refusal to make agreement with Germany for this might lead to a close understanding between Germany, Britain, and the United States which would prove best guarantee to world peace. Such understanding, however, would necessarily be conditioned upon a free hand for Germany in Eastern and Central Europe whereby Germany could move her frontiers when and where she deemed necessary.

2. Tone of these remarks corresponds with League High Commissioner Burckhardt's confidential disclosure that the attitude respectively of East Prussian Gauleiter Koch, German Consul General Von Janson, and Danzig Gauleiter Förster had become markedly aggressive and imperialistic during the past week.

3. Of pertinent bearing, in response to Estonian Minister Markus' question yesterday as to what concessions Germany might be willing to grant Poland in the event of reopening of negotiations over Danzig German Ambassador Moltke stated Germany would let Poland keep Corridor which together with access to the sea Poland could keep only by the "grace of Germany".

4. The aforementioned individuals' imperialistic tone might possibly have been assumed in compliance with orders from Berlin as a part of Berlin's tactics of psychological terrorism. However, if this tone reflects the true attitude both of Berlin and aforementioned individuals, hopes for a reasonable and just settlement of the Danzig question seem remote.

BIDDLE

740.00/1923 : Telegram

The Minister in Yugoslavia (Lane) to the Secretary of State

BELGRADE, July 16, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received 6:25 p. m.]

192. For the Secretary and Under Secretary. In the talks I had with Prince Paul at Brdo on July 12 and July 15 he expressed himself as being "most pessimistic ["] regarding the international situation. He referred to his optimism of last September which he claims was justified due to the possibility of compromise. Now Hitler cannot go back on his promise that Danzig become a part of Germany, nor can Great Britain and France back down from their stand not to permit

¹⁸ Not printed.

the incorporation of Danzig into the Reich. The situation now depends on the question of prestige. The Prince said he did not believe either side would give way: hence the only answer is war.

He said that the United States could still play a very important role in favor of peace and he expressed the hope that the President "who understands the situation so well" will be able to use the moral influence of the United States to avert war. While he did not so explicitly state, I inferred that the Prince is in favor of our exerting our influence through neutrality legislation or through some administrative measures to give us freedom of action in sending arms and munitions where we wish.

The Prince has apparently been impressed by Italian propaganda for he seemed loath to believe that the anti-German feeling in Italy is so high. He expressed the opinion that Grandi had been recalled from London because he had become too friendly with the British.

Prince Paul said to me that his Government is under terrific pressure from Berlin, exerted through Neuhausen, German Consul General at Belgrade, who is an intimate friend of Marshal Goering. The Prince admitted that Neuhausen had exerted pressure in connection with the concession desired by the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey, regarding which I am reporting in a separate message.¹⁴

Prince Paul said he thought there would be no immediate danger to European peace, many important German officials being now absent from Berlin. He said he would leave tonight (Saturday) for London.

The more I see the Prince the more convinced I am that his sympathies are with Great Britain and France as contrasted with the Axis powers.

LANE

740.00/1937 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, July 21, 1939—10 a. m.

[Received July 21—7:55 a. m.]

1041. Personal for the Secretary. I saw Prince Paul of Yugoslavia last night. He is very bearish on the entire outlook. He said on his visit to Hitler he was impressed with three things: First of all Hitler was convinced that the British Empire was decadent and therefore would not be able to fight very strenuously even though their dispositions were courageous; secondly, he found the same condition that he has in London and Paris; when he asked Hitler and Goering what they knew about Russia they told him "nothing"; third, he found

¹⁴ Telegram No. 193, July 17, 10 a. m., not printed.

Goering a most decent fellow, very able, and with a real desire to be constructive; Ribbentrop, however, at that time was definitely no longer top.

Halifax told me also that he received a wire from Danzig last night that Förster had told his friends that on his visit to Hitler, Hitler had told him the German demands on Danzig remained the same as in his speech to the Reich but that he was in no hurry and thought the Poles and Germans should play down all discussions of agitation in their newspapers and see whether anything might automatically work itself out. Halifax was pleased but Prince Paul was very distrustful.

Halifax also said that he has not given up hope of getting out of the Chinese situation with some face saving. I said "Do you mean by making all concessions and withdrawing from Tientsin?"¹⁵ He said "Not by withdrawing from Tientsin and not giving too much in concessions." I think he was a little bit carried away with the good report from Danzig because he wanted to assure me that he was not definitely hopeful of China, but just a bit.

KENNEDY

740.00/1942 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Italy (Phillips) to the Secretary of State

ROME, July 22, 1939—7 p. m.

[Received July 22—3:26 p. m.]

277. During my conversation with Ciano this afternoon I called to his attention the general nervousness in the United States with regard to the European situation and the widely accepted belief that during the months of August and September an outbreak of war was possible. Ciano admitted the existence of tension but said that there was no reason to be alarmed. Admitting that he was speaking not only on behalf of Italy but also of Germany he said, "We have no intention of provoking a war" and he added, "Such a war as it would be". Aggravating incidents he felt might occur in the Danzig and Corridor regions which would naturally increase the tension but in spite of this possibility he evidently does not anticipate any drastic action on the part of the Axis powers which would bring about any general European tragedy this year. I said that I hoped that the Italian Government was counseling prudence in Berlin to which he made no reply.

While Ciano may of course be too optimistic I was nevertheless impressed by his evident sincerity.

PHILLIPS

¹⁵ For correspondence regarding the situation at Tientsin, see vol. iv, pp. 163 ff.

740.00/1956a : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Chargé in Italy (Reed)

WASHINGTON, July 26, 1939—7 p. m.

71. Personal from the Under Secretary. I do not feel that the Embassy is giving us nearly enough information by telegram with regard to present conditions. It is very important that the Department be kept daily advised of all of the factors of importance in the international situation. Please make it a point to have the Embassy send telegraphic reports to the Department of all information of significance obtained from government officials or from your colleagues in the Diplomatic Corps, together with excerpts and summaries from the press whenever these latter are in your judgment significant.

HULL

740.00/1995 : Telegram

The Chargé in Italy (Reed) to the Secretary of State

ROME, August 1, 1939—6 p. m.
[Received August 1—3 : 18 p. m.]

289. My telegram No. 286, July 29, noon.¹⁶ The British Ambassador¹⁷ with whom I had a long conversation this morning did not seem to be much impressed by reassuring statements which Ciano has recently been making to foreign diplomatic representatives regarding the general European situation and the pacific intentions of the Axis powers. He expressed the opinion that granted the Italian Government is not contemplating any military adventure and is counseling prudence in Berlin and even if Ciano believes what he had told our Ambassador, and more recently the Soviet Chargé d'Affaires, namely, that he is satisfied that Germany does not intend to provoke a war, all this is of relatively minor importance as the real decision rests with Berlin. A great deal depends he thinks on whether Hitler feels it necessary to present the party rally at Nuremberg with a new success. If Hitler does not, things may go on as they are for some time to come; if he does, Loraine believes that he will not take into consideration such a success in Danzig or the Corridor, as he must now realize that the attempt would mean war with Great Britain and France. Loraine considers it far more likely that Hitler will strike against a nonguaranteed state such as Slovakia or Hungary, possibly the latter as he already has the former pretty much under his control.

¹⁶ Not printed.¹⁷ Sir Percy L. Loraine.

Hitler would then in effect say to Great Britain and France "Here I am, what are you going to do about it?" There were, however, said Loraine, signs that Hitler was "pulling in his horns" and he referred in this connection to the fact that neither the Prince Regent of Yugoslavia nor the Bulgarian Prime Minister had been subjected to any undue pressure on their recent visits to Berlin.

The French Chargé d'Affaires with whom I also talked today was inclined to take a rather calm view of the situation. He stressed particularly the subsidence of the Italian press and radio campaign regarding Tunis, Suez, and Djibouti which according to his observations was at the present time merely being kept at a point where it would not languish completely.

REED

740.00/2016

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Chief of the Division of European Affairs (Moffat)

[WASHINGTON,] August 2, 1939.

During the course of the call on other matters the French Ambassador said information received from Coulondre in Berlin was to the effect that the Germans had everything ready for the end of August and that they could, if they wished, strike almost without further preparation. No man's guess is worth anything as to how Hitler's mind would work. Reports from François-Poncet in Rome were to the effect that the Italians did not want war and would presumably argue against it, but that the decision would not be theirs. Apart from Danzig the Ambassador was most worried about developments in Yugoslavia.

PIERREPONT MOFFAT

760C.62/758 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, August 3, 1939—4 p. m.

[Received 5:27 p. m.]

1429. The Polish Ambassador said to me today that he had just received a personal letter from Beck in which the latter expressed the opinion that Hitler would go on ordering the Nazi leaders in Danzig to create incident after incident until it should be necessary for the Polish Government to take action. The Polish Ambassador added that such action would be in the form of an ultimatum to the Government of Danzig.

He said that Beck took the most serious view of the threat of the Danzig authorities to open the customs frontier between Danzig and East Prussia. Poland would not permit this economic attachment of Danzig to the Reich. If the Danzig authorities should attempt to abolish Polish customs control on this frontier Poland would be obliged to take action.¹⁸

The Polish Ambassador said that Beck believed that an intense crisis with regard to Danzig might be provoked by Germany on either the 6th, 12th or 15th of this month. Beck had stated in his letter that he thought that Hitler would have to go before the Nuremberg Congress early in September either with Danzig as a part of Germany or with the statement that since Danzig was certain in the long run to return [to] Germany it was not necessary for Germany to precipitate war now.

Beck thought that Hitler had not yet definitely made up his mind to provoke war but he felt certain Hitler had decided to bring matters to the edge of war in the hope that either Poland, France or England would recoil and give him another diplomatic victory.

A story was prevalent in London last night to the effect that Germany had proposed to Great Britain a conference to be composed of Germany, Italy, France, England and Poland to settle the question of Danzig. The Polish Ambassador stated to me that his colleague in London had telephoned him last night with regard to this story. He added that Poland would not accept such a conference. The Polish Government is ready to discuss with Germany alterations in the status of Danzig on the basis that Danzig should remain independent and that its independence should be guaranteed by Germany and Poland. The Polish Government therefore would be glad to have a conversation on this basis with the German Government but would not permit the Danzig question to become the subject of a general conference in which Italy, France, and England should participate.

From London also, through circles close to Lord Beaverbrook, stories are reaching Paris that at the last moment Chamberlain will let down Poland. Whatever may be the position of the British Government there is no doubt whatsoever of the position of the French Government.

About a month ago Bonnet addressed a letter to Ribbentrop¹⁹ reminding him that when he had visited Paris last December he had

¹⁸ For Polish ultimatum of August 4, 1939, demanding that the alleged announcement of the Danzig customs authorities be canceled, see Polish White Book, doc. No. 82, p. 94.

¹⁹ The French Yellow Book, *Diplomatic Documents*, 1938-1939 (New York, Reynal & Hitchcock), doc. No. 150, p. 197. This American edition, published by authority of the French Government is a translation of *Le Livre Jaune Français, Documents diplomatiques*, 1938-1939 (Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, 1939).

stated that the German Government accepted as entirely natural the Franco-Polish alliance. Bonnet's letter went on to remind Ribbentrop that this alliance would take effect immediately and France would support Poland with force in case of a change in the status of Danzig produced by direct or indirect German activities.

About two weeks and a half ago Bonnet received a 12-page reply from Ribbentrop²⁰ couched in the most violent language in which Ribbentrop denied that he had ever said what he had said in Paris and stated that if France should support Poland's position with regard to Danzig, France would be responsible for the war which would ensue and predicted that such a war would result in the complete demolition of the French Army and the French state.

Recently Bonnet replied most politely²¹ reiterating, however, the complete determination of France to fight in case Poland should become involved in war with Germany over any matter concerning Danzig.

The general impression here remains that Hitler has not yet decided definitely whether or not to provoke war but that he will provoke a crisis of the most serious nature in the course of this month—probably about August 15—and that by the repetition of small acts against Polish interests in Danzig he may push Europe into a general war.

BULLITT

740.00/2011 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, August 4, 1939—4 p. m.
[Received August 4—1:10 p. m.]

1440. Charvériat, Director of Political Affairs at the Quai d'Orsay, said to me today that the French Government had been informed that 11 large German transports were being loaded at Hamburg to sail immediately for Pillau.

I was informed this morning by an American source in Hamburg that these 11 ships had sailed; that they were loaded with troops and light tanks and that their destination was Koenigsberg.

In connection with this report Charvériat said many indications had reached the French Foreign Office in the past few days that Hitler intended to go on provoking incidents in Danzig. He said that while he did not consider war inevitable he would not be surprised if any 24 hours should bring forth an incident which would oblige the Poles to send an ultimatum to the Government of Danzig.

²⁰ The French Yellow Book, doc. No. 163, p. 213.

²¹ *Ibid.*, doc. No. 168, p. 221.

Charvériat said that all information from Moscow continued to indicate that the Russians genuinely desired to conclude both political and military agreements with the British and French Governments.

The French Foreign Office has as yet no official information whatsoever with regard to the reports that Japan is about to enter into a military alliance with Germany and Italy.

BULLITT

740.00/2026 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, August 8, 1939—8 p. m.
[Received August 8—4: 50 p. m.]

751. From conversations with colleagues here during the past few days the impression is obtained that the accumulated tension of recent months is regarded as being concentrated now into a period covering the next few weeks. Many point to the next fortnight as the crucial time, some look to the latter half of September, but all are inclined to agree that owing to the technical problem of transporting the masses who are expected to attend the celebration of the anniversary of Tannenberg²² on August 27th and the Party Congress at Nuremberg which is scheduled to close on September 11th it is unlikely that any action requiring extensive use of railroad and other transportation will be launched by Germany from the latter part of August to the middle of September.

In spite of the impression of the imminence of a crisis the same uncertainty which has hitherto prevailed is noted as to the actual intentions which Hitler may have. Persons professing to be in a position to judge assert that Hitler does not want war, that he is fully aware of the possibilities of social and economic chaos inherent in a general conflict, that he does not believe that the solution of the Danzig problem alone is worth a general war, and finally, that although he is preparing for eventualities he has not yet reached a definite decision as to his course in the immediate future. This general view is also reflected among the diplomatic representatives of those countries openly or tacitly aligned with Germany. The situation which has been created, however, is recognized as one which in its present course points to climax but although conjecture is without limit no agreement seems to exist as to the test by which Hitler's intent may at present be gauged or even as to the elements both within Germany and abroad which might combine in the formulation of that intent and direct its implementation.

²² Battle of Tannenberg, August 26-30, 1914.

In the meanwhile rumors circulate as to attempts which are being made towards palliative measures in the Danzig controversy in which Mussolini's name is most frequently mentioned. In my conversations with my colleagues here, however, nothing definite along this line has been forthcoming and no indication has been given that efforts are being made to ease the general state of tension which is so acute that there is little inclination to regard the specific points of conflict immediately at issue as subjects for peaceful solution or to cooperate with a view to dealing with those individual issues at a time when the overwhelming possibilities now envisaged may be rendered more remote.

KIRK

760C.62/827

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Acting Secretary of State*²³

[Extracts]

[WASHINGTON,] August 9, 1939.

The Polish Ambassador called to see me this afternoon upon his return to the United States after a month's stay in Poland.

With regard to the prospects during the next few weeks, the Ambassador said that Colonel Beck was inclined to believe that war would not break out. He said it was Beck's impression that Hitler was becoming gradually convinced that the risks of a general war were too great for Germany to force the issue and that, while Ribbentrop was still continually telling Hitler that England and France would not fight over Danzig, the Polish Government knew that the German generals had informed Hitler two weeks ago that, while if the war could be limited to a war between Poland and Germany, Germany would win easily, if the war involved England and France the German generals could give no assurances of any kind to Hitler as to the outcome. He said that Hitler was beginning to get information from sources other than Ribbentrop which was leading him to feel that England and France would fight with Poland should Poland fight on the Danzig issue.

Beck believed that Germany would probably not risk war over Danzig but would continue for an indefinite period its present policy of constant provocation of Poland without going to the extreme limit. Beck believed it was far more likely that Hitler before the middle of September would bring about the downfall of the Hungarian Gov-

²³ Copies were transmitted on August 10 to the Secretary of State at White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, and to President Roosevelt.

ernment, replacing it with a government completely subservient to Germany, and then spend the next six months in amalgamating the position so obtained in order to make it easier for Germany to attack Poland when the time came through Hungary and Slovakia and in the same manner obtain a more preponderant position in southeastern Europe.

I asked the Ambassador what solution his Government saw to the present situation since it would clearly seem incredible that mobilization and military preparations could continue at the existing rate and that the entire world be kept at its present state of extreme uncertainty and of anxiety for any protracted period. To this the Ambassador made the singularly unconvincing reply that he thought that if no war broke out this autumn, the internal situation in Germany would become so serious by midwinter that Hitler would be overthrown by the spring and some more reasonable regime would come into power in Germany before next summer. I asked him if he had any reason to think that public opinion in Germany showed any signs of extreme dissatisfaction with the present regime, and he stated that he had no specific information to that effect but that he knew the internal economy of Germany was so precarious that the utmost measure of dissatisfaction was inevitable before many months had passed.

The Ambassador stated that on his return to the United States he had stopped off for a few hours in Berlin to talk with his colleague the Polish Ambassador, Lipski. He said that Lipski had told him that the refusal of the American Congress to revise the neutrality legislation had had an eminently encouraging effect upon the German authorities, both civil and military, but that fortunately this had been counteracted completely by the announcement made by the Government of the United States of its termination of the commercial treaty with Japan.²⁴ Ambassador Lipski had said that no one could exaggerate the consternation which this step by the United States had created in Berlin.

I asked the Ambassador if he had any information, or what the opinion of his Government might be, with regard to the success of the negotiations now in progress in Moscow between the British and French and the Soviets for a political and military agreement. The Ambassador replied that Colonel Beck believed that a political agreement was improbable, but that he thought a military agreement would be concluded. In reply to a further inquiry from me, the Ambassador said that the Polish Government was informed that the Italian Government was continually counseling moderation on the German Gov-

²⁴ See *Foreign Relations, Japan, 1931-1941*, vol. II, pp. 189 ff.

ernment, but that no representations of any kind had been made to Poland by Italy with regard to the Polish-German situation.

The Ambassador told me explicitly that there had been no conversations and no negotiations of any character whatever between Germany and Poland with regard to the Danzig issue. He said that the Polish Government had deliberately refrained from making any approach at all to Germany because of its conviction that if any such approach were made, Germany would construe it as a sign of fear and of weakness and would adopt a far more vigorous attitude.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

762.65/671 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Italy (Phillips) to the Secretary of State

ROME, August 9, 1939—8 p. m.
[Received August 9—3 : 55 p. m.]

304. Ciano informed me this afternoon that he was leaving tomorrow for Germany and would spend 2 days with Von Ribbentrop in Salzburg. (He has informed one of my diplomatic colleagues that his visit was in response to an invitation from Von Ribbentrop.) He was uncertain whether he would see Hitler. I reminded him of a conversation which we had had following the signature of the Rome-Berlin alliance during which I had expressed my hope that the first part of the agreement notably that dealing with "consultation" was more important than the military clauses which followed. Ciano replied that he well remembered our conversation and that the 2 days in Salzburg would give him the opportunity which the consultation clauses afforded. The Minister added that he remained optimistic with regard to the European situation because of the "will to improve matters". He said that he would like to see me as soon as he returned to Rome when he hoped to be able to give me some reassuring message which I could transmit to you.

PHILLIPS

760C.62/782 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, August 10, 1939—11 p. m.
[Received August 10—3 p. m.]

771. My 770, August 10, 10 p. m., and 749, August 8, 5 p. m.²⁵ I have just seen the British Ambassador who said that he is communi-

²⁵ Neither printed.

cating with Lord Halifax on the basis of the anti-Polish press campaign as resumed in the German press today and is pointing out the serious consequences inherent in a continuation of the publication at this time in the Polish press or even in the press of other countries of articles and statements which can be used by the Germans to develop the impression that the threat of war comes from outside Germany. The Ambassador continued that if, as his instinct tells him, Hitler has not decided on war such statements from abroad merely support those in Germany who may be advocating extremist measures and that even if an act of force has been determined upon here it is to be deplored that any opportunity such as the publication of these statements offer should be advanced which would assist the Germans in an attempt to shift the blame if only in argument for an eventual act of aggression on their part. The Ambassador added that he believed that every effort should be made to counsel restraint in public utterances outside Germany and concluded with a statement of his conviction of the powerful influence which could be exerted by the President in counsel along these lines delivered by his Ambassadors in London, Paris and Warsaw.

KIRK

760C.62/784 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Poland (Biddle) to the Secretary of State

WARSAW, August 10, 1939—midnight.

[Received August 11—3 a. m.]

163. 1. Following is our translation of French text (*a*) of note Wilhelmstrasse handed Polish Chargé d'Affaires at Berlin yesterday and (*b*) Polish reply thereto handed German Chargé d'Affaires here at 4 p. m., today (which were handed me by Beck tonight and should be regarded as confidential until released by either party) :

“The German Government had learned with great astonishment the tenor of the note of the Polish Government to the Senate of the Free City of Danzig by which the Polish Government demanded in the form of an ultimatum the annulment of a so-called measure the existence of which was based upon unfounded rumors. That measure which was supposed to prevent the activity of Polish customs inspectors in reality had not been drawn up by the Senate. In the case of a refusal there was the threat of the application of measures of reprisal.

The German Government finds itself obliged to draw attention to the fact that a repetition of such demands in the form of an ultimatum addressed to the Free City of Danzig as well as threats of reprisals might lead to an aggravation of Polish-German relations the responsibility for which would rest solely upon the Polish Government,

the German Government being obliged to refuse from this moment all responsibility in that regard.

Further the German Government draws the attention of the Polish Government to the fact that the measures taken by it to prevent the exportation of certain merchandise from Danzig to Poland are liable to cause the population of Danzig heavy economic losses.

If the Polish Government persists in maintaining this attitude the German Government is of the opinion that in the present circumstances the only recourse of the Free City would be to look for other possibilities of exportation and hemispheres of importation."

Following is Polish reply :

"The Government of the Republic of Poland has noted with the greatest surprise the declaration made on August 9, 1939, by the Secretary of State of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Reich to the Chargé d'Affaires ad interim of Poland in Berlin regarding the relations existing between Poland and the Free City of Danzig. The Polish Government does not perceive, in effect, any juridical basis of justifying an intervention by Germany in the said relations.

If exchanges of views have been able to succeed on the subject of the problem of Danzig between the Polish Government and the Government of the Reich, these had as sole foundation the good will of the Polish Government and did not proceed from any obligation whatsoever.

In reply to the said declaration of the Reich Government the Polish Government is obliged to apprise the Government of the Reich that it will react in the future, as until now, with regard to any attempt of the authorities of the Free City which would tend to compromise the rights and interests which Poland possesses there—by virtue of her agreements—with the aid of means and measures which it alone will judge appropriate to adopt and that it will regard eventual interventions by the Government of the Reich to the detriment of these rights and interests as an act of aggression."

2. In handing me copies of the above notes Beck said that since thus far Berlin had not published contents Warsaw refrained therefrom. I am aware Beck and associates, many of whom are dining with me tonight, regard the last report as grave. In fact Beck is inclined to feel note may either be (*a*) aimed for benefit of home consumption; or (*b*) a prelude to definite action in support of Danzig claims or both. Moreover Beck said that inasmuch as Berlin's note is result of 5 days' deliberation since Warsaw's sharp counter-warning to Danzig the situation assumes a graver aspect. It is highly significant that Berlin has thus openly revealed itself as directing Danzig policy in the present crisis.

BIDDLE

760C.62/784 : Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Poland (Biddle)

WASHINGTON, August 11, 1939—3 p. m.

33. Your 163, August 10, midnight. I have communicated the contents of your telegram to the President. The President expresses the belief that, in the interest of public opinion in the United States, as well as public opinion in other parts of the world, it is in the highest degree important that history should not record, in the event that any military crisis results from the Danzig issue, that the first act of aggression of a military character was brought about by Poland. To use the Biblical phrase, a situation should not arise as a result of which it could truthfully be said that Poland "threw the first stone".

Please communicate the above in the strictest confidence to Colonel Beck at the first opportunity.

Please repeat to London and Paris.

WELLES

760C.62/802 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Poland (Biddle) to the Secretary of State

WARSAW, August 11, 1939—midnight.

[Received August 12—2:15 a. m.]

167. In conversation with President Moscicki, Marshal Smigly-Rydz, his associates in high command, and Beck regarding the current turn of events I find they share opinion that each week henceforth might be expected to see cumulative tension. Moreover Beck anticipates that present wave of tension may be seriously augmented within next 6 days.

Pursuant his recent information from all sources he does not exclude the possibility that Hitler's machinations might bring about a political crisis at an early date. Accordingly all Polish chiefs of mission are at their posts and Beck himself feels the delicate treatment of details in whatever may ensue necessitates his foregoing even his previously planned weekend absence. Beck then stated that in his opinion the danger lay less in Hitler's extremist associates to possible influence on his forward looking policy than in what Beck had reason to suspect was their practice of withholding full information from Hitler. Accordingly Hitler might conceivably find himself in an acute political crisis through the error of lack of full comprehension of the mood and capacity of neighboring states to resist his doctrine of force. It was due mainly to this possible danger

that Beck had given his sharp response to Hitler's note (see my cable 163, August 10 midnight) on the same day of receipt thereof; a delay or any sign of retreat in Beck's response might have run the danger of being interpreted by Hitler as a sign of weakness.

Speculating upon the result of Burckhardt's visit to Berchtesgaden, Beck said that pending receipt of report thereon he was inclined to feel results would be characterized either by further menaces or a search for a face-saving retreat (in this connection Beck is inclined to feel that even if Hitler sought a retreat on general lines Hitler, due to the question of prestige, might still demand Danzig).

Moreover Beck as spokesman for aforementioned officials emphatically reiterated opinion that concessions to Hitler in Eastern or Central Europe would not spell durable peace.

BIDDLE

760C.62/803 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, August 12, 1939—2 p. m.

[Received August 12—11:53 a. m.]

1491. Charvériat, Director of Political Affairs, who is in charge at the Quai d'Orsay today said to me this morning that the exchange of notes between the German and Polish Governments (the texts of which are contained in Ambassador Biddle's 163, August 10, midnight) had brought the Polish and German Governments to grips so definitely in the Danzig dispute that while there might be no acute crisis for a number of days the governments of the world must be prepared to have such a crisis in any 24 hours.

Charvériat added that the French position remained that Poland would receive the fullest possible support from France at any moment that Poland might decide to defend her vital interests by force. Poland would be the sole judge as to the policy to be followed. He added that the position of the British Government was identical with the position of the French Government and that there was no sign whatsoever of any weakening in the British attitude. There had been no communications from the British Government to the French Government that indicated a desire to return to a policy of "appeasement."

Charvériat said that in addition to the concentrations on the Polish frontier the Germans were concentrating in Slovakia in a manner which had aroused great apprehension in both Rumania and Hungary. The Rumanians and Hungarians feared that if war should break out German troops would march from Slovakia against Rumania either

through Polish territory or possibly through the Ruthenian tip of Slovakia recently acquired by Hungary.

Charvériat said that whereas Ciano had been optimistic with regard to the possibility of preserving peace before he saw Ribbentrop he was now pessimistic. The fact that Ciano was to spend 2 more days in Germany than had been planned seemed to indicate that the most serious decisions were being discussed.

BULLITT

760C.62/804 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, August 12, 1939—3 p. m.

[Received August 12—12:16 p. m.]

1492. Daladier expressed to me today the same opinions as those expressed by Charvériat reported in my No. 1491, August 12, 2 p. m.

He added that in his opinion the German troop movements to date were disquieting but did not yet indicate definitely an intention to strike in the immediate future. He thought that a major Far Eastern crisis which might lead to war was imminent but he did not believe that war itself would come during the next few days.

Daladier said that his information from Moscow indicated that Voroshilov²⁶ and the officers of the Red Army were genuinely eager to come to a definite agreement.

BULLITT

760C.62/807 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Poland (Biddle) to the Secretary of State

WARSAW, August 13, 1939—3 p. m.

[Received 6:38 p. m.]

168. For the President and Secretary. Your 33, August 11, 3 p. m.

1. In response to President's message which I delivered in person at 11:30 today, Colonel Beck stated he was profoundly sensible of the President's friendly interest and fully appreciated the importance of the comprehensive suggestion contained in his message.

2. He thereupon reiterated observations in effect contained in my No. 167, August 11, midnight, adding that, as outlined in his May 5th address, Poland would have to resist a threat to her vital interests and principles. However, he and his associates would continue (a) to

²⁶ Kliment Efremovich Voroshilov, People's Commissar for Defense of the Soviet Union.

the utmost of their ability to confine the dispute within limits of diplomatic action and (b) not to permit their emotions to cloud their perspective.

3. In this connection Beck drew my attention to message just received from Polish Ambassador to London that Cadogan had conveyed expression of Halifax's appreciation of the manner in which Warsaw continued to handle the delicate situation in Danzig.

BIDDLE

762. 65/683 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, August 14, 1939—6 p. m.
[Received August 15—12:45 p. m.]

793. The following oral statement has been submitted in secrecy to a member of this Embassy by a German closely associated with high military circles here: A conference between German military leaders and Hitler had been scheduled to take place at Berchtesgaden either today or tomorrow but following the conferences with Ciano was cancelled and in the place of this conference a meeting of generals was held at the War Ministry in Berlin this morning when a report of the Ciano conversations was submitted. According to this report Hitler had demanded of Ciano that in the event of a general conflict precipitated by the Danzig issue the Italians would immediately cooperate with the Germans by attacking France but Ciano had declared that in such an event Italy would not participate at once in the conflict. At the same meeting at the War Ministry the generals were notified that it was the wish of the Fuehrer that the present state of military preparedness in Germany be maintained for 3 months so that if or when Hitler should decide to make use of the armed forces they would be in readiness to carry out his orders.

The above-mentioned informant stated that judging from the state of preparation in the War Supply Department no offensive action on an extensive scale need be expected for a fortnight and that the most serious lack of war materials at present related to the supply of tin and coal. He added that it had been reported that Hitler was in a highly excitable state and that it was his understanding that the Tannenberg celebration scheduled to take place on August 27 would not assume the significance which has lately been ascribed to it. (See my despatch No. 1226 of July 31.)²⁷

KIRK

²⁷ Not printed.

760C.62/822 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Poland (Biddle) to the Secretary of State

WARSAW, August 15, 1939—noon.

[Received 3 p. m.]

170. For the President and the Secretary.

1. Following in effect are high points of Beck's confidential report (which he is guarding with utmost secrecy) on Hitler-Burckhardt conversation (see my No. 167, August 11, 12 midnight, paragraph 3).

2. Conversation amounted to monologue wherein Hitler "thinking out loud" on Danzig question: (a) stated that in view possibility his associates had neglected to inform him fully on situation he had wanted to consult Burckhardt (while Hitler might have awakened to possibility his associates were withholding full information, Hitler to my mind did not overlook occasion to flatter Burckhardt who it is generally thought here aspires to become Swiss Minister to Berlin); (b) let it be known he still aimed at extraterritorial passageway across Pomorze and Danzig's incorporation in Reich.

3. Beck's preliminary reactions: (a) he found no discernible traces either (1) of a search for a means of retreat, or (2) of a definite plan of action; (b) in fact despite Beck's reports of accumulative military preparations in East Prussia and along other sectors of Polish-German border Beck was inclined to perceive in substance of Hitler's reported "monologue" signs of indecision. Of pertinent bearing moreover Beck's reports from Italy indicated absence of signs presaging intentions of action in near future; (c) however Beck considers (1) situation grave, (2) Hitler contemplates either bluff or military action, and (3) that in either case the intensity of Hitler's preparations would have to be the same. Hence Poland had to prepare correspondingly to meet either alternative.

4. Beck, his associates and the high command continue vigilant but notably calm and resolute.

BIDDLE

760C.62/818 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, August 15, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received August 15—2:35 p. m.]

1494. Charvériat who is in charge at the Foreign Office stated to me this afternoon that the telegrams received this morning from Berlin and Rome indicated that Hitler was determined to have war with Poland.

A telegram received from Berlin this morning stated that the Italian Ambassador there, Attolico, was intensely depressed because Hitler and Ribbentrop seemed to be determined to have war with Poland whether Mussolini wished it or not.

From both Rome and Berlin the French Government had information to the effect that Hitler and Ribbentrop had talked to Ciano in such a manner that Ciano had been shocked and had refused to make any definite reply to Hitler's proposals and had not telephoned or reported otherwise to Mussolini but had returned to Rome to report in order to avoid giving answers to the requests of Hitler and Ribbentrop for Italian support in an attack on Poland.

It was the impression of the French Government that Mussolini at the moment was reluctant to support Hitler in an attack on Poland and desired to bring about a conference at which Germany and Italy might present all their demands in all the different international fields. The Italians, however, appeared now to doubt their ability to obtain Hitler's consent to such a conference or to restrain him from almost immediate action against Poland.

From the French point of view the proposal of such a conference would involve an exceedingly grave decision. Because of the manner in which Hitler had broken the promises which he had made at Munich it was obvious that no confidence could be placed in any future promises of his. As a preliminary to any such conference it seemed essential that the French and British should demand the carrying out of the promises made at Munich which would involve the evacuation by German troops of the territory of the Czechoslovak Republic.

The telegrams this morning from Berlin indicated that the responsible officials of the German Government were now talking about Poland in a manner which indicated that the Germans would insist not only upon the acquisition of Danzig but also the annexation of the Corridor and of Polish Upper Silesia. Danzig still remained the probable point at which the Germans would strike the spark that would set fire to Europe; but the most responsible German officials were now talking about the necessity of entering Poland to protect the Germans resident in Poland. It might be that this sort of talk was merely intended to produce terror in Poland but it might also be that Hitler had decided to strike and that he was fanning German feeling to a greater head. The German mobilization was continuing without interruption.

Charvériat expressed the same opinion which Daladier expressed to me a few days ago, to wit: that the only hope of preserving peace lay in convincing Hitler that an attack on Poland would involve im-

mediate declarations of war by France and England. The nub of the question was that it was not Danzig's freedom but Poland's which was at stake. Charvériat said that reports thus far received from Moscow indicated that the Russian military men desired to get on with the business of the military pact rapidly; but he added that up to date the negotiators had not yet touched the heart of the question.

Charvériat concluded by saying that it was his conviction that the Germans might provoke an incident in any 24 hours that might start general war.

BULLITT

760C.62/324 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, August 15, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received August 15—2:20 p. m.]

1495. I have just received a letter from Kirk written last night in which he states "Without being at all hysterical, I do know that there is enough evidence to justify one in thinking that the worst can happen at any moment."

He suggests that some one against whom Hitler is not prejudiced should visit Hitler immediately and inform him that his present actions inevitably will produce general war and suggest that he should propose a moratorium of 6 months on the execution of all international political designs.

I suggested to Charvériat today entirely unofficially and personally that such a visit by some one to Hitler might produce some effect. He was not at all sure that it would produce any effect and was somewhat apprehensive that if such a move should be instigated by France or England it would be taken as a sign of weakness and desire to restart a policy of "appeasement" and might encourage Hitler to strike.

I do not know anyone who has a personal influence with Hitler at the present time that might be sent on such a mission. I am inclined to believe that the best chance of preventing Hitler from starting war lies in convincing him that Poland, France and England with the support of the Soviet Union will certainly fight. A word from you to the German Chargé d'Affaires in Washington might possibly be timely and of some use.

BULLITT

762.65/684 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, August 15, 1939—8 p. m.

[Received 8:29 p. m.]

804. The Italian Ambassador did not proceed to Rome with Ciano as stated in the press but returned to Berlin. Although I have asked to see him he has not yet given me an appointment and it is now said that he has left Berlin this evening.

A friend of the Ambassador who saw him however informs me that the optimism which Attolico has hitherto displayed has disappeared and that he is manifesting great anxiety. He is under the impression that Attolico believed that Hitler might be inclined to adopt a more moderate attitude and although the Ambassador refrained from giving definite information as to the course of the conversations at Salzburg and Berchtesgaden he indicated that moderation had not been manifested and that Hitler was enraged by the tone and contents of the uncompromising reply of the Polish Government in the exchange of notes a few days ago in regard to the German protest over certain developments relating to matters in the city of Danzig.

My colleagues here are apparently in ignorance of what actually transpired in the course of the Ciano conversations and the results of the Burckhardt conference at Berchtesgaden have not yet been discussed but the impression prevails that whatever efforts Ciano may have made to modify Hitler's attitude have failed.

The report has even been repeated to the effect that although Ciano and Ribbentrop had agreed in writing upon certain bases of cooperation between Germany and Italy in case of eventualities with the oral stipulation by Ciano that the Danzig issue would not be precipitated, Hitler himself had rejected that stipulation and had declared that Danzig was Germany's affair.

There is no indication here to minimize the gravity of the present situation. The extent of the military preparedness is generally acknowledged and certain indications have lately been detected that a process of mobilization which would enable immediate military action is being effected without the actual publication of orders usually attending mobilization. The intent of Hitler is still unknown and some authentic account of the result of the Ciano visit as well as that of Csaky²⁸ who is reported to be again in Munich is awaited to throw some further light on this controlling factor. Certain of my colleagues however express the conviction that if the present momentum continues the Danzig issue may be precipitated within a brief delay

²⁸ Count Stephen de Csaky, Hungarian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

unless Hitler can be prevailed upon by some direct approach unattended by publicity to postpone action or is presented with some compromise as to Danzig before an act occurs which he will seize upon as a final provocation.

KIRK

760C.62/836 : Telegram

The Chargé in the United Kingdom (Johnson) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, August 16, 1939—6 p. m.
[Received August 16—2:45 p. m.]

1172. My 1146, August 9, 9 p. m.²⁹ Through the courtesy of the Foreign Office I was shown this afternoon a résumé of the conversation between Herr Hitler and Burckhardt as well as an instruction to the British Ambassador at Warsaw, both of which were telegraphed to the Ambassador last night. I understood that both texts have likewise been telegraphed to the British Ambassador at Washington for communication to you.³⁰ From the instruction to the British Ambassador at Warsaw will be seen the official British view of the present situation and the nature of the pressure which they are endeavoring to bring to bear on the Polish authorities.³¹ I also understand that the British Ambassador has been instructed to make clear to Colonel Beck the great importance which this Government attaches to a full and frank exchange of views and intentions before Poland takes the initiative in replying to various forms of German pressure by any act which could be represented in Germany as Polish aggression. The Foreign Office has been at pains through background press conferences to discuss current speculations that Dr. Burckhardt had acted as an agent in communicating messages to Hitler from the British Government or that he had conveyed any message to the British Government from Hitler.

Dr. Burckhardt, in whom Foreign Office officials express confidence, has given a clear-cut account of his interview with Hitler. Officials here however do not feel that it has thrown any additional light on what Hitler's real intentions are as to the issue of peace or war.

JOHNSON

²⁹ Not printed.

³⁰ Transmitted by the British Ambassador on August 15; not printed.

³¹ On August 21, 1939, the British Embassy informed the Department of State that the British Ambassador in Poland was authorized at his discretion to suggest to the Polish Foreign Minister that the Polish Government might convey in some way to the German Government its readiness to discuss the minority problem. The British Government was not, however, suggesting that the Polish Government should give anything away with regard to Danzig or otherwise compromise its position. (740.00/2114)

760C.62/824 : Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Bullitt)

WASHINGTON, August 16, 1939—6 p. m.

618. Your 1495, August 15, 6 p. m. With regard to the suggestion contained in the last paragraph of your telegram, if I felt that I could confidently make such a statement or that it would be transmitted accurately to the individual for whom it was intended, I would, of course, give it every favorable consideration. I fear, however, for several reasons that any such approach on my part would be futile.

Please continue to telegraph me as fully as you have been doing. Your telegraphic reports are invaluable.

WELLES

760C.62/850 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Poland (Biddle) to the Secretary of State

WARSAW, August 17, 1939—11 a. m.

[Received 1:35 p. m.]

180. For the President and the Secretary. Supplementing my No. 170, August 15, 12 noon.

1. Beck feels that while signs continue to indicate Hitler is still undecided as to definite plan of action he does not overlook disturbing implications of increase in pace of German mobilization and troop concentrations in East Prussia and in southeastern Germany. Besides his today's report from Berlin indicated increasing pessimism amongst diplomatic circles and throughout German community as whole. Accordingly Poland was immediately increasing extent of its mobilization and had already so notified London and Paris.

2. In that large scale troops concentrations in Breslau Oppeln District might conceivably indicate any one of several alternatives described my No. 141, July 10, 7 p. m.,³² paragraphs 1 and 2, and in view of disturbing implications of Csaki's second visit to Germany I am aware Beck is more than hitherto apprehensive over Hungary's and Slovakia's respective positions. (Beck and a number of his associates feel Poland could not look indifferently at the lengthening of Germany's front along Poland's southern frontier.)

3. Beck instructed Chodacki³³ to adopt as conciliatory an attitude as possible in his further conversations with Greiser.³⁴ Beck is calm

³² Not printed.³³ Marjan Chodacki, Polish Commissioner General at Danzig.³⁴ Arthur Greiser, President of the Danzig Senate, and Danzig Minister for Foreign Affairs.

and in good spirits and re-emphasized he and his Government would do all possible to contribute towards preventing a war.

BIDDLE

760C.62/858 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Italy (Phillips) to the Secretary of State

ROME, August 17, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received 6:30 p. m.]

316. My No. 315, August 17, 11 a. m.³⁵ Ciano had an informal talk at the beach yesterday with Soviet Chargé d'Affaires whom he had promised to see upon his return from Salzburg. He intimated that he was taking this informal opportunity to fulfill his promise as he was refusing for the moment to see other chiefs of mission because he "could not tell the truth" about the Salzburg meeting and "would not lie". He could, however, tell Helfand the following. He had left for Salzburg in an optimistic frame of mind and had returned pessimistic. In his conversations with Ribbentrop they had reviewed the international scene in general but during his two talks with Hitler latter had harped upon Danzig theme to exclusion of everything else. Hitler had been emphatic that Danzig question must be solved in very near future and gave the impression that he considered his prestige and that of the regime involved in the matter. To Ciano's surprise Hitler repeated to him in all seriousness the "Polish atrocity" stories that have been flooding the German press. Besides the two formal meetings Ciano went for a long walk with Hitler when as before Danzig was the main topic of conversation. As a result Ciano felt that unless direct conversations were opened between Germany and Poland seeking a solution compatible with dignity and prestige of both parties Hitler was likely to attempt a coup. Ciano thought that this could be accomplished without war in such a manner as to leave Poland faced with making the decision to attack Germany—a risk which Poland would not take. Furthermore Ciano said that Ribbentrop was keeping almost as much to himself these days as Hitler and he could not imagine how former kept himself in touch with reactions of other countries. Soviet Chargé is under impression that Ciano is considerably disquieted by his Salzburg experience and finds himself in an embarrassing position at the moment.

Ciano remarked to Chargé that he would make an exception in my case as well since he had also promised to receive me on his return from Salzburg. Ciano informed me today that he would communicate with me tomorrow.³⁶ He leaves for Albania on Saturday. Although no more precise information is obtainable here as yet with regard to

³⁵ Not printed.

³⁶ See telegram No. 322, August 22, 8 p. m., from the Ambassador in Italy, p. 305.

the Salzburg meeting Ciano's very definite determination to avoid receiving chiefs of mission confirms my belief that Europe is now approaching a very critical situation.

PHILLIPS

740.00/2068 : Telegram

*The Chargé in the United Kingdom (Johnson) to the Secretary
of State*

LONDON, August 17, 1939—10 p. m.

[Received August 17—8:59 p. m.]

1183. I understand that the Foreign Office gave out this afternoon to press correspondents a statement which is to be attributed to "Whitehall" to the effect that Great Britain will not participate in any international conference for settlement of existing European difficulties unless Russia and Poland are included. This statement probably owes its inspiration to rumors that a four-power conference is being worked up by the Axis powers and is an indication that the military conversations at Moscow are getting along.

I had a talk this afternoon with Sir Alexander Cadogan on the general European situation. He says that the Government here simply has no information on which to base a calculation as to where the present crisis is heading. They have good reason to believe that Mussolini is making real efforts to bring Hitler to moderation but have no indication as to the effect on Hitler. Best-informed opinion, Cadogan said, believes that if there is to be a war the turning point will be either on the anniversary of the battle of Tannenberg at the end of this month or at the annual Nuremberg Congress on September 3. Whether or not a war results they believe that the crisis will certainly reach its climax at that time. They have no information as to the substance or results of the conversations at Salzburg between Ribbentrop and Ciano nor have they any reliable information which would lend color to speculative reports that Hitler is using the Danzig issue as a feint to conceal intentions for a surprise attack in the direction of Hungary and Rumania. Cadogan said that yesterday he told the Rumanian Minister, who was nervous, that British secret reports of the movements and disposition of German military forces do not indicate that there is any immediate military move contemplated in that direction; however with 2,000,000 Germans under arms it would be folly to proceed on the assumption that they could not be switched to any objective. The Government here is convinced apparently that Mussolini does not want a war and that Hitler probably does not want one, but what worries them is what Hitler can do if he does not go to war as they see no alternative open to him except one of receding from what he has declared to be unalterable objectives. The Under

Secretary again emphasized to me what he has several times said before, that the British Government is making no proposals to Hitler and that no unofficial communications are being exchanged.

The position of the service departments is that they are "standing by" in readiness for action on the basis of a war being possible at any moment. Many of the top men are out of London on holiday but in a position to return on a few hours' notice. Most of the leading political personalities are also away but in constant touch with their offices. The Prime Minister, however, is returning to London on Monday and there will be a Cabinet meeting on Tuesday. The Prime Minister may then resume his holiday, depending on the situation at the time.

As indicated in recent instructions sent to the British Ambassador in Warsaw (my 1172, August 16, 6 p. m.) every effort is being made to keep the Poles in line and the Under Secretary said that they are particularly emphasizing to Colonel Beck the absolute necessity for prior consultation with the British Government before Poland commits herself to any action. He said incidentally that he thought that, considering everything, Beck and the Poles had behaved extremely well.

From my own conversations with British officials, well-informed diplomatic colleagues and others, I am convinced that what Cadogan has said to me represents the consensus of sober and informed opinion. Press correspondents uniformly express the opinion that they are up against a "stone wall." Many of these men are extremely active and ordinarily well-informed. After reciting the obvious dangers of the present emotional and physical set-up, with nearly 2,000,000 men under arms in Germany, they are unwilling in private conversation to speculate on what is going to happen. This has not, however, prevented the London press in the past fortnight from giving vent to every sort of rumor as to German and Italian intentions. Many of these articles have been wrong on facts and indicate a tendency to speculation which outrides the real opinion of the writers. Cadogan spoke today of press reports that Mussolini and Hitler had made an approach to the Vatican, and said that the British Minister to the Holy See received yesterday a categorical denial from the Vatican itself that any such approach had been made.

In connection with the Salzburg conversations between Ciano and Ribbentrop, I have received in confidence from an entirely reliable non-British and unofficial source the following account of a conversation with a member of the German Embassy here. The German said that he and his colleagues in London were almost as much befogged over the Salzburg talks as the representatives of other nations. They had not been given any precise details of the proceedings in question nor the conclusions reached. All they had here were a few

hints over the telephone of the general trend of the conversations. These were roughly to the following effect: Mussolini wants a general negotiation between the Axis and the democracies and wants it quickly, for Italy can get nothing for herself out of either a Danzig agreement or a Danzig row. Hitler also would like a general negotiation but realizes that it might require months, indeed probably a year, to hammer out a general European settlement. The solution of the Danzig question however cannot be held up that long. Hitler, when he meets the Nuremberg Congress, holds that he must be in a position to make an impressive announcement about a Danzig solution in the German sense. This need not involve a detailed agreement but an agreement on main principles. The outstanding principle is that, with whatever practical restrictions in the direction of international guarantees and safeguards for Polish interests and rights, the return of Danzig to German sovereignty must be conceded by Poland; for if Hitler would prefer a solution of the Danzig problem by negotiation to a solution by force, he considers that the negotiation should be with Poland and not with the Western powers, which are not entitled to any say in the matter beyond the good advice they should hand out to the Poles to restrain themselves and to agree.

Whether the ultimate source of this information can be relied upon may be open to question. The statement however seems to me of interest when read in conjunction with the account sent to the British Government by Dr. Burckhardt, the League Commissioner at Danzig, of his conversation with Hitler. The Department will by now doubtless have received from the British Ambassador a copy of a telegram from the Foreign Office giving the gist of Dr. Burckhardt's report.³⁷ Cadogan mentioned this report and the subsequent telegram of instruction that they had sent to the British Ambassador at Washington likewise repeated to Washington, and said that there was really little of substance that could be added to the statement made in the telegram to Ambassador Kennedy.

JOHNSON

760C.62/892

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Chief of the Division of
European Affairs (Moffat)*

[WASHINGTON,] August 18, 1939.

The Polish Ambassador called this morning. He had little to offer other than to reiterate the belief of his Government that German

³⁷ Transmitted to the Department by the British Ambassador, August 15; see telegram No. 1172, August 16, 6 p. m., from the Chargé in the United Kingdom, p. 219.

strength was overrated. I remarked that the situation worried me as the points of view of Germany and Poland were so clearcut that no compromise seemed possible, and that it was difficult to see either side backing down. The Ambassador said that of course Poland would never back down, but that he did not exclude the possibility of Hitler's weakening.

He said that the German Army was not the army of 1914. The officers had insufficient training and had not been allowed to remain long enough with the same units of troops. The best generals had been liquidated, and the remaining generals were merely "party hacks"!! The German people did not want to fight, and it would be suicidal to start a war when conditions were already so bad that people were being rationed as to foodstuffs. Furthermore, Germany was burdened with an ally which was scared and whose soldiers would "run like rabbits".

The whole conversation represented a point of view of unreasoning optimism and still more unreasoning underrating of one's opponent that, if typical of Polish mentality in general, causes me to feel considerable foreboding.

PIERREPONT MOFFAT

760C.62/871 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, August 18, 1939—8 p. m.
[Received August 18—6:03 p. m.]

1521. Daladier said to me today that when Bonnet had reported to him the reaction of the Polish Ambassador in Paris to the proposal of the Soviet Government for bringing aid to Poland in case of a German attack on Poland he had been shocked and angered by the violence of the Polish Ambassador's negative reaction.

Before Bonnet had spoken to Lukasiewicz he had advised Bonnet not to take the matter up with him but to have it taken up with Smigly-Rydz by the French Military Attaché in Warsaw. He had now sent the French Military Attaché to talk to Smigly-Rydz about the proposal. He considered it utter folly for the Poles to turn down a Russian proposal for genuine military assistance. He understood the reluctance of the Poles to have the Red Army enter the territory of Poland but as soon as Poland should have been invaded by the German armies the Polish Government certainly would be glad to take assistance from anyone who could bring assistance.

He would be glad to send two French divisions to Poland and he was certain that he could get a British division as well for Poland so that the support would be not exclusively Russian but international.

Moreover he could get the most absolute guarantees from the Soviet Government for the eventual evacuation of Polish territory and France and Great Britain would give absolute guarantees of those guarantees.

Voroshilov had struck the heart of the question when he had said to the British and French negotiators that the Soviet Army was ready to march against Germany but that the only practical lines of passage were by way of Vilna against East Prussia and by way of Lwow (Lemberg) to the south.

The Soviet Government would not send airplanes and tanks unaccompanied by other troops to the assistance of Poland. He, Daladier, considered that the Soviet position was reasonable. An army without airplanes was blind and without tanks was relatively disarmed. Daladier concluded by saying that if the Poles should reject this offer of Russian assistance he would not send a single French peasant to fight in defense of Poland.

I take this statement seriously but not too seriously although he repeated it three times. He was angry at the Polish Ambassador in Paris and inclined to overstate.

BULLITT

760C.62/872 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, August 19, 1939—noon.
[Received August 19—9:30 a. m.]

1525. Kirk has sent me by hand the following message for immediate transmission to you:

There is sufficient evidence to support a suspicion that in spite of the assurances which have been given and the declarations which have already been made Hitler is not convinced that in the event of the use of force by Germany against Poland or its vital interests England and France will align themselves on the side of Poland regardless of the interpretation which may at the last moment be offered as to the blame for the acts of provocation or aggression as a consequence of which the issue may be precipitated. The isolation in which Hitler is alleged to be enclosed and the influences which are said to surround him are offered as explanations of this suspicion.

I have reason to believe that a project may be under consideration to convey to Hitler immediately possibly in the form of a personal letter signed by the most authoritative spokesmen of the British Government and of the French Government, a solemn statement of the firm position of both Governments and especially that of Great Britain in the face of the existing threat to world peace. In order to reduce the possibility that such a declaration might spur Hitler to immediate action the suggestion has been made that primarily the conveyance

thereof and all circumstances connected therewith be maintained in the utmost secrecy, that it be couched in terms devoid of all prejudice and argumentation, that it omit any reference to a settlement of the controversies at issue which might be seized upon by Hitler as a sign of weakening in the British and French positions but that it contain a statement to the effect that the Polish Government is being urged to refrain from any acts which might be regarded in the light of provocation.

Copies of these letters would be delivered simultaneously to Mussolini not only for the purpose of acquainting him with the contents thereof but also in order to furnish an added safeguard against a possible failure of their reaching Hitler.

My own knowledge as to the foregoing is limited. I feel, however, that I would be derelict in my duty if I did not submit a suggestion that the President may wish to weigh the wisdom of such an effort to dispel all possibility of doubt in Hitler's mind as to the magnitude of the consequences which would ensue from acts of force which he may be contemplating and that if it meets with the President's favor he may care to take at once such steps [as] may be advisable always without endangering the [secrecy?] with which it is absolutely essential to surround such a message to Hitler in order to convey to the heads of the British and French Governments his views in support thereof.

BULLITT

760C.62/885 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, August 19, 1939—1 p. m.

[Received August 19—11 a. m.]

1526. Kirk requests me to transmit to you a message in the following sense:

More evidence has come to his attention indicating that Hitler is not convinced that England and France will fight in case Germany becomes involved in war with Poland.

He has positive information that on the 15th Weizsaecker³⁸ asked both the French and British Ambassadors whether or not England and France would give military aid to Poland if Germany should be compelled to go to war against Poland as a result of Polish provocation. The French Ambassador made a very strong statement in reply pointing out that French opinion had reacted abruptly after the German occupation of Prague, that aggression against Poland by Germany would be considered a threat to the safety of France and that France would march at once in support of Poland. The British Ambassador made a less direct and less categorical answer.

³⁸ Baron Ernst von Weizsaecker, State Secretary in the German Foreign Office.

Kirk comments that Weizsaecker's questions indicate doubt as to the attitude that England and France would take and also a recognition of the importance of the attitude of England and France.

BULLITT

760C.62/873 : Telegram

The Chargé in the United Kingdom (Johnson) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, August 19, 1939—2 p. m.

[Received August 19—9:25 a. m.]

1197. Personal for the Acting Secretary. The following information has I know been telegraphed to Sir Roland Lindsay³⁹ and may be known to you. It seems to me however too important to take any chance.

Pressed by the British Ambassador at Berlin to make Great Britain's determination clear to Mussolini, the Italian Ambassador there, who is shortly to see Mussolini, emphasized (a) that Italy is bound hand and foot to Germany; (b) the position of both sides being clear, the British and Italian Governments must work together for peace; (c) Great Britain must realize that Hitler is not to be intimidated by the peace front. He feels humiliated by having to watch its negotiations and would not wait indefinitely. The Italian Ambassador further asked, speaking privately, whether if approached by Mussolini the Prime Minister would feel able to make a move in conjunction with him.

Lord Halifax is returning to London on Monday and I have an appointment to see him.

JOHNSON

760C.62/886 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, August 19, 1939—3 p. m.

[Received August 19—11:08 a. m.]

1529. My No. 1526, August 19, 1 p. m. The British Chargé d'Affaires in Paris called on me this morning and stated that he was familiar with the questions which Weizsaecker had put to Henderson, British Ambassador in Berlin and Coulondre, French Ambassador in Berlin.

He said that he had received this morning Henderson's account of this conversation.⁴⁰

³⁹ British Ambassador in the United States.

⁴⁰ British Cmd. 6106, Misc. No. 9 (1939), doc. No. 48, p. 88.

Henderson had stated flatly to Weizsaecker that he hoped there was no doubt in the mind of the German Government with regard to the support that Great Britain would give the Government of Poland in case of war between Germany and Poland. Great Britain would make war at once to support Poland.

Weizsaecker had replied that in view of Polish provocation toward Germany he felt that Great Britain was completely absolved of all obligations to Poland and trusted that Great Britain did not intend to go to war in support of a lunatic nation—meaning Poland.

BULLITT

760C.62/883 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Italy (Phillips) to the Secretary of State

ROME, August 19, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received 5 : 50 p. m.]

318. The British Ambassador succeeded in having an interview with Ciano on Thursday and read to me this morning the report of it which he had sent to London yesterday and which he is showing to no one else. His statement to Ciano was a recital of the British position vis-à-vis Poland and Danzig and a solemn warning of his Government's preparedness in the event of an aggressive step being taken which involved the independence of Poland. He referred to the wrongful assumption of the Axis press that Great Britain was encouraging Poland in her present position. Ciano remarked that the Poles should be more reasonable and realistic rather than risk the destruction of their country. Loraine replied to the effect that there are some things more precious than peace at any price as Italian history had so often shown. He informed Ciano that his Government stood ready to confer with the Italian Government at any moment that that Government desired to cooperate in the cause of peace. He said he wished me to treat this in absolute confidence.

This oral communication must have impressed Ciano as it impressed me.

The Ambassador mentioned to me the recent visit to London of a group of German military officers who had been shown everything in connection with British preparedness. They admitted their astonishment to British officials and said that Berlin had no conception of its magnitude. They said that the reports of German agents in England with regard to such matters were apt to become buried in Nazi Party headquarters and not reach the general staff.

While it is impossible to obtain any accurate information on day by day developments here my belief is that Ciano had an exceedingly "rough deal" in his contacts in Salzburg but did not convey any

approval on the part of Italy of a German move in Danzig. Rather he must have urged caution. Mussolini's position in this respect is of the highest importance and Hitler may well refrain from any act endangering war without some sort of assurance of Italian cooperation.

Count Csaky, Hungarian Foreign Minister, left Rome this morning it is said for northern Italy and will return here on Monday. His movements indicate his deep concern over the general situation and the importance which he attaches to Mussolini's intentions.

Ciano has already left for Albania on what has been publicly described as a "tour of inspection" but which leaves one guessing as to its real import. He will probably receive me on his return and should the Department have any suggestions as to how I might at this juncture express our concern I should be grateful for instructions.⁴¹

PHILLIPS

760C.62/906 : Telegram

The Chargé in the United Kingdom (Johnson) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, August 21, 1939—9 p. m.
[Received August 21—7: 55 p. m.]

1204. My 1197, August 19, 2 p. m. and 1183, August 17, 10 p. m. Lord Halifax told me this afternoon that Sir Percy Loraine saw Ciano on Saturday and indicated that if Signor Mussolini should make an approach to the Prime Minister for a joint move, the proposal would be received sympathetically. Nothing further has been heard, however, from that end. Lord Halifax said that he is making every possible endeavor to impress on both Mussolini and Hitler exactly where Great Britain stands in the present crisis. On Saturday night he sent through the British Ambassador at Rome a very confidential message to Mussolini, with instructions to the Ambassador to assure himself that the message was conveyed to Mussolini in its entirety. Lord Halifax expressed to Mussolini the extremely grave view which he felt compelled to take of the present situation and, after pointing out that in his opinion there was no reason why the differences between Germany and Poland could not be settled directly between themselves by those countries on a peaceful basis, he said that if a situation should arise in which Poland felt compelled to defend herself by force of arms, the full resources of both Great Britain and France would be behind her. The result could only be a general conflagration of appalling proportions and Signor Mussolini should be under no illu-

⁴¹ Marginal notation: "Mr. Welles said that for the moment at least there was nothing that Mr. Phillips could usefully say. P[ierrepoint] M[offat]."

sion that in these circumstances the war would be a short one ending merely in the crushing of Poland. He spoke of the old friendship between Great Britain and Italy and said that he felt that he should let Signor Mussolini know exactly where Great Britain stands. He then referred to various reports of a possible international conference and pointed out to Signor Mussolini that Great Britain had no objections in principle to a general conference but that a conference to settle the issue between Germany and Poland could not be thought of without the participation of Poland nor, under present circumstances, without the participation of Russia also. If such a conference could be brought about he suggested that perhaps Signor Mussolini might even have other consultations to suggest. He pointed out, however, that the principal difficulty in arriving at a general settlement would be the lack of any confidence in the faithful fulfillment and implementation of what might be agreed upon and expressed his doubt that at the present moment any useful results could come from a general conference. The message ended with a further reference to the old friendship between Great Britain and Italy and a warning that they would undoubtedly be aligned against each other if a war should break out as a result of German aggression on Poland and Germany were supported by Italy.

Lord Halifax does not know whether this message to the Duce will do any good or not, but it can certainly do no harm and at least it puts clearly to Mussolini exactly what to expect from Great Britain in the event of a German attack on Poland which receives Italian support. Although everything possible has been done to impress on both Hitler and Mussolini Great Britain's determination to stand by her pledges to Poland, Lord Halifax said that he is not even yet fully convinced that Hitler and his entourage really believe this. He expects to send a further message directly to Hitler in plain terms and somewhat along the line of the one to Mussolini.

As to what exactly Hitler has in mind there is no real indication. The Foreign Office, Lord Halifax said, had just received, however, information from several sources indicating that Hitler will push matters to an issue with Poland sometime between the 24th and 28th of August. He attaches no particular importance to these dates as such, but the information, even though circumstantial, points to Hitler's having made up his mind for a showdown with Poland even if it means war. He said that he knew it to be a fact that Mussolini is making a very great effort to restrain Hitler from taking any irremediable action and he told me of a report received this morning from the British Ambassador at Rome in which the Ambassador spoke of a meeting he knew to have taken place between the King, Mussolini, Badoglio, Starace and other high Fascists. The King and

the Fascist leaders expressed themselves strongly against war, and even Ciano is backing down in the face of a war in which Great Britain would be aligned against Italy.

The opinion of these leaders is reported to be that Italy is neither from a military nor an economic point of view able to go to war and all their influence is being forced in this sense on Mussolini; for a number of reasons this is a complete reversal of their position. Moreover the rank and file of the Fascist Party itself is reported to be against war, not to speak of the widespread unpopularity in Italy generally of the German alliance.

Lord Halifax said that in his personal view there is no question whatever as to where the people of Great Britain now stand. Their mind is made up and if Hitler wants a war he will "damned well have it"; Hitler has simply "got to be stopped". He told me confidentially that the Prime Minister would probably summon Parliament this week. This action is to be taken not because of any absolute certainty as to war but simply as a matter of political strategy both internally and externally. The Government likewise now has under consideration a message to the Pope which Lord Halifax says will shortly be sent asking His Holiness to hold himself ready for a peace move. Lord Halifax did not go into any detail as to what exactly is contemplated in this communication.

JOHNSON

VI. ANGLO-FRENCH-SOVIET NEGOTIATIONS ATTEMPTING TO REACH AN AGREEMENT AGAINST AGGRESSION

740.00/832: Telegram

The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, April 15, 1939—6 p. m.
[Received April 15—3:25 p. m.]

182. I am informed that the British Ambassador saw Litvinov⁴² this afternoon at 3:00 o'clock and under instructions from his Government made a proposal along the following lines:

The British Government had taken due note of the statement in Stalin's recent speech at the Party Congress to the effect that the Soviet Government stood for the support of states, victims of aggressors, who were struggling for their independence (see my telegram No. 94 [99], March 11, 4 p. m.⁴³). In view of the similarity between this statement and the views recently expressed by the French and

⁴² Maxim Maximovich Litvinov, People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union.

⁴³ *Foreign Relations, The Soviet Union, 1933-1939*, p. 739.

British Governments, the British Government suggested that the Soviet Government on its own initiative issue a public declaration which after referring to the above statement of Stalin and to the French and British views should announce that in conformity with the principle expressed therein, if a country neighbor to the Soviet Union became the victim of aggression and was fighting for its independence the Soviet Government would come to the support of those countries if so desired and in such form as might be suitable.

The Soviet Government has not yet replied to this proposal.

I am further informed that the Soviet Ambassador in London⁴⁴ is to proceed to Moscow for consultation.

The above information has been furnished by the British Embassy with the request that it be held in strictest confidence.

KIRK

740.00/821 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

[Extract]

PARIS, April 15, 1939—7 p. m.

[Received April 15—5:15 p. m.]

749. I discussed the present political situation at length with Bonnet⁴⁵ today.

He said that yesterday, officially on behalf of the French Government he had asked the Soviet Ambassador in Paris⁴⁶ to request his Government to offer immediately a unilateral guarantee to Rumania in case of German aggression against Rumania. At the same time he had added that if the Soviet Union should be ready to enter into an agreement with France for immediate assistance in case of war similar to the Anglo-Polish agreement⁴⁷ the French Government would be prepared to enter into such an agreement with the Soviet Union. Bonnet added that Great Britain yesterday had made a similar proposal to the Soviet Union.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Ivan Mikhailovich Maisky.

⁴⁵ Georges Bonnet, French Minister for Foreign Affairs.

⁴⁶ Yakov Zakharovich Suritz.

⁴⁷ The British Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, made a statement on March 31, 1939, in the House of Commons announcing unilateral assurance to Poland. He added that the French Government had authorized him to state that it stood "in the same position in this matter" as the British Government. An Anglo-Polish communiqué of April 6, 1939, made the assurance reciprocal. The permanent agreement of mutual assistance was signed at London on August 25, 1939. British Cmd. 6106, Misc. No. 9 (1939): *Documents Concerning German-Polish Relations and the Outbreak of Hostilities between Great Britain and Germany on September 3, 1939*, doc. Nos. 17, 18, and 19, pp. 36-39.

⁴⁸ For British proposal, see telegram No. 182, April 15, 6 p. m., from the Chargé in the Soviet Union, *supra*.

Bonnet said that negotiations with Turkey had proceeded in the most satisfactory possible manner. The Turks had replied like courageous gentlemen. They were prepared immediately to enter into agreements with France and England for automatic mutual assistance similar to the Anglo-Polish agreement and in addition were contemplating giving a unilateral guarantee to Rumania and Greece.

Bonnet said that the new Spanish Ambassador Lequerica had reviewed the general situation with him yesterday.

BULLITT

740.00/934 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Belgium (Davies) to the Secretary of State

BRUSSELS, April 18, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received April 18—1:55 p. m.]

47. For the President and the Secretary of State. I am convinced that the decisive factor in Hitler's determination will be whether or not Russia will support Britain and France wholeheartedly. From personal knowledge I know that the Soviets did mistrust Britain and France, both their purposes and their performances. They do trust you. They also believe in me. I am impelled therefore to suggest that if you considered it advisable I could go to Moscow on the pretext of cleaning up personal affairs for a few days⁴⁹ (if that pretext is advisable) and can personally and if need be unofficially see Litvinov, Kalinin,⁵⁰ Molotov⁵¹ and, I am quite sure, Stalin⁵² also with the object of aiding in securing a quick and speedy agreement with Britain against aggression. Neither the French nor the British in my opinion can personally reach the highest authorities there in the negotiations there pending. I am confident that I not only can see the proper people otherwise unreachable but that they have confidence in my good judgment and sincerity. In my judgment Hitler will not fight now if he is confronted with two military fronts. I believe that I could help without commitments in either turning the scales in the Russian decision or aid in strengthening it and thus in a small way help in implementing your great effort for world peace.

⁴⁹ Joseph E. Davies was Ambassador to the Soviet Union, 1936-38.

⁵⁰ Mikhail Ivanovich Kalinin, Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the Soviet Union.

⁵¹ Vyacheslav Mikhailovich Molotov, Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the Soviet Union, and People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs after May 3, 1939.

⁵² Iosif Vissarionovich Stalin, Secretary General of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks); member of the Politburo and Orgburo of the Party, etc.

It may be that from your wider information such action is unnecessary or inadvisable. You know I am sure that my sole purpose is to help. Speed is vital.

DAVIES

740.00/948 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, April 18, 1939—7 p. m.
[Received April 18—2:26 p. m.]

514. My 504, April 17, 9 p. m.⁵³ Following strictly confidential information communicated by the Foreign Office.

The Soviet Government has now presented to the British and French Governments the following proposals which it states are a combination of the British suggestion for a unilateral Soviet declaration and French suggestion for bilateral declarations.

1. An agreement is proposed between Great Britain, France and Russia to run from 5 to 10 years to render all manner of assistance including military in case of aggression in Europe against any one of those powers.

2. The same undertaking on the part of the three countries to render assistance to Eastern European states between the Baltic and the Black Sea and bordering on Soviet Russia in case of aggression against those countries.

3. To undertake to discuss and settle in the shortest possible space of time the extent and forms of military assistance which would be required if (1) and (2) were accepted.

4. England to make an explanation that the assistance she is to give to Poland in the event of an attack against that country applies only against Germany. The Soviet Government apparently thinks that there is one ambiguity in the British commitment and that in some quarters the Soviet Republic thought that her guarantee extended also to aggression against Poland by Soviet Russia.

5. The Polish-Rumanian treaty⁵⁴ to be declared operative in all cases of aggression from any quarter or revoked as directed solely against Soviet Russia.

6. The three countries to make an agreement that they will negotiate no separate peace with a joint enemy.

7. An agreement to be signed to this effect simultaneously with the agreements envisaged under (3) above.

⁵³ Not printed.

⁵⁴ Treaty of guarantee, signed January 15, 1931, League of Nations Treaty Series, vol. cxv, p. 171.

8. To recognize the necessity for joint negotiations with Turkey because of the possibility that the Turkish Government might wish to confine its liabilities to the Balkan and Mediterranean areas.

It will be seen that the foregoing proposals are very far reaching and there is no indication as yet of the British reaction.

KENNEDY

740.00/934 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Belgium (Davies)

WASHINGTON, April 18, 1939—7 p. m.

18. Personal for the Ambassador. The President and I sincerely appreciate your suggestion and offer to be helpful in the present situation. We both feel you will understand, however, that from a domestic point of view such a visit, however carefully prepared, might be misconstrued. During these days when our neutrality legislation is being considered by the Congress, it is more than ever important not to run any risk.

HULL

740.00/946 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, April 18, 1939—8 p. m.

[Received April 18—5:07 p. m.]

775. I asked Léger⁵⁵ today if Gafencu⁵⁶ had proposed to Beck⁵⁷ an alliance between Rumania and Poland directed against Germany. He replied that Gafencu had made this proposal and had made it in the form which seemed most easy of acceptance by Poland. He had suggested that since Poland and Rumania already had an alliance which was general in terms, but the additional military clauses of which indicated that it was to be operative only against the Soviet Union, no new alliance should be concluded, but there should simply be an exchange of notes between the Polish and Rumanian Governments, stating that this alliance was to apply against attack by Germany.

Léger stated that Beck had refused this proposal and said that he desired to negotiate a new alliance directed against Germany provided the Rumanians would give certain concessions to the Hun-

⁵⁵ Alexis Léger, Secretary General of the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

⁵⁶ Grigore Gafencu, Rumanian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

⁵⁷ Józef Beck, Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs.

garians with regard to the rights of the Hungarian minority in Transylvania.

Léger went on to say that he considered that this meant that Beck was attempting once again to escape from making an alliance with Rumania and that he would take any good opportunity to avoid concluding this alliance.

Léger then stated that the British yesterday had made a most terrible diplomatic blunder. The French Government had proposed to the Soviet Union that if France should become involved in war because of a German attack on Rumania the Soviet Union should give immediately all possible assistance to France—it being clearly understood though not stated that this assistance would in reality be given in the form of military support of Rumania. The French had taken this form of approach to the question because of their desire not to give the Rumanians or Poles any excuse to say that France was arranging for the Red Army to walk into Rumania or Poland.

The British yesterday without consulting the French had proposed to the Soviet Government that Stalin should make a public statement to the effect that if either Poland or Rumania should be invaded by German troops and if either Poland or Rumania should ask for help from the Soviet Union that help would be accorded at once.

Phipps⁵⁸ had informed Bonnet of this British move last night. Bonnet had expressed his horror and had predicted that such a statement by Stalin might give Beck an excellent excuse to refuse to include [*conclude?*] the alliance between Poland and Rumania. The British Ambassador had replied that this might be the case; but that it was too late to withdraw the proposal which had been made by Halifax⁵⁹ to Maisky and was to be repeated by the British Ambassador in Moscow⁶⁰ to Litvinov. He had insisted that the French Envoy⁶¹ in the name of French-British solidarity should be instructed to go with the British Ambassador to make this *démarche* in Moscow. Bonnet weakly had consented.

Léger said that it seemed to be too late to do anything to avoid the consequences of this blunder; but intimated that he would make last minute efforts to hold up any such declaration by Stalin until after the conclusion of Polish-Rumanian alliance.

I asked Léger if he felt certain that Stalin would agree to make such a statement and he replied that the British Government was confident that Stalin would agree.

BULLITT

⁵⁸ Sir Eric Phipps, British Ambassador in France.

⁵⁹ Viscount Halifax, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

⁶⁰ Sir William Seeds, British Ambassador in the Soviet Union.

⁶¹ Paul Emile Naggiar, French Ambassador in the Soviet Union.

740.00/1001 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, April 19, 1939—11 p. m.
[Received April 20—9:45 a. m.]

784. Bonnet and Léger both said to me this evening that they were engaged in thanking God that Stalin had refused to make the public statement with regard to Poland and Rumania which the British Government had asked him to make.

Stalin had suggested instead that Great Britain and the Soviet Union and France and the Soviet Union should conclude accords for immediate military support in case of aggression similar to the pact recently concluded between Great Britain and Poland.

Both Bonnet and Léger said that they believed such pacts should be concluded at once provided the Soviet Union should indicate that it was ready to support Rumania in case of German attack.

Both Bonnet and Léger said to me that they were doing everything possible to bring about the alliance against Germany between Poland and Rumania before Hitler's speech. They feared however that Beck would delay the conclusion of this alliance.

I had a long talk with the Yugoslav Minister today who said that his Government did not expect any immediate German or Italian attack. He added that the position of Yugoslavia in any war would be determined solely by the control of the Mediterranean. If the British and French should be able to wipe out the Italian fleet and control the Mediterranean he would guarantee that his country would be in war on the side of France and England within 60 days. If on the other hand the Italians should control the Mediterranean and it should be impossible for supplies from England, France or the Soviet Union to reach Yugoslavia it would be impossible for Yugoslavia to do anything but remain neutral.

I discussed the position of Yugoslavia with Léger this evening and he entirely agreed with this diagnosis. He added, however, that the Rumanians felt that a German attack on them would not come by way of Hungary which at the moment was prepared to resist the transit of German troops; but would come by way of Yugoslavia which was in a state of such emotional uncertainty that there might be no resistance to the passage of German troops.

Léger went on to say that he was certain that in spite of German threats to Poland the only country which was most menaced today by Germany was Rumania. The Germans had their eyes on the Rumanian oil fields. If the Rumanians had taken a decisive anti-German line Hitler already would have attacked Rumania by one route or another. King Carol was playing an extremely clever game. He was

being very polite to the Germans and had convinced them that they might be able to obtain Rumania's support with Rumania's consent. The reality was that the King knew perfectly well that he was fighting for his own existence and the existence of his dynasty and although he would be very polite to the Germans so long as it was clearly understood he would never go over to their side.

BULLITT

740.00/1068 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, April 21, 1939—2 p. m.

[Received 3:02 p. m.]

798. Both Bonnet and Léger have informed me that the French Government received last night the counterproposal of the Soviet Government to the mutual proposals of the French and British Governments.

The Soviet Government has proposed to France and England that the three countries should guarantee not only to fight at once in case of a direct attack on any one of the three, but also that all three countries should guarantee to go to war at once in case of an aggression against any other country in Europe.

Both Bonnet and Léger said that they felt the acceptance of a proposal of this sort would place the present negotiations for mutual defense on an unreal "League of Nations" basis. Guarantees especially of this kind would not carry conviction. For example, it would be totally impossible in their opinion to get French soldiers to march in case of a German attack on Estonia unless such an attack should first involve Poland. A French guarantee of military aid in case of a German attack on Estonia would be therefore in the opinion of every one in Europe a fictitious promise that the French people would not support with arms.

Both Bonnet and Léger said that after studying the Soviet note today they would prepare, in close collaboration with the British Government, a counterproposal in which they would suggest a formula by which it could be understood but not stated specifically that if either France, Great Britain, or the Soviet Union should be drawn into war with Germany because of its obligations to support another European state, the other partner to the agreement should give immediate military assistance.

In other words the guarantees would be between France and the Soviet Union and Great Britain and the Soviet Union but they would cover Rumania without mentioning Rumania.

Both Bonnet and Léger said that they did not believe that the Soviet reply indicated a desire to escape from making any commitments. The formula might be hard to find but they were confident that it would be found.

Incidentally I dined last night with Léger and Vansittart⁶² who returned to London today after comparing agreement with Léger on the subject of relations with the Soviet Union. I gathered from Vansittart that his relations with Halifax have now become very close but that his relations with Chamberlain are as distant as ever. He is violently in favor of immediate conscription.

BULLITT

740.00/1087: Telegram

The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, April 22, 1939—10 a. m.

[Received April 22—5:35 a. m.]

202. My telegram No. 198, April 20, 10 [11] a. m.⁶³ The British Embassy here states that the conversations with Litvinov are proceeding satisfactorily and that the Soviet Union has manifested an attitude of sensational cooperation with France and England. Although exact details of the discussions are still unavailable it is stated that the unilateral basis for a Soviet declaration embodied in the original British proposal has been abandoned and that other measures concerning possible Soviet association with the position adopted by England and France are now being discussed. It is again affirmed that the technical matters of Soviet military assistance are not a part of the present British-Soviet conversations in Moscow and that the question of the Far East has not been raised by either side.

The Soviet Ambassador to London arrived in Moscow yesterday (see my telegram No. 182, April 15, 6 p. m.).

KIRK

740.00/1111: Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, April 24, 1939—2 p. m.

[Received 3:08 p. m.]

810. Bonnet said to me this morning that he would send for the Soviet Ambassador Suritz today or tomorrow to give him the reply of the French Government to the Soviet proposals.

⁶² Sir Robert Gilbert Vansittart, chief diplomatic adviser, British Foreign Office.

⁶³ Not printed.

Bonnet said that the Soviet Government had proposed not only a guarantee for all the states bordering on the Soviet Union, but also had insisted that Poland and Rumania should denounce their treaty of mutual assistance directed against the Soviet Union. Bonnet added that both the Poles and Rumanians were familiar with this, the Soviet proposal, and both had stated that they resented it intensely; that they would not give up their pact of mutual assistance against the Soviet Union and that they considered making them [*sic*] proposal to bring to absolute failure the efforts of the French and British to provide support for Poland and Rumania.

Bonnet said that he would propose to the Soviet Ambassador the compromise formula that if France should be drawn into war because of her promises to protect Poland and Rumania against German aggression, the Soviet Union should bring all military support possible to the assistance of France, and that conversations between the French, Soviet General Staffs should take place at once.

Conversely the French Government would agree that, in case the Soviet Union should become involved in war arising from German aggression on either Poland or Rumania, the French Government would bring immediate military assistance to the Soviet Government.

Bonnet said that the Rumanians and the Poles were familiar with this French proposal and heartily approved it. He added that in his opinion this was the only form of proposal which could be acceptable to Poland and Rumania and that he intended to stick to it.

He said that Maisky, Soviet Ambassador in London, would take up the same question with Halifax and stated that he believed that Halifax would make proposals on behalf of England on all fours with the proposals which would be made on behalf of France.

BULLITT

740.00/1154 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, April 25, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received April 25—3 : 05 p. m.]

818. I asked Léger today for information with regard to the present status of the negotiations between France and the Soviet Union and Great Britain and the Soviet Union.

Léger said that the British yesterday had sent urgent instructions to the British Ambassador to Moscow ordering him to ask the Soviet Government immediately to issue a guarantee of Rumania and Po-

land on all fours with the British guarantees to Rumania⁶⁴ and Poland. After sending this instruction the British Government asked the French Government to send a similar instruction to the French Ambassador in Moscow.

The French Government replied to the British that it considered this new British *démarche* extremely stupid and refused to order the French Ambassador in Moscow to join his British colleague in the *démarche*.

Léger added that if the Soviet Government should issue the statement requested by the British, the only result would be to enrage the Poles and to make the Rumanians apprehensive of an immediate German attack.

The French Government proposed to the British Government, as an alternative, that the Soviet Union should be requested to guarantee to give support to France and England in case either one should become involved in war due to promises to protect states in Eastern Europe. Similarly, France and England should agree to give support to the Soviet Union in case the Soviet Union should become involved in war due to assistance to France and England. The British reply to this proposal had not yet been received; but the French Government on its own behalf had made this proposal to the Soviet Ambassador in Paris.

We discussed the relations of Poland and Rumania and Léger said that he was inclined to believe that Gafencu's position was as stated to me last night by Raczynski, Polish Ambassador in London. (See my 816, April 25, 9 a. m.)⁶⁵

BULLITT

740.00/1235: Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, April 29, 1939—3 p. m.

[Received 3:45 p. m.]

859. Bonnet showed me this morning the text of the latest proposal that he had made to the Soviet Union.

The document consisted of three brief paragraphs the first of which stated that if France should become engaged in war because of military assistance given to Poland or Rumania, the Soviet Union would support France immediately with all her military forces.

⁶⁴ Given by Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain on behalf of both the United Kingdom and France in the House of Commons on April 13, 1939; United Kingdom, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Commons, 1938-39, 5th series, vol. 346, p. 13. Also simultaneously in the House of Lords by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Lord Halifax; *ibid.*, House of Lords, 1938-39, 5th series, vol. 112, p. 612.

⁶⁵ *Ante*, p. 174.

The second paragraph provided that if the Soviet Union should become involved in war because of assistance given to Poland or Rumania, France would support the Soviet Union immediately with all her military forces.

The third paragraph contained an agreement that conversations should take place at once for the purpose of concerting measures to make the assistances envisaged effective—in other words, that there should be immediate military conversations between the General Staffs of France and the Soviet Union.

Bonnet said that Suritz, the Soviet Ambassador, had informed him this morning that this text would be entirely acceptable to the Soviet Union provided that Great Britain should agree to sign a similar agreement with the Soviet Union.

I asked Bonnet why he had mentioned Poland and Rumania. He said that he had done so because he wanted to make it clear that the states envisaged were Poland and Rumania and no others.

He added that he had proposed an alternative text to cover the same but omitting the names of Poland and Rumania. This text provided that if France should become involved in war because of support given to states in Eastern Europe or the Balkans the Soviet Union would come to the assistance of France; and *mutatis mutandis* that France would come to the assistance of the Soviet Union.

Bonnet said that until this morning the British Government had refused to accept this French proposal and had continued to insist that the Soviet Union should make a unilateral declaration guaranteeing by name Poland and Rumania.

I lunched with Sir Eric C. Phipps today who said to me that this was indeed the position of his Government but that he had just received a long telegram before luncheon on this subject. Only the first two sentences of the telegram had been decoded and he did not know whether or not the British Government was now prepared to accept the French proposal.

Incidentally, the British Ambassador informed me that he felt that the British Government should and would support Poland to the utmost in refusing any German claim for Danzig or roadways across the Corridor. He added that it was obvious that if Great Britain should not support Poland at this moment Polish resistance to Germany might disintegrate and the entire edifice of resistance to Germany which was being built up might crumble.

Incidentally, the British Ambassador said to me twice that he felt as did his Government that the most effective measure which could be taken at the present time to build up resistance to Germany and Italy would be an early change in our Neutrality Act.

Bonnet said to me that he felt that no concessions should be made to Germany at the present time but that every effort should be made

to push resistance to Germany and added that he felt that with[in?] a week or so the President would have an opportunity for a magnificent reply to Hitler.

Both Bonnet and the British Ambassador and also the Polish Ambassador ⁶⁶ expressed the opinion to me that Hitler's speech ⁶⁷ showed that he did not dare to make war at the present time. They all felt that if resistance to Germany should be increased the disinclination of Germany to risk war would be increased also and that Hitler in the end would be compelled to negotiate on a reasonable basis.

BULLITT

740.00/1250 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, May 1, 1939—1 p. m.

[Received May 1—12:40 p. m.]

865. I asked Léger if the British Government had agreed to accept the French formula with regard to mutual defense agreements in behalf of the Soviet Union and France and the Soviet Union (see my telegram No. 859 of April 29, 3 p. m.). He replied that on the contrary the British were continuing to insist that Russia should give a unilateral declaration to the effect that in case of German attack on Poland or Rumania the Soviet Union would give military support to Poland or Rumania.

The French Government had continued to argue the point with the British Government and the British Government had replied that it was not ready to give any British guarantee whatsoever to the Soviet Union.

Léger went on to say that the Russians had taken the position that they would not give any guarantee to Poland and Rumania unless at the same time they should be guaranteed by France and England. The Russians had indicated their willingness to give reciprocal guarantees to France and England and were ready to accept the French formula referred to in my No. 859 of April 28 [29], 3 p. m.

Léger said that he felt there was still some danger that the Russians might attempt once more, as they had attempted so, to come to terms with Hitler. Moreover the Soviet Government had sent Potémkin, Vice Commissar for Foreign Affairs, to Ankara to strengthen the Turkish opposition to signing any agreements with

⁶⁶ Juljusz Lukasiewicz, Polish Ambassador in France.

⁶⁷ For extracts in translation of Hitler's speech to the German Reichstag on April 28, 1939, see German White Book, *Documents on the Events Preceding the Outbreak of the War* (New York, German Library of Information, 1940), doc. Nos. 214, 266, 295, and 343, pp. 226, 284, 314, and 364, respectively.

France and England until France and England should have given guarantee to the Soviet Union.

Léger went on to say that he was certain that if Great Britain should accept the French formula vis-à-vis the Soviet Union, Turkey would sign agreements with France and England at once. The Turks at the moment were taking the position that they could not come into a system of mutual defense in which the Soviet Union was treated as a pariah.

BULLITT

740.00/1256 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, May 1, 1939—9 p. m.

[Received May 1—5:05 p. m.]

590. For the Secretary and Under Secretary. My 527, April 20, 7 [8] p. m.⁶⁸ The Anglo-Soviet conversations have not yet reached any positive result although the Foreign Office is endeavoring to find a formula that will assure the association of the Soviet Government with the efforts now being made to build up a front against aggressor nations.

The British Government is trying to reconcile the following considerations: (a) Not to forego the chance of receiving help from the Soviet Government in the case of war; (b) not to jeopardize the common front by disregarding the susceptibilities of Poland and Rumania where Russia is concerned; (c) not to forfeit the sympathy of the world at large by giving a handle to German anti-Comintern propaganda; (d) not to jeopardize the cause of peace by provoking violent action by Germany.

The proposals made by the Soviet and the French Governments (my 514, April 18, 7 p. m.) is a matter which seems to run counter to some of the foregoing considerations. The British Government therefore still considers that something on the lines of its original proposal (my 504, April 17, 9 p. m.⁶⁹) is best calculated to meet the complications of the situation.

In order to make clear the nature and purpose of their proposals and in order to meet in some degree French and Russian views the British have suggested to the French Government that they be revised along the following lines: The Soviet Government to make a public declaration on its own initiative in which, after referring to the general statement of policy recently made by Stalin⁷⁰ (when he

⁶⁸ Not printed.

⁶⁹ Not printed; see telegram No. 182, April 15, 6 p. m., from the Chargé in the Soviet Union, p. 232.

⁷⁰ *Foreign Relations, The Soviet Union, 1933-1939*, p. 739.

said that Russia stood for support of any country which was prepared to resist an unprovoked aggression), and having regard to the statements recently made by the British and French Governments accepting new obligations on behalf of certain Eastern European countries, the Soviet Government would undertake that in the event of Great Britain and France being involved in hostilities in fulfillment of these obligations the assistance of the Soviet Government would be available if desired and would be afforded in such manner as might be most convenient. The British think that this proposal does take due account of the susceptibilities of Poland and Rumania, neither of whom would be mentioned individually; and the Soviet declaration would be unilateral.

The above views of the British Government have been communicated to Poland and Rumania along general lines, without any express request for assent. M. Gafencu when recently in London had the British ideas explained to him, however, and stated that they met with no objection on his part. The Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs has informed the British Ambassador⁷¹ that Poland had no objection in principle. The views of the French have not yet been received in London except that during a conversation reported between the British Ambassador and M. Bonnet, M. Bonnet said that he saw no objection, provided British Government should be able to persuade the Soviet Government to accept them; M. Bonnet doubts whether this is possible.

When Lord Halifax saw the Soviet Ambassador on Saturday, M. Maisky was still raising objections to any sort of limited guarantees and insisting on the superior utility of the Russian proposal for a general all-around guarantee as set forth in his Government's proposals (my 514, April 18, 7 p. m.). He asked Lord Halifax when a reply would be made to the Russian proposals and the Secretary of State replied that he hoped it could be got out very shortly. I gathered that the attitude of M. Maisky was not particularly helpful and that he had no constructive suggestions to make.

M. Maisky also asked the Secretary of State whether the German note denouncing the Anglo-German naval agreement⁷² has been acknowledged. Lord Halifax said that it had not been acknowledged yet and that British observations would be made in due course.⁷³

KENNEDY

⁷¹ Sir Howard William Kennard, British Ambassador in Poland.

⁷² Signed June 18, 1935; for text, see *Foreign Relations*, 1935, vol. 1, p. 162. For text of the German note of April 28, 1939, see German White Book, doc. No. 294, p. 313; or British Cmd. 6106, Misc. No. 9 (1939), doc. No. 22, p. 51, where the note is dated April 27, 1939.

⁷³ The British reply was given on June 23, 1939; for text, see British Cmd. 6106, Misc. No. 9 (1939), doc. No. 24, p. 53.

861.01/2158 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, May 4, 1939—3 p. m.
[Received May 4—1:36 p. m.]

879. Suritz, the Soviet Ambassador, said to me today that he was absolutely certain that the dismissal of Litvinov⁷⁴ would make no change whatsoever in the foreign policy of the Soviet Government. He made a similar statement to [Bonnet].

The Polish Ambassador who has just been in contact by telephone with Warsaw said to me that it was Beck's opinion that Litvinov's dismissal would entail a change not in direction but in method.

Beck felt certain that the Soviet Union was not about to make an agreement with Germany. He believed on the other hand that Litvinov's dismissal would mean a complete break with the policy of dependence on the League of Nations, and the commencement of a policy of bilateral pacts—in the first instance with England and France. It was also Beck's opinion that there would be a purge of Jews in the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Soviet Diplomatic Service.

The Soviet Ambassador stated to me that the British were still continuing to refuse to make a proposal to the Soviet Union similar to the French proposal. He hoped that such a proposal might come from the British shortly.

Léger said to me that he feared Litvinov's dismissal might be a gesture of Stalin's designed to indicate his extreme displeasure with the attitude of Great Britain toward the Soviet Union. Léger added that the British were still insisting on a unilateral guarantee by the Soviet Union of Poland and Rumania.

In this connection Léger stated that the British Government had informed the French Government 2 days ago that Beck had said that he would be delighted to have such a guarantee. The French Government had expressed its astonishment, and through diplomatic channels had verified the fact that such a guarantee would be rejected instantly by the Polish Government.

Léger expressed the opinion that the British proposals were not designed to avoid any arrangements with the Soviet Union; but were the product merely of ignorance and bad diplomatic information. It was certain that Poland and Rumania would protest against any unilateral guarantee by the Soviet Government and it was also certain that the Soviet Government would not give any guarantees to Poland

⁷⁴ M. M. Litvinov was replaced by V. M. Molotov as People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs on May 3, 1939.

or Rumania except by way of reciprocal guarantees between the Soviet Union, France and England.

Léger called my attention to the fact that a great many people on the Right in Paris had telephoned to him this morning to express the opinion to him that Litvinov's dismissal was an act of blackmail to compel the French and British Governments to make closer agreements with the Soviet Union than otherwise would have been made. Léger said that in his opinion this was nonsense.

In conclusion, the Soviet Ambassador said to me that he believed Litvinov's dismissal had been caused by internal political considerations and not external.

Bonnet expressed the opinion to me that the dismissal of Litvinov would not entail any great change in Soviet foreign policy.

BULLITT

740.00/1351 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, May 5, 1939—10 p. m.
[Received May 5—9: 45 p. m.]

893. For the President and the Secretary. With approval of Ambassador Kennedy I called on Vansittart in London this afternoon.

He was intensely apprehensive with regard to the future policy of the Soviet Union. He said that he feared the dismissal of Litvinov portended the withdrawal of the Soviet Union from an active interest in European affairs and the adoption of a policy of isolation. Such a turn in the policy of the Soviet Union would make certain a collapse of resistance to Hitler in Eastern Europe and the Balkans and the consequences for all Europe and the world would be of the utmost gravity.

I asked Vansittart if he felt that Stalin's dismissal of Litvinov had been occasioned by the dilatory and almost insulting policy which the British Government had pursued vis-à-vis the Soviet Union since Hitler's invasion of Czechoslovakia. He said that he feared that British policy might have contributed to Stalin's attitude but he did not know what alternative proposals could be made to the Soviet Government.

I asked why the British had refused to accept the French proposal which the Soviet Government had indicated its willingness to accept. Vansittart replied that he had no knowledge of any French proposal. I expressed my amazement and he said that no French proposal had yet reached the British Government.

I replied that I knew positively that his intimate friend Léger and also Daladier⁷⁵ felt that the British proposal to the Soviet Union would never be accepted by the Soviet Union; that they considered it ill-advised and calculated to drive the Soviet Union away from a policy of collaboration with France and England and that I was certain that the French Government had expressed these views to the British Government and had made a constructive counterproposal.

Vansittart replied that these views of Daladier's might have been expressed by Bonnet to Sir Eric Phipps and by Sir Eric Phipps to the British Government in such a watered down form that they had made no impression. He was personally fully conversant with information of the British Government from France and his understanding of the French position in respect of this matter was that while the French were not optimistic that the British proposal would be accepted by the Soviet Government they nevertheless wished the British Government well and approved the proposal.

Vansittart then asked me what was the French proposal and I informed him. He at once stated that he considered the French proposal far superior to the British proposal and asked me if on my return to Paris this afternoon I could say to Léger and Daladier that he believed that Daladier should call personally the French Ambassador in London on the telephone this evening and instruct him to state at once to the British Government in the strongest terms that if the latest British proposal should be rejected the British Government must be prepared to offer immediately to the Soviet Union an agreement on the basis of the French proposal.

Vansittart said that if the British Government should not agree to the French proposal before rejection of the British proposal—which he considered almost certain—further vital days would elapse before any new proposal could be made to the Soviet Government. He, himself, feared so greatly that the Soviet Government was on the edge of adopting a policy of isolation—if such policy had not already been adopted—that he felt not even 24 hours could be lost with safety.

On my return to Paris I repeated what Vansittart had said to me to Daladier and Léger. Daladier at once telephoned to Corbin, French Ambassador in London, and instructed him to make immediately the *démarche* proposed by Vansittart.

I asked Léger how on earth it could have been possible that the British Government had not received either the French proposal or the true views of the French Government with regard to the British

⁷⁵ Édouard Daladier, President of the French Council of Ministers and Minister for National Defense.

proposal to the Soviet Union. He replied that conversations on this subject had been conducted by Bonnet with Sir Eric Phipps. He added that in point of fact both Bonnet and Sir Eric Phipps were opposed to bringing the Soviet Union into close cooperation with France and England.

I asked Léger if he had had no reply from any representative of the British Government on this subject. He replied that he had talked with the British Minister in Paris (that is to say with the Counselor of Embassy who has the rank of Minister at this post) and had handed to him for the information of the British Government the French proposal and had expressed his views on the subject of the British proposal. He added that it seemed evident from Vansittart's ignorance of the French proposal that the British Minister had not transmitted this information to his Government. Léger went on to say that he had had this conversation with the British Minister because through delays in Bonnet's office and Daladier's the formal French note to the British Government on the subject of policy vis-à-vis the Soviet Union which had been prepared 10 days ago had not gone forward to London until 2 days ago, Wednesday night, at 7 o'clock. This note was now in the hands of the British Foreign Office and no doubt Vansittart would see it tomorrow morning. Meanwhile it appeared that the effort to obtain Russian support might have failed because of the delay.

Léger then read to me a telegram which he had received today from Payart, French Chargé d'Affaires in Moscow (a man I know intimately and for whose judgment I have great respect). In his telegram Payart expressed the opinion that the dismissal of Litvinov had been occasioned by the proposals which Halifax had made to Maisky on April 14. These proposals from the Soviet point of view merely added insult to injury.

Halifax had made clear to Maisky once more that the British Government was not prepared to guarantee support to the Soviet Union and had proposed that Soviet support to Rumania and Poland should be given only in case Great Britain and France should be engaged previously in war in support of Poland and Rumania and only if those countries should ask for Soviet support.

Payart had been informed that this proposal had enraged Stalin who had considered it a relegation of the Soviet Union to a third rate role unworthy of a great power. It was Payart's impression that Stalin would withdraw the Soviet Union into a position of complete isolation. He feared that this might be only the first step which might be followed soon by large scale economic agreements between the Soviet Union and Germany.

In commenting on this telegram Léger said that if indeed the Soviet Union should withdraw into complete isolation, the entire

effort of the French Government to build up resistance to Hitler in Eastern Europe and the Balkans would collapse, and France and England would face war with Germany and Italy under most terrible conditions. At such a moment British policy would probably become an attempt to buy off Germany by giving her possessions of other powers.

In conclusion Léger said that he considered Beck's speech admirable in every way. He had telephoned to the Polish Ambassador on behalf of the French Government and had stated to him that he felt Beck, while maintaining a strong position, had done so with a minimum of provocation and the greatest possible skill. He added that the French Government on the basis of the latest military and diplomatic information was of the opinion that Germany would not attack Poland in the immediate future.

BULLITT

861.01/2168 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

[Extracts]

PARIS, May 8, 1939—8 p. m.

[Received May 8—5:07 p. m.]

905. Bonnet said to me this afternoon that the Soviet Ambassador in Berlin ⁷⁶ had informed the French Ambassador in Berlin ⁷⁷ that he could state officially that the dismissal of Litvinov would lead to no change whatsoever in the foreign policy of the Soviet Union. The British Government had been informed officially that there would be no change in Soviet policy. The Soviet Ambassador in Paris had made the same statement to him last Thursday (see my telegram No. 879, May 4, 3 p. m.).

Bonnet went on to say that Sir Eric Phipps had informed him this afternoon that the British Government was still opposed to accepting the French proposal to the Soviet Union since the British Government was loath to give any guarantee whatsoever to the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, the British Ambassador to Moscow today had presented to Molotov the latest British proposal and had been instructed to say that if Russia would first promise to come to the aid of Poland and Rumania the British Government would consider the question of direct guarantees between Great Britain and the Soviet Union.

⁷⁶ Alexey Fedorovich Merekalov.

⁷⁷ Robert Coulondre.

Bonnet then went on to say that so far as he was concerned he had no confidence whatsoever in Russian promises and doubted that, even though the Soviet Union should promise to support Poland, Rumania, and Turkey in case of German attack, the support would be forthcoming;—thus making it once more abundantly clear that the present French policy is Daladier's and Léger's and not his own.

On the question of future Russian policy I have received today an optimistic interpretation from the source that I found always the most reliable when I was Ambassador in Moscow.⁷⁸ This interpretation is the following: Stalin is more anti-Semitic than ever. The dominant members of the Politburo since the purges of last year have been Zhdanov, Andreyev and Molotov all of whom are extremely anti-Jewish. They have all desired for some time to take the foreign relations of the Soviet Union out of the hands of the Jews. Litvinov's failure to reach agreement with England offered an excellent opportunity to get rid of Litvinov and his intimate Jewish collaborators. The foreign policy of the Soviet Union would remain unchanged, and it might prove easier to arrive at an agreement with Molotov than it had been with Litvinov.

BULLITT

740.00/1381 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

[Extracts]

LONDON, May 8, 1939—10 p. m.

[Received May 8—7:05 p. m.]

640. My 628, May 6, 2 p. m.⁷⁹ Instructions for the British reply to the Russian proposals were cabled to Moscow Saturday,⁸⁰ not Friday, night. The British Ambassador before communicating the reply and discussing it with the new Soviet Minister for Foreign Affairs is to assure himself that the Russian proposals (my 514, April 18, 7 p. m.) still stand and that the change of Foreign Ministers does not indicate any vital change in Russian foreign policy. If the Ambassador discovers any reason to believe that there is such a change, he will delay presenting the British reply and will telegraph for further instructions.

Poland and Turkey occupy the key positions in the system which the British are now endeavoring to perfect. With respect to Turkey

⁷⁸ 1933-36.

⁷⁹ Not printed.

⁸⁰ May 6.

there is no difficulty as far as Russia is concerned, for the Turkish Government is quite willing to associate itself with the Soviet Government in any defensive arrangements that may be reached. The situation of Poland however is entirely different and the attitude of Poland toward any close political association with the Soviet Government is well known to that Government and must as a fact be taken into account. This attitude is that the German Government would regard any political association between Poland and Soviet Russia as provocative and such an association would involve Poland in a risk of war which ought to be avoided. The same considerations would apply to the cases of Rumania.

The British feel that the most effective way in building up a front against aggressors is to start with what is practicable to realize at once and that the first step is to endeavor to assure the safety of states most menaced in Eastern Europe. To this end the cooperation of the Soviet Government is regarded as of the greatest importance. British efforts have therefore been directed toward finding some means of circumventing the difficulties above described. The new proposal to the Soviet Government has however been drafted in the light of the Soviet counter-proposals and of British consultations with other governments.

Official opinion is still uncertain as to whether the new proposal will be acceptable to Russia. This uncertainty is of course accentuated by lack of information as to whether Russian foreign policy will change with the resignation of Litvinov. No light has yet been thrown on the new set-up.

KENNEDY

740.00/1423 : Telegram

The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Grummon) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, May 10, 1939—9 p. m.

[Received May 10—5 : 25 p. m.]

233. My 231, May 10, 9 a. m.⁸¹ The communiqué⁸² reported in my telegram under reference, which was the first indication to the Soviet public that any negotiations were being held with the British Government, has been generally interpreted here as reflecting Soviet dissatisfaction with the British counterproposals at least in their present form. The British Embassy here while admitting that the communiqué is misleading concerning the nature and contents of the British proposal, nevertheless, professes to consider its publication

⁸¹ Not printed.

⁸² Issued by the Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union (Tass) for publication in the Soviet press, May 10.

as of little significance in regard to the real Soviet attitude towards these proposals or as indicating a possible Soviet refusal thereof. A member of that Embassy has stated that yesterday, that is, prior to the issuance of the communiqué, the Soviet Ambassador in London had called at the Foreign Office to seek further clarification of the British counterproposal and assurances that no possibility existed under the proposed arrangement whereby the Soviet Union might be involved alone in a war as a result of any commitments to Poland and Rumania, and that although oral assurances on this point had been given, Maisky had expressed the desire of the Soviet Government to obtain written confirmation to this effect from the French and British Governments. My informant emphasized that since Maisky's request had been concerned with the form rather than the substance of the British proposals in the first place it presented no real difficulty. He admitted, however, that there was some slight divergence between the views of the French and British Governments in regard to these proposals and indicated that the statement in the Tass communiqué that the French Government "had no objections" to the British proposals was a reference to this difference of opinion of which the Soviet Government was aware. He added that the Soviet reply was expected shortly but that it was not yet certain whether it would be delivered to the Embassy here or by the Soviet Ambassador in London.

Despite the guarded optimism expressed by the British Embassy here in regard to the nature of the Soviet reply it is thought possible that the misleading implications in the Soviet communiqué and the emphasis placed on the allegedly one-sided nature of the British proposals may have been the means to prepare Soviet and foreign public opinion for a possible Soviet rejection of these proposals.

GRUMMON

740.00/1500 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, May 16, 1939—8 p. m.
[Received May 16—6:43 p. m.]

953. Daladier gave me this evening the text of the Soviet Government's note rejecting the British proposals.

The Soviet Government took the position that the British proposals could not even serve as the basis for discussion since they offered no reciprocal guarantees whatsoever to the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Government pointed out that owing to this lack of reciprocal guarantees and owing to the limitation of the British and French obligations to Poland and Rumania, German aggression might

be turned against the Soviet Union by way of the Baltic States. The Soviet Government proposed as the only basis for agreement: full mutual guarantees between the Soviet Union, England, and France; a guarantee for Finland, Estonia, and Latvia as well as Poland and Rumania, and military conversations and agreements between England, France, and the Soviet Union to make the assistance thus promised a reality.

In commenting on this Russian note, Daladier said that he had ordered Corbin, French Ambassador in London, yesterday (as reported in my No. 948 of May 16, 4 p. m.⁸³) to state at once to Halifax that the French Government must insist on its thoughts being made the basis for discussions between England, France, and the Soviet Union.

Daladier added that he was no longer certain that the Soviet Union would accept the French proposal. The Soviet Union had been ready to accept it and there had been no question of adding the Baltic States to the guarantees for Poland and Rumania. He felt that all the British had accomplished by their dilatory and half-hearted proposals was to make the Russian terms stiffer.

So far as he was concerned he could not see much objection to guaranteeing the Baltic States. It was clear that if Germany should invade the Baltic States Poland would be obliged to go to their assistance. A guarantee of the Baltic States would add therefore little or nothing to the obligations of France. He was inclined to feel that the Russian proposal should be accepted, although he would prefer to obtain Russian acceptance as well as British for the original French proposal.

Daladier went on to say that now that the policy of resistance to German aggression in the east had been adopted it was essential to will the means necessary to make such a line of policy effective and successful. He had as few illusions as I had with regard to the Soviet Union. The Soviet Government had done everything it could to overthrow his Ministry. Nevertheless he believed that it was essential to have Russia in the combination. Only thus could a sufficient combination of force be built up to deter Hitler from risking war.

Daladier added that he had received reports today of disquieting movements of German troops toward the Polish frontier. He did not know whether this might presage an early attack. He was inclined to guess that Germany by threats would attempt to disintegrate Polish morale for at least a few weeks and that there would probably be peace until the end of June; but on the whole he was not optimistic.

BULLITT

⁸³ Not printed.

741.61/632 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, May 22, 1939—2 p. m.

[Received 5:05 p. m.]

979. On Saturday night Daladier, Bonnet, Léger and Halifax discussed at length the negotiations between Great Britain and the Soviet Union.

Léger stated to me this morning that Halifax had finally agreed to adopt the original French proposal and indeed had expressed willingness to go further than the original French proposal since he was prepared to propose to the Soviet Union the following formula: that in case the Soviet Union should become engaged in war because of an appeal for assistance by either Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Poland or Rumania in case any one of these states should be attacked by Germany, Great Britain would bring full and immediate military assistance to the Soviet Union. Vice versa in case Great Britain is involved in war because of an attack on one of these states and an appeal to Great Britain for assistance, the Soviet Union would render immediate military assistance to Great Britain.

Léger commented that if the British had been prepared to accept this formula 3 weeks ago the Russians would have accepted it but at the present moment the Soviet Union was insisting that it would not negotiate on any other basis than the full Soviet formula reported in my No. 953 of May 16, 8 p. m.

Léger said that the French Government had received some disquieting information with regard to offers that the German Government was making to the Soviet Government and in view of the urgent need to have full Soviet support for the states of Eastern Europe the French Government had urged the British Government to accept the Soviet proposal *in toto*.

Halifax had replied that it would be extremely difficult for the Prime Minister to carry public opinion with him to the lengths demanded by the Soviet proposal. In the end, however, he had said that he was convinced personally that if the Russians should refuse to accept the proposal he was now ready to make, the Soviet proposal should be accepted. He did not, however, hold out much hope that Chamberlain would agree with this point of view. Léger added that Maisky was on a very high horse indeed and said he feared that at this late date nothing short of full acceptance of the Soviet proposal would persuade the Soviet Government to participate in the resistance to Germany. The Soviet Government had explained privately to the French Government that it felt so uncertain of the situation in Rumania which might be reversed in one night by the assassination

of the King of Rumania that it desired a direct alliance with France and England. The Soviet Government must consider within the bounds of possibility the eventuality that Rumania would not resist German attack and would not call on the Soviet Government for assistance. In that case if German troops should cross Rumania to attack the Soviet Union, Great Britain would not be obliged to assist the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union desired to be confident of British support no matter what might be the future action of the Rumanian Government.

BULLITT

741.61/635 : Telegram

The Minister in Switzerland (Harrison) to the Secretary of State

GENEVA, May 23, 1939—10 p. m.

[Received May 23—7:50 p. m.]

13. I saw Halifax this afternoon and after referring to speculation respecting the Russo-British negotiations said I would greatly appreciate anything he might feel disposed to tell me in confidence.

Halifax then said that he had had several talks here with Maisky. In reply to the original British suggestion for Russian aid to Poland and Rumania, the Russians, he said, had proposed a tripartite alliance of a far-reaching character, even including an obligation to make peace in common.

The Russians, he said, had objected to the British proposal as not comprising a reciprocal obligation. His conversations however had brought out the fact that what the Russians feared above all was the collapse of Poland and/or Rumania, that the Poles might come to terms with Hitler and that the Iron Guard might eliminate Carol and let in the Nazis, then the Russians would be in the first instead of in the second line. For this reason the Russians wanted a firm tripartite agreement, something more binding and definite than the Franco-Russian Pact.⁸⁴

Halifax said that the Russians also wanted guarantees extending to the Baltic States as well as to Poland and Rumania. Halifax had observed that the British and French had their own commitments in the west, also that the Baltic States might not welcome the guarantees proposed by Russia. However, in this connection Halifax said that he had talked with Munters⁸⁵ and the latter had proposed a formula based on the defense of their neutrality which might prove acceptable (I hope to have an opportunity to see Munters tomorrow).

⁸⁴ Treaty of Mutual Assistance signed at Paris, May 2, 1935, League of Nations Treaty Series, vol. CLXVII, p. 395.

⁸⁵ Vilhelms Munters, Latvian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Halifax also said that although he was not "enamoured" of Maisky's proposals, he would submit them to the Cabinet tomorrow. He also observed that Russian participation was all important in any eventual assistance for Poland and Rumania.

Although he expressed the view that certain sections of British opinion would undoubtedly be opposed to the Russian proposals, I gathered the impression that Halifax will advocate their acceptance by the British Government.

HARRISON

741.61/636 : Telegram

The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Grummon) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, May 24, 1939—1 p. m.

[Received May 24—12:10 p. m.]

263. The Embassy is aware, since the delivery of the Soviet counterproposal on May 14 (see my 249, May 15, 9 p. m.⁸⁶) there have been no diplomatic conversations or negotiations on the subject between the British Ambassador and Molotov. There is no evidence up to the present to justify an opinion that the Soviet Government intends to modify its position in accordance with the views expressed in the *Izvestiya* editorial of May 11 or to accept anything less than a direct and unequivocal commitment from England and France for the protection of the Soviet western frontier against attack as the price of Soviet association in the Franco-British system of guarantees in Eastern Europe. In the opinion of most neutral diplomatic observers in Moscow the firmness of the Soviet position may be in large part attributed to the following factors:

1. The increased sense of security felt by the Russian Soviet Government as a result of the prior British and French commitments in respect of Poland and Rumania and the later Anglo-Turkish agreement,⁸⁷ and the realization on the part of the Soviet Government that under the circumstances the inclusion of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics in an anti-aggression front in Eastern Europe is of vital necessity to England and France.

2. The fear of the Soviet Government, based on its suspicion of the Chamberlain and Daladier Governments that in the absence of a direct commitment from England and France the Soviet Union might

⁸⁶ Not printed; see telegram No. 953, May 16, 8 p. m., from the Ambassador in France, p. 254.

⁸⁷ The British Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, announced in the House of Commons on May 12, 1939, the Anglo-Turkish agreement on mutual assistance in the event of an act of aggression leading to war in the Mediterranean area; *Parliamentary Debates*, 5th series, vol. 347, p. 952. The 15-year mutual assistance pact concluded between Great Britain, France, and Turkey was signed at Ankara on October 19, 1939; for text, see League of Nations Treaty Series, vol. cc, p. 167, or Department of State *Bulletin*, November 11, 1939, p. 544.

be left to continue alone a war in Eastern Europe in the event that the states guaranteed by England and France were overrun by Germany in the early stages of a conflict in that area. In the opinion of the French Embassy at least, this fear of a "separate peace" on the part of England and France lies at the root of the Soviet insistence on a direct pact of mutual assistance with those countries.

Other points which it is understood have arisen in the negotiations such as the question of the guarantee of the Baltic States and the possible Soviet resentment at Polish and Rumanian reluctance to be bound by any commitments to the Soviet Union are considered here as of secondary importance and as having been advanced by the Soviet Government largely as of possible value in negotiation.

While the effect if any of the somewhat indirect and half-hearted German approach to the Soviet Government, reported in my telegram 258, May 12 [22], 11 a. m.,⁸⁸ will presumably be confined to strengthening the latter's insistence on the satisfaction of its demands in the present negotiations with England and France, the possibility, however remote, cannot be completely excluded that it may raise a question in the mind of the Soviet Government as to the advisability of committing itself openly at the present time on the side of the Western democracies.

It is expected here that Molotov during the course of the sessions of the Supreme Soviet which open tomorrow will make an important statement on Soviet foreign policy.⁸⁹

GRUMMON

741.61/639 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, May 24, 1939—8 p. m.
[Received May 24—5 : 36 p. m.]

734. I have just seen Halifax and delivered to him the messages contained in your 381, May 23, 11 a. m.⁹⁰ He told me that after his conference with the Russians in Geneva he made up his mind that if he were going to make any deal with them at all it would more or less have to be along their lines. So with that firmly fixed in his own mind he came back this morning and sold the idea to the Cabinet

⁸⁸ *Post*, p. 321.

⁸⁹ For a summary of Molotov's speech of May 31, before the Supreme Council of the Soviet Union, see telegram No. 282, June 1, 1 p. m., from the Chargé in the Soviet Union, *Foreign Relations, The Soviet Union, 1933-1939*, p. 764.

⁹⁰ Vol. IV, p. 765.

but, in order that their humiliation will not be too great in having to step down from their original plan and accept the Russians' plan, they decided to put it under the cloak of the League platform of anti-aggression and bring in Poland and Turkey and all the rest under the same canopy. But what it really amounts to is that France, Russia, and England will make an anti-aggression pact, all agreeing to come to the aid of the others if they are attacked by any European power and also if any one of the countries finds itself involved in a war with anyone to protect any country the others will join in. They intend to handle the Baltic States by making an agreement that if any states are attacked while trying to preserve neutrality they are all in to save them. This is going to require some maneuvering and a good deal of secrecy, but Halifax is of the opinion that it will finally work out. The Russians have evinced a great willingness to have staff talks with the French and English as quickly as possible, once the agreement is signed, in order to prepare to use their resources, and Halifax is of the opinion now that, unless there is some nigger in the woodpile he cannot see, the arrangement will be made. He said the French told him they have almost agreed on their deal with Turkey, so that is cleaned up.

He told me he had a long private talk with Ambassador Dirksen²¹ away from the Foreign Office. Dirksen told him that whatever might be said of Hitler, he was not without judgment and sense and he was not going to take on a row with France and England and Turkey and Poland and Russia (and the United States not far behind). Here Halifax thought it very strange that Dirksen should include Russia, at a time when it looked like there was a very wide breach between Russia and England in the settlement of their difficulties. Halifax then suggested to Dirksen that word be got to Hitler that if he would make a speech or a gesture of some kind that he did not want war and that he was hoping for peace and that while Danzig was an irritant it could probably be worked out, regardless of what popular opinion in this country might be, Halifax assured Dirksen that officially England would welcome the statement and would so reply.

Halifax in the meantime is preparing a speech which he is going to give before some organization, trying to hold the door open for economic discussions with Hitler and has suggested that he will let Dirksen see the speech before he delivers it to see if any suggestions might be made.

KENNEDY

²¹ German Ambassador in the United Kingdom.

741.61/644 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, May 25, 1939—4 p. m.
[Received May 25—1 : 51 p. m.]

1008. Bonnet said to me today that on Monday²² in Geneva he had ascertained definitely at the end of a long talk with Maisky that the Soviet Government positively would not enter into any agreement with England which would not involve a promise of direct assistance from Great Britain to the Soviet Union.

Maisky had stated that the Soviet Union feared that either Poland or Rumania or both might collapse as a result of German pressure and might permit the passage of German troops to attack the Soviet Union. Maisky had gone on to state however that the Soviet Union would sign at once an accord with England if in addition to guarantees for Poland and Rumania it should contain a direct guarantee for the Soviet Union.

Bonnet said that he had convinced Halifax that Great Britain must give such a guarantee to the Soviet Union and that on Tuesday morning Halifax on behalf of the British Government had asked the Polish and Rumanian Governments for their views with regard to such a guarantee by Great Britain to the Soviet Union.

Halifax later had reported to him, Bonnet, that the Rumanian Government had replied that it would be delighted to have a guarantee of Rumania from the Soviet Union provided Rumania should not be mentioned specifically in the terms of the agreement and that it would have no objection to a British guarantee of the Soviet Union. Halifax had said that Poland had replied in the same sense but less definitely.

Bonnet said that he was convinced that Halifax had communicated with Chamberlain on Monday evening and that the British Government would not have asked these questions of the Poles and Rumanians until Halifax had been certain that Chamberlain was prepared to make such an accord with the Soviet Union.

Bonnet added that he expected to be informed officially by the British Government tonight that Great Britain was prepared to make such an accord with the Soviet Union. He considered the matter completely settled. He expected that tomorrow the British and the French simultaneously but not jointly would make a proposal to the Soviet Union which would be accepted at once. With regard to the political accord with Poland, Bonnet said that he would not sign any accord with Poland until the British had informed him

²² May 22.

that they were ready to sign a similar accord. He believed that the British would be ready to sign a similar accord within 3 or 4 days.

BULLITT

741.61/646 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the
Secretary of State*

LONDON, May 25, 1939—9 p. m.

[Received May 25—5 : 40 p. m.]

745. For the Secretary and the Under Secretary. My 734, May 24, 7 p. m. The text of a draft agreement which the British propose shall be presented by themselves jointly with France to the Soviet Government was delivered to the French Government today for approval. The text ^{92a} is substantially as follows :

The Governments of Great Britain, France and Russia, desiring in their capacity as members of the League of Nations to give effect to the principles of mutual support embodied in the Covenant of the League of Nations,⁹³ have reached the following agreement :

1. If France and the United Kingdom are engaged in hostilities with any European power in consequence of (1) aggression by that power against another European state which they had in conformity with the wishes of that state undertaken to assist against such aggression, or (2) assistance given by them to another European state which had requested such assistance in order to resist violation of its neutrality, or (3) aggression by a European power against either France or Great Britain, Russia acting in accordance with the principles of article XVI, paragraphs 1 and 2, of the Covenant of the League of Nations, will give France and Great Britain all support and assistance in its power.

2. Sets forth the identical obligations as in 1 above on the part of France and Great Britain to the Government of Soviet Russia.

3. The three contracting Governments will concert as to methods by which such mutual support and assistance could in case of need be made effective.

4. In the event of there arising a threat which would call their undertakings of mutual support and assistance into operation, the three Governments will immediately enter into consultation with each other. The methods and scope of such consultations will at once be the subject of further discussions between the three Governments.

5. The obligation of rendering support and assistance in the cases outlined in preceding articles is without prejudice to the rights and position of other powers.

6. Each of the three Governments will communicate to the others the terms of any undertaking to which they are now committed,

^{92a} For official text, see *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939*, Third Series, vol. v, doc. No. 624, p. 679.

⁹³ *Foreign Relations*, The Paris Peace Conference, 1919, vol. XIII, p. 69.

referred to in paragraphs 1 (1) and 2 (1) above, and before taking on any similar obligations in the future each of the three powers will consult with the others.

7. The agreement is to continue for 5 years and the three Governments will consult as to the desirability of renewal, with or without modifications, not less than 6 months before its expiration.

The Foreign Office is hopeful that by the very careful and precise definition in articles I and II of the circumstance under which the obligation to render aid will become effective, any existing apprehensions of Poland and Rumania as to the desirability of Russian aid will be allayed and that the terms of article V will serve to allay the apprehensions of the Baltic countries that Russian aid might under certain circumstances be thrust upon them without their wishing it.

KENNEDY

741.61/651 : Telegram

The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Grummon) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, May 29, 1939—noon.

[Received May 29—11:18 a. m.]

274. My telegram 267, May 26, 4 p. m.⁹⁴ The reply to the Soviet proposals in the form of a joint Franco-British note was delivered late Saturday⁹⁵ afternoon by the British Ambassador and the French Chargé d'Affaires to Molotov in his office in the Kremlin. Potemkin was present as interpreter. I understand that the conversation lasted less than an hour and that Molotov gave no indication of the Soviet attitude to the proposed plan, merely promising to refer it to his Government.

In the light of further details which have been provided by the British Embassy here in regard to the Franco-British plan it appears that the pact of mutual assistance for Europe alone becomes operative under the following three conditions:

1. In the event of a direct attack on any one of the signatories,
2. In the event that any of the signatories should become involved in hostilities as a result of (individual, not joint as previously reported) obligations already assumed towards other states, and
3. In the event that any of the signatories should become involved in hostilities as a result of coming to the assistance of a country whose neutrality has been violated and which has requested such assistance.

I am informed by a member of the British Embassy that although the purpose of this plan is to insure Soviet assistance to Poland and

⁹⁴ Not printed.

⁹⁵ May 27.

Rumania in the event of an attack on those countries, the proposals as worded contain no specific mention of these or other countries and relate merely to mutual assistance between England, France and the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics under the conditions outlined above. It was further stated that since the Soviet Union assumes no obligations to states other than France and England the obligations referred to in 2 above relate only to those already assumed by the latter in Europe, and in respect of any future obligations to additional countries in Europe which might be assumed by any one of the signatories the pact of mutual assistance will only be operative providing that the signatory assuming such obligations obtains the prior approval of the other two parties. The conditions set forth in 3 above, I am further informed, are designed to respect the desire of the Baltic States to avoid accepting guarantees of their independence, especially on the part of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, and to retain their freedom of action. Although I understand that Molotov did not state specifically when the Soviet reply would be forthcoming it is expected shortly, possibly tomorrow.

GRUMMON

741.61/652 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, May 30, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received 5 : 35 p. m.]

1030. Bonnet informed me this evening that he was convinced that negotiations for an accord between France, England, and the Soviet Union could not now fail. When Seeds and Payart had called on Molotov with the French-British proposal on May 27 Molotov had read it giving every sign that he was familiar in advance with its contents and had said that he must make objection to the clause referring to the League of Nations and to the clause referring to consultation in case of threat of war. (See my 1014, May 25, midnight.⁹⁶) Molotov expressed himself as personally extremely pleased by the rest of the proposal and said that he would refer it to the Council of Ministers, in other words to Stalin.

Bonnet said that Molotov's objection to these two points was in his opinion the product of an exaggerated suspicion; but that certainly any change in wording that the Russians might wish would be accepted by the French and British. The Soviet Ambassador was to call on him this evening and he expected an official reply at that time. He hoped that the accord might be in final form for signature within a week.

⁹⁶ Not printed.

Rochat⁹⁷ showed Wilson⁹⁸ this afternoon the text of the Anglo-French proposal. The proposed agreement consists of seven articles of which the most important are as follows:

[Here follows a summary of the first four articles of the proposed agreement; see telegram No. 745, May 25, 9 p. m., from the Ambassador in the United Kingdom, printed on page 262.] (Rochat explained that the consultation contemplated . . . under article IV relates merely to an earlier stage in which, because of threatened aggression, consultation would be useful.) Rochat commented that there was a "hole" in the agreement which would at once be obvious to the Soviet Government.

For instance if Latvia or Estonia should be attacked by Germany and should not defend themselves or should refrain from appealing to Russia for assistance, preferring to have Germany overrun their country rather than Soviet Russia, then the pledge of mutual assistance would not come into play. The same situation, however, would of course arise if Belgium, Holland, or Switzerland should be attacked by Germany and should not defend themselves or should fail to appeal to Great Britain and France for assistance. In other words the "holes" were reciprocal just as the obligations were reciprocal. It had not been intended in this three-power agreement to cover every possible point but only the most important points and thus to lay a broad foundation for the anti-aggression front.

BULLITT

741.61/664 : Telegram

The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Grummon) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, June 3, 1939—noon.

[Received June 3—11:30 a. m.]

286. My telegram No. 285, June 2.⁹⁹ Molotov handed the Soviet reply to the British and French Ambassadors yesterday at 3 o'clock.

According to information received from the French Embassy the reply was in the form of Soviet counterproposals which, after pointing out the objections to the Franco-British plan voiced by Molotov, reaffirmed Soviet insistence on the following points: (1) A direct guarantee of the independence of Finland, Latvia and Estonia by England, France and the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics; (2) the elimination of any reference to the League of Nations in the

⁹⁷ Charles Antoine Rochat, Assistant Director of Political and Commercial Affairs in the French Foreign Office.

⁹⁸ Edwin C. Wilson, Counselor of Embassy.

⁹⁹ Not printed.

wording of the triparty pact for mutual assistance; and (3) an agreement to conclude subsequently a military convention between England, France and the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics in regard to the extent and character of the aid to be rendered mutually and to the countries guaranteed in the event of hostilities.

I am informed that the question of the Far East was not introduced or referred to by Molotov.

According to the French Embassy here the impression was received that the Soviet Union intend to remain adamant on the satisfaction of these demands as the price of its adherence to the Franco-British anti-aggression front. My informant stated that it was not believed that any real difficulty would be encountered in satisfying points (2) and (3) above but that the question of a guarantee of the three states bordering on the northwest frontier of the Soviet Union presented certain difficulties in view of the reluctance of those states to accept any guarantee from the Soviet Union. He was quite frank in stating that the Soviet insistence on this point was exaggerated and could only be explained through the extreme mistrusts which the Soviet Government had manifested throughout these negotiations, as well as the apparent Soviet conviction that it is in a position to enforce compliance with any measure which it considers even desirable.

I was given to understand that the French Ambassador here is still of the opinion that an agreement can be reached but only on the basis of full compliance with the Soviet desires set forth in the reply delivered yesterday.

As previously reported the French Embassy has throughout been in favor of full compliance with the Soviet demands as originally presented in order to avoid affording the Soviet Government an opportunity to delay its decision by objection to specific points and in order to force this Government to declare itself one way or another.

GRUMMON

741.61/672 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, June 5, 1939—7 p. m.
[Received June 5—5: 47 p. m.]

1071. Bonnet gave me to read this afternoon the note of the Soviet Government containing its latest proposals to the French Government.

The first paragraph contains a mutual promise of the French, British and Soviet Governments to give military assistance to each other in case of a direct attack by any power.

The next paragraph obliges the three powers to take military action in case of "aggression" against Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Rumania, Turkey, Greece or Belgium.

A later paragraph of the note stipulates that this political agreement shall come into effect only after the signature by Great Britain, France and the Soviet Union of a military accord to be negotiated at some future date.

Bonnet said that both he and Daladier felt that the Russian proposal in its present form was unacceptable for two reasons:

1. The Russians had eliminated the provision in the French-British draft which provided that assistance should be brought to a state only in case that state should have been attacked and should have requested assistance.

At this point he handed me to read a copy of a note which the Soviet Government had sent to the Estonian Government and a copy of the reply which the Estonian Government had sent to the Soviet Government.¹ The Soviet note to Estonia stated that it was a vital interest of the Soviet Union to prevent any power obtaining special privileges of either a political, military or economic nature in Estonia and that if either "freely or under duress" the Estonian Government should accord such privileges to any other power the Soviet Government would be obliged to defend Estonia against such "aggression" whether the Estonian Government had asked for such assistance or not.

(The note of the Estonian Government in reply stated that the Government of Estonia insisted on retaining the sole right to judge whether there was any aggression against Estonia.)

Bonnet went on to say that in view of this note of the Soviet Government to Estonia the word "aggression" in the Soviet Government's proposal to France and Great Britain wore a sinister aspect. It could be interpreted to mean that at any time that the Soviet Government should decide to march troops into Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Poland or Turkey because of some event which it chose to consider aggression, although the state concerned might not consider it aggression, the French and British Governments would be obliged to support a Soviet invasion of the state that the Soviet Union chose to invade. In other words, the Soviet proposal meant *carte blanche* for the Soviet Union to invade the states named in the Soviet note with French and British consent and support.

¹ A note of March 28, 1939, to Estonia had stated that the Soviet Union could not remain passive if the independence of Estonia were limited either freely or through outside pressure. In its reply of April 7, 1939, the Estonian Government had declared that it could never consent to any restriction of its sovereignty nor share with any other state the right and duty to care for its neutrality and independence. See telegram No. 13, April 19, from the Chargé in Estonia, *Foreign Relations, The Soviet Union, 1933-1939*, p. 935.

France and England could certainly not consent to giving the Soviet Union support for an extension of bolshevism in Eastern Europe.

Furthermore, the entire moral position of France and Great Britain was based on their defense of the freedom of peoples. Acceptance of the Soviet proposal would mean consent to the establishment of a Soviet protectorate over the states named in the note.

2. The second objection was that contrary to all diplomatic practice the political accord was subjected to and made dependent upon the signature of a military accord, the terms of which were totally unspecified. If France and England should sign the political accord proposed by the Soviet Union, the Soviet Government might, and doubtless would, make demands for military assistance from France and England of a nature that it would be totally impossible to accord.

To sign the proposed political accord as a document subjected to the conclusion of a future military accord therefore would be to sign a blank check that the Russians could fill in or not fill in as they might choose.

While I was with Bonnet he telephoned to Corbin, the French Ambassador in London, to obtain the British view of the Soviet proposal.

Corbin replied that he had seen Halifax this morning; but that Halifax had not yet shown the Russian proposal to Chamberlain and had only read it hurriedly himself and had not yet received reports from his experts on it and therefore could say nothing of a decisive nature.

Bonnet stated that Daladier had seen Suritz, the Soviet Ambassador in Paris, and had told him that although the French Government was still studying the Soviet note and had not prepared a formal reply to it, France would not agree to make the political accord subject to the conclusion of a future military accord and also would not agree to the paragraph permitting invasion of states by Soviet armies under the guise of protecting them against "aggression".

Bonnet said that no progress had yet been made in the matter of the political agreement between France, Great Britain and Poland because the Poles had not yet requested the British to discuss the immediate conclusion of a political agreement. He said that he could not understand this and that he was notified today to attempt to clarify this situation and hoped that he could persuade the British to conclude political, military and financial accords with the Poles in the immediate future, which would permit the signature of similar French-Polish accords.

In conclusion Bonnet said that in spite of the present difficulties he still believed that an accord between Great Britain, France and the Soviet Union would be achieved.

He added that his information from Germany indicated that the Germans had made no progress in their efforts to achieve *rapprochement* with the Soviet Union.

Further information indicated that the Germans were not contemplating an attack on Poland or any other state this month.

BULLITT

741.61/673 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, June 5, 1939—10 p. m.
[Received June 6—1:30 p. m.]

1072. Daladier said to me this evening that he had stated to the Soviet Ambassador that he considered the Soviet proposal a ridiculous document. It would be absurd to conclude a political accord subject to the conclusion of a future military accord, and the enumeration of states in the Soviet proposal seemed to him thoroughly undesirable. What was necessary was to make a simple agreement between France, Great Britain and the Soviet Union, providing that the three states should go to war if any one of the three were menaced by an aggression direct or indirect.

I asked Daladier how he intended to define aggression in view of the Soviet note to Estonia (see my telegram No. 1071, June 5, 7 p. m.). He replied that the definition of aggression would have to be prepared with the utmost care. The Soviet note to Estonia was one of the most shocking documents he had ever read. It meant simply that the Soviet Union reserved the right to enter Estonia on any pretext convenient to the Soviet Government. He was inclined to think that the simplest test of aggression was the crossing of a frontier by an armed force. He felt that it was necessary to have the Soviet Union in the front of resistance to Hitler. He also believed that the negotiations could be brought to a successful conclusion; but he thought that before the end of the negotiations, it would be necessary for him to adopt a position of take it or leave it. He had done this once before with the Soviet Union when he had forced the Soviet Union to enter the League of Nations² by informing the Soviet Ambassador in Paris that he intended to come to an agreement with Hitler.

Daladier said he had no indication as to Chamberlain's attitude and, since Chamberlain had been driven by others to make his proposals to the Soviet Union, he felt that there was a possibility that Chamberlain would refuse to argue any further. He had said this to the Soviet Ambassador and had told the Soviet Ambassador that he was con-

² On September 18, 1934.

vinced that Chamberlain would not agree to guarantee the Baltic States. He added that he had no information which indicated that there were serious conversations with regard to a *rapprochement* between Germany and the Soviet Union.

Daladier then stated that he had no information indicating that Hitler was likely to attack Poland or any other country this month. He believed that the next great moment of danger would come at the end of July after the German harvest.

He thought that Hitler was now most hesitant to begin a war. The military position of France and England was much stronger than last September. The production of airplanes in both France and England was now satisfactory and anti-aircraft guns were now beginning to be produced in sufficient quantity. Germany and Italy could no longer bombard the industrial centers of France and England with impunity.

In his opinion another vital factor which was restraining Hitler from making war was the attitude of the Government of the United States. He was absolutely certain that if the President had not taken the attitude that he had taken from last October onward Hitler long since would have attacked France and England. He could never express adequately his gratitude to the President for his policy during these months. The fact that the United States had become an enormous question mark in Hitler's mind had been sufficient to prevent the war which otherwise would have been inevitable. He was deeply grateful to the President and was certain that his position in history would be that of a very great statesman.

I asked Daladier if he had any criticism to make of American policy. He said that he had none. The Government of the United States had done everything possible to prevent war in Europe with a clarity and ability that were astonishing. If he should meet the President in Washington tomorrow he would have nothing to say except to thank him for his offers.

He had asked Alphand, Director of Commercial Accords, to speak to me about the possibility of acquiring a very large quantity of American cotton to be stocked at the earliest possible moment in France and he assumed that Alphand had already discussed this matter with me. I replied that Alphand had informed me that he would call on me today to make a formal proposal with regard to American cotton. Daladier said that aside from this proposal he did not have a single request to make. Relations between nations should be always of the sort that now existed between France and the United States.

I asked Daladier how he explained Mussolini's present policy. He said that he felt Mussolini had aged rapidly during the past year and had begun to lose his grip and was influenced greatly by Ciano³ who

³ Count Galeazzo Ciano di Cortellazzo, Italian Foreign Minister.

was unpopular in Italy and could not see any way of becoming Mussolini's successor except by German support. He felt that the present policy had been invented by Ciano and foisted on Mussolini by him and was designed to obtain German support for Ciano's succession to the Duce's post.

Daladier said that he felt confident that if war should break out during the month of July, Spain would not become an ally of Germany or Italy; but he felt almost certain that Spain would provide submarine bases for Germany and Italy.

Daladier said that the Japanese had been intensely angry because of his action in sending a military mission to assist the Chinese. They were threatening to attack French Indo-China almost daily. He did not believe that the Japanese would attack Indo-China and he was now sending arms and ammunition to the Chinese Government. He believed that it was of the utmost importance that China should be supported at the present time by all the democratic countries. (I spoke to him at this point about Chinese exports of tung oil to the United States. See your No. 396 of June 2, 7 p. m.)*

Daladier said that he was continuing to attempt to get under way the conversations between Great Britain and Poland for the rapid conclusion of a political agreement. He believed that it would have an excellent effect on the negotiations with the Soviet Union if France and England should conclude political, military and financial agreements with Poland before replying formally to the Soviet Union's proposals.

BULLITT

740.00/1684: Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, June 9, 1939—1 p. m.
[Received June 9—11:35 a. m.]

807. I had a talk with the Prime Minister last night. He said he does not regard the situation in a favorable light at all; that he would not be surprised if some time between now and the first of August Hitler would make a move. He regards the most important thing that could be done would be for the French to make some gesture to the Italians on the question of their demands. He said he is very much surprised that Daladier is so definitely opposed to even a discussion and thinks that the failure of the French to make some gesture may be the determining point in trouble starting. He is

* Not printed.

contemplating writing a personal letter, after Monday, urging Daladier to do something.

In answer to the critics who say that Mussolini is so tied up with the Germans that any gesture by the French could not possibly aid the democracies in their desire for peace, he says he does not feel it any stranger for him to think that Mussolini would be anxious to have some sort of deal with the French than was his prediction that the Italians would be withdrawn from Spain during the month of May. He said that his idea that the Italians would evacuate was not at all supported by most of his associates and the idea that Mussolini would welcome in his heart an agreement with the French is also not supported by most of his associates. The gesture that he and Halifax made to Germany yesterday in their statements to Parliament⁵ was Chamberlain's answer to German accusation of encirclement and the charge that the British, once having attained a strong political position, would be averse to making any concessions whatsoever, and at the same time a hint to the French to get busy and help defense.

The Russian situation is most annoying to him. He is not at all sure that the Russians have the slightest idea of concluding the pact and if they do not accept the latest proposition, he on the other hand, is not at all sure that he will not call the whole thing off.

He is overwhelmingly delighted with the reception of the King and Queen in America⁶ and again paid tribute to the President in saying that, no matter how history is written, the President's attempt to save the world from war can never be forgotten.

Summing up my talk with him last night: he felt he was doing everything that could be done to put him in a position of strength to condemn Hitler, but he is not confident that Hitler, in the back of his mind, has not decided to take England on. When I asked him when he thought the time would come, he said "Probably just in time to spoil our vacations—in August." His apprehension is not based on any new information but rather on his inability to get anything out of Germany that indicates the slightest cooperation.

KENNEDY

⁵ *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Commons, 5th series, vol. 348, p. 400, and *ibid.*, House of Lords, 5th series, vol. 113, pp. 335 and 358.

⁶ King George VI and Queen Elizabeth visited the United States, June 7-12, 1939.

741.61/704 : Telegram

The Chargé in France (Wilson) to the Secretary of State

[Extract]

PARIS, June 16, 1939—10 a. m.

[Received 10:20 a. m.]

1142. I called on Bonnet yesterday afternoon. Referring to the negotiations with the Soviet Union he stated his belief that they would come to a successful conclusion. He said that the British had gone so far in an effort to meet the point of view of the Soviet Union (much farther than anyone had expected they would go) that it was inconceivable that agreement should fail. The only reason for failure would be a desire for failure on the part of the Soviet Government, and he would not admit that hypothesis.

As regards the request to subordinate the political agreement to the military agreement Bonnet said that the French Government would agree to open military conversations with Moscow immediately after the conclusion of the political agreement and he looks for no difficulties on this point.

He also professes to believe that the conversations now taking place in Moscow will convince the Soviet Government that no rigid guarantee by the Soviet Government is necessary so far as the Baltic States are concerned since, if there should in fact be a German move against one of the Baltic States which threatened the security of the Soviet Union, Britain and France would be at the side of the Soviet Union.

I asked Bonnet whether, in addition to the written instructions, Strang⁷ had received oral and secret instructions giving more latitude. Bonnet said that this was in fact so and that if the early talks in Moscow convinced the British that the Soviet Government meant business the British would find a way of reaching agreement with the Soviet Government. He added that Naggiar, French Ambassador at Moscow, had telegraphed that after conferring with Seeds and Strang he was convinced that agreement would be reached. . . .

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WILSON

⁷ William Strang, expert on Russian affairs in the British Foreign Office, temporarily in Moscow.

741.61/737

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Under Secretary of State
(Welles)*

[WASHINGTON,] June 23, 1939.

The British Ambassador * called to see me at his request this afternoon.

The Ambassador talked at some length with regard to the negotiations between his Government and the Soviet Government. He said that he was receiving copies by telegraph of the cables sent from the British Embassy in Moscow to the British Foreign Office and that they left him in a state of hopeless confusion. He said it was the most incredible negotiation of which he had ever known in his long experience. He said that, of course, on account of his service in Russia he believed he had some knowledge of Russian character and that it seemed to him that the real key to the present situation was that for the first time in a great many generations, Russia had a purely Russian Government since all foreign or alien elements had been expunged from the Government with the exception of Stalin himself who naturally was a Georgian. As a result of this, he said, he believed that the Russian Government was getting back to its policy of long ago, namely, to keep the rest of Europe at arms length upon the ground that Russia was practically invulnerable so long as she remained in a defensive position and provided that she did not link her own destinies with those of other European powers. He said that naturally the nightmare of some definite alliance between Germany and Russia was always in his mind, but that he did not see that this could be accomplished so long as Hitler remained at the head of the German Government. If the German General Staff were to determine the question, he said, necessarily the situation would be very different in as much as the German General Staff had always supported a policy of a direct and close understanding between Germany and Russia.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

741.61/732 : Telegram

The Chargé in France (Wilson) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, June 24, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received 6:10 p. m.]

1192. Charvériat ° said to me this afternoon that the negotiations with the Soviet Government continued to turn on the one point the

* Sir Ronald Lindsay.

° Émile Charvériat, Director of Political and Commercial Affairs at the French Foreign Office.

protection of the Baltic States. The proposals which the British and French Ambassadors together with Strang presented to Molotov on June 21 contained in fact certain changes from earlier proposals. Molotov, however, on June 22 informed the Ambassadors that the new proposals failed to represent any progress. Molotov proposed that if the British and French were unwilling to mention the Baltic States by name in the agreement then there should be merely a three-power mutual assistance pact in general terms with no other country mentioned therein as receiving a guarantee.

Charvériat said that this would be unsatisfactory and they would eliminate what had been the chief objective of the British and French namely to associate the Soviet Union in the guaranty of Poland. Strang was awaiting further instructions from London and he, Charvériat, was confident that a formula would be worked out on which agreement could be reached.

I inquired what this formula might be. Charvériat said in strict confidence that it might take the following form: a three-power mutual assistance agreement in general terms accompanied by a secret letter in which each partner would set out the specific cases in which it would regard action by an outside power as constituting aggression against it; the other two partners would promise to give assistance in the cases of aggression specified.

Charvériat said that the Soviet representatives had shown themselves extraordinarily suspicious and hard to deal with.

But in fairness to the Soviet Government it should be borne in mind that at no time since the negotiations began had the Soviet Government sought to introduce a new element. It had stated its position on the Baltic States at the outset and had maintained this position consistently.

Charvériat said that there were many stories of extravagant offers being made by Hitler to induce Stalin to break off the Anglo-French negotiations but no confirmation of the report that an important German trade delegation would go shortly to Moscow.¹⁰

WILSON

¹⁰ For correspondence on the course of the negotiations between Germany and the Soviet Union, see pp. 312 ff.

893.102 Tientsin/317: Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State[Extract ¹¹]

LONDON, June 27, 1939—7 p. m.

[Received June 27—4: 40 p. m.]

905. . . .

As to Russia, they ¹² have sent instructions to Strang to express to Russia their willingness to concede finally the point that Russia has been standing out for, that is to name the Balkan [*Baltic?*] States in any agreement. The British said that, having agreed that they will name them, they asked Molotov to reconsider his request on the ground that it will do more harm than good. They also have said that the Russians must add Switzerland and Holland. I asked him what the English will do if the Russians find some excuse for not accepting these terms and Halifax said then they will go back to an original three-power proposition, England, France and Russia in a mutual pact against aggression. He is disposed as to [*is?*] the Government to tell Russia to go jump into the Baltic Sea or any other sea they can find, except that they have been under constant pressure from all their friends who say that the failure of a Russian pact would be psychologically bad for England (my 871, June 21, 8 p. m.¹³).

Halifax feels that the German situation is certainly very restless at the minute but believes that Danzig can be settled between Poland and Germany if Hitler wants it settled; they can get no assurances from him, however, that he wants to do anything with England; certainly not at the minute. They have sent him a reply today on his denunciation of the Anglo-German naval pact, "firm", Halifax said smilingly, but saying that they would be willing to sit down to work out any new basis that would be acceptable.¹⁴

Halifax feels that there is plenty of opportunity for trouble between now and the latter part of July but again it all rests with Mr. Hitler. If he has made up his mind to take England on, no olive branch will have any effect on him and there is a very definite feeling now that that is what he has in the back of his head.

One thing that you must consider in all reports at least from London, and I should think it is quite likely from most other spots, is that

¹¹ For the first part of this telegram, see vol. iv, p. 205.¹² The British Foreign Office.¹³ Not printed.¹⁴ See footnotes 72 and 73, p. 246.

what is going on now is a battle of nerves, and opinions and judgments are more than inclined to be affected by nerves rather than tempered with good common sense.

KENNEDY

740.00/1822 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

[Extract]

PARIS, June 28, 1939—midnight.

[Received June 29—10:40 a. m.]

1217. I talked with Daladier this evening. He said that he personally was convinced that Hitler intended to make war this summer, would begin war by an attack on Danzig. The information of the French General Staff indicated that Germany would have enough men mobilized to strike at any time after July 15. Some of the reports indicated that the Germans would not strike until about August 15. In any event he felt that some time between July 15 and August 15 a crisis of the gravest sort was inevitable.

He added that he felt Hitler might fear to strike if the negotiations of France and England with the Soviet Union should be concluded successfully before July 15 and if the Neutrality Act in the United States should be altered to permit shipments of arms, munitions and implements of war and if the Germans should become convinced that France and England were absolutely determined to fight by the side of Poland. If any one of these three elements should be missing he thought that Hitler would risk war.

Daladier said that the British were now falling over themselves to accede to the Russian demands. Two texts for submission to the Soviet Government had been prepared today. The first contained no specific mention of the Baltic States, the Netherlands, Belgium and Switzerland but would be accompanied by a secret agreement covering them. The second contained a complete acceptance of the Russian demands. Strang, in Moscow, would be instructed tonight or tomorrow to present these two texts to the Soviet Government and to state that the British and French preferred the first text but were ready to accept the second if the Russians should insist.

I asked Daladier if he believed that this would conclude the negotiations or if he believed the Russians would insist on subjecting this political accord to the conclusion of a future military agreement. He said that he had urged the British to take up the question of military agreement with the Russians before taking up the matter of the political agreement but the British had refused to do this. He was by no means certain that the Russians would surrender this demand and

feared that the negotiations might be dragged out indefinitely. The proposal of the British now was that military conversations should begin within a week after the signature of the political agreement.

He added that the Soviet Government had repeatedly assured the French and British Governments that it was not negotiating in any way with the German Government. I expressed doubt, and Daladier said that of course he knew he could not trust any Russian assurances, but that neither the French nor British Embassies nor Secret Services had been able to unearth any information indicating that the Russians were negotiating with the Germans.

Daladier said that in order to convince the Germans that the French support of Poland was certain he had just ordered 42 tanks and a considerable quantity of heavy artillery shipped to Poland. In case Poland and Germany should become involved in war it was absolutely certain that France would declare war on Germany.

BULLITT

741.61/735 : Telegram

The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Grummon) to the Secretary of State

[Extracts]

Moscow, June 29, 1939—2 p. m.

[Received 3:28 p. m.]

353. *Pravda* which appeared late this morning contains a front page article, signed by Zhdanov¹⁵ as Deputy of the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union, under the heading "The British and French Governments Do Not Wish an Equal Treaty With the Soviet Union". . . .

The open accusations of insincerity against the British and French Governments contained in Zhdanov's article constitute a clear attempt to exert pressure on those Governments during the next and possibly critical stages of the negotiations by intimating the possibility of a breakdown thereof unless the Soviet demand for a guarantee of the Baltic States is accepted and have been interpreted in some quarters here as supporting the opinion that one of the purposes of the Soviet tactics in the present negotiations has been to bring about the downfall of the Chamberlain Government. In addition, the views expressed in this article probably reflect an attempt to relieve the Soviet Government in advance of any blame for the delays already encountered or

¹⁵ Andrey Alexandrovich Zhdanov, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Leningrad *oblast* since 1934, and holder of other Party and Government positions.

for a possible failure to reach any agreement. A certain loophole for compromise however may be found in Zhdanov's statement that his point of view regarding British and French insincerity is not shared by "his friends". While it is impossible on the basis of this article to forecast the final attitude of the Soviet Government toward any new Anglo-French proposals which might fall short of a complete surrender to the Soviet position, the views of so important an official as Zhdanov who, although writing in his capacity as a Deputy of the Supreme Soviet, is generally regarded here as among the very closest of Stalin's associates in the Politburo, would appear to indicate a further stiffening of the Soviet attitude toward the present negotiations.

GRUMMON

740.00/1840 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, June 30, 1939—8 p. m.

[Received June 30—3 : 25 p. m.]

1232. Léger said to me today that he still believed there were eighty chances in a hundred that the negotiations between the Soviet Union and France and England would be concluded successfully in the near future.

He thought that the negotiations between the Soviet Government and Germany had broken down during the past week.

The Soviet Government had indicated that it would not seriously consider the political agreement with France and England being invalid [*valid?*] until the conclusion of a subsequent military agreement. The formula which had now been devised to cover the Baltic States, the Netherlands, Belgium and Switzerland involved no direct guarantee of those states but only mutual assistance between France, England and the Soviet Union provided an attack directed against any of the three should be begun by a march through one of the small states named.

Léger said that relations between Poland and France had again become extraordinarily unpleasant. At a moment when it was absolutely essential for the French Government to know the exact thoughts of the Polish Government with regard to Danzig, the Polish Ambassador in Paris was so nervous and irritable that it was impossible to have any really intimate conversation with him. He had insulted both Daladier and Bonnet so grossly that Daladier would no longer see him and Bonnet could get nothing out of him. Similarly Beck in Warsaw had no relations of an intimate nature with the French Ambassador.¹⁶

¹⁶ Léon Noël, French Ambassador in Poland.

As a result all the French Ministers from Daladier down were reluctant to do anything of a concrete nature for Poland. He, Léger, believed that both France and England should give loans to Poland and send airplanes to Poland at once in order to convince the Germans that France and England were determined to support Poland, if Poland should become involved in war with Germany. The Polish Ambassador was entirely right in his demands for such assistance; but his manner of presentation of his demands was such that he killed his own case.

Léger said that a crisis of the gravest nature at some time before the 15th of August was in his opinion inevitable. Such a crisis might develop any day. The news that the House of Representatives was about to pass the Bloom proposals for alterations in the Neutrality Act¹⁷ had just reached him. The passage of these changes undoubtedly would be a large factor in deterring Hitler from making war. The conclusion of the alliance with the Soviet Union would be another such factor.

Léger said that he hoped that the Government of the United States had made clear through diplomatic channels, the interest of the United States in a peaceful and reasonable settlement of the Tientsin incident¹⁸ and the opposition of the United States to the exclusion by Japan of all foreign interests from China. He added that he felt that it was much easier to prevent the Japanese from taking action than to get them to reverse action after it had once been taken. The moment the question of "face" was involved the Japanese were apt to become immovable.

In discussing the possibility that Hitler might risk war Léger expressed the opinion that the Reichswehr was now inclined to have war for the peculiar reason that the Reichswehr had become convinced that Hitler's régime was intolerable and desired to establish its authority in the country and throw out Hitler. His own opinion was that in case of an early outbreak of war Hitler would soon be ousted by the Reichswehr which would then attempt to make peace. This might seem to be highly specious reasoning but he was convinced that the Reichswehr, which had been against war until recently, was now withdrawing its opposition to war.

I have received a peculiar but authoritative bit of information about Hitler's present state of mind. To a man that he is in the habit of receiving once or twice a year, to whom last May he expressed the absolute conviction that war was not in his destiny, he said recently that now he realized that war was in his destiny.

BULLITT

¹⁷ For correspondence regarding revision of United States neutrality legislation, see pp. 656 ff.

¹⁸ See vol. iv, pp. 163 ff.

741.61/755: Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, July 5, 1939—1 p. m.

[Received July 5—11:20 a. m.]

1253. I talked with Daladier this morning. He had just conferred with Blum¹⁹ on the subject of the latest Soviet reply to the French and British. He said that Blum agreed with him that the Soviet Union's latest proposal was totally unacceptable because the Soviet Union had repeated to the French and British the definition of aggression which had been contained in the Soviet Union's note to Estonia, reported in my No. 1071 of June 5, 7 p. m.

Daladier went on to say that the Soviet Union's demand amounted to this: If there should be a change of Government or any other event displeasing to the Soviet Union in any one of the Baltic States the Soviet Union should have carte blanche in advance to invade any one of those states with the full support of France and England. He would never agree to such a demand.

Daladier added that although he had no specific information with regard to negotiations between the Germans and the Russians he feared that they might be most serious.

(When I was in Washington recently I found that our Government was far better informed on this subject than the French or British Governments. I should be greatly obliged if you could give me any information you have with regard to the negotiations between Germany and the Soviet Union which have taken place since the return of Count Schulenburg the German Ambassador to Moscow).²⁰

Daladier went on to say that he was pessimistic about the possibility of preserving peace. He was certain that Hitler would not stop his efforts to get Danzig unless he should be confronted by an absolute determination of England, France and the Soviet Union to fight at once in case the Poles should take up arms in defense of their vital interests.

In addition the action of the House of Representatives with regard to the Neutrality Act²¹ had encouraged Hitler to believe that France and England would receive no arms and ammunition from the United States.

¹⁹ Léon Blum, Socialist member of the French Chamber of Deputies, formerly President of the Council of Ministers.

²⁰ In its telegraphic reply No. 501, July 7, the Department stated: "We have not been informed of any developments of importance."

²¹ In his statement of July 1, the Secretary of State expressed his regret that his proposals of May 27 for a revision of the Neutrality Act had failed to pass the House of Representatives by a narrow margin; Department of State *Bulletin*, July 1, 1939, p. 4.

It was clear that if France, England and Poland should come into war with Germany and Italy—and the Soviet Union should remain neutral—and the United States should refuse to supply arms and ammunition, the prospects of victory for France and England would be much worse than in 1914. Indeed the prospects indicated that France and England would be defeated.

In 1914 Germany with the support of Austria-Hungary had stood against England, France and Russia with the later assistance of Italy. At the present time Germany had all that part of Austria-Hungary which was a source of strength and in addition had Italy and might have Japan; France and England might not have Russia.

Under the circumstances the fight for England, France and Poland would be a desperate one. Nevertheless it would be made. If the Poles should fight—and they would—France and England would fight at once.

He felt that Hitler would certainly decide to make war unless the Soviet Union should agree in the immediate future to an alliance with France and England and unless our Neutrality Act should be changed to permit the export of arms and munitions.

BULLITT

741.61/756 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, July 5, 1939—8 p. m.

[Received July 5—5:35 p. m.]

942. My 936, July 3, 8 p. m.²² I have just talked with Halifax. They have just prepared another reply for Russia which they have today submitted to the French for approval. The British have agreed to accept the refusal of Russia to guarantee Holland and Switzerland. They refused to accept an additional Russian demand that the Baltic States be guaranteed against "indirect aggression". Halifax is at a loss to understand what "indirect aggression" means. If this is not agreeable to the Russians, they will suggest reverting to the original three-power pact.

It is plain to see, after talking to Halifax, that the Russian agreement, aside from its psychological value, is really a negative agreement rather than a positive one. In other words they would like to tie up Russia so that there is no possibility of the Russians considering a deal with Germany. He told me he had talked with the Finnish Minister²³ this afternoon and tried to persuade him that

²² Not printed.

²³ Georg Achates Gripenberg.

the procedure of guarantee should not be an annoyance to Finland, but the Finnish Minister was too polite to argue with him, just smiled and acted as if he did not believe one word of it and Halifax said he did not blame him.

The Tientsin situation is getting much worse. They look for more trouble in Tientsin and a bad situation for the negotiations in Tokyo. Halifax is of the opinion that before long they must start to withdraw from Tientsin.

As far as the Polish and Danzig situation is concerned, there is nothing new. (My 931, July 1, 2 p. m.).²⁴ They are going to continue to air every sort of rumor in the press for two reasons: one, to get people used to this type of warfare and the other to keep Germany denying it. Halifax is of the belief that England appearing stronger all the time is having an effect in Germany.

He is not as concerned as a great many others are at the failure of the passage of the Neutrality Act in America. He thinks that as long as the papers say that America will act if there is trouble and that is brought to the front, that will be satisfactory.

KENNEDY

740.00/1887: Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, July 7, 1939—5 p. m.
[Received July 7—2:52 p. m.]

1269. This afternoon Bonnet said to me that the instructions had now been sent to the British and French Ambassadors in Moscow ordering them to say to the Soviet Government that the Soviet definition of indirect aggression was totally unacceptable to the French and British Governments. He said that the portion of the Soviet note which had especially shocked the French and British was the phrase that any change in the make-up of the Government of any of the Baltic States which tended to favor an aggressor "must lead to immediate military action by the Soviet Union, France and England." Bonnet added that this phrase if accepted would make it possible for the Soviet Union to invade any of the Baltic States at any minute on any flimsy pretext with the armed support of France and England. It was obvious that neither France nor England could accept any such proposal.

Bonnet added that the French and British Ambassadors in Moscow had been given a large number of alternative definitions of aggression which they would propose to Molotov tomorrow, requesting him to

²⁴ Not printed.

choose from among them. They had also been ordered to inform the Soviet Union that France and England were ready to adjourn immediate signature of an agreement with regard to Switzerland and Holland provided the Russians would agree to discuss the matter later.

I asked Bonnet if he still thought the negotiations with the Soviet Union could be brought to a successful conclusion. He replied that he really had no idea. The Russian demands had been so extraordinary that he was no longer certain that the Soviet Government really desired to reach agreement.

He asked me if I had any information as to conversations between the Soviet Government and the German Government. I replied that I had not. He said that the French information indicated that discussions were going on but that they probably were confined to commercial matters.

As I said in my No. 1253 July 5, 1 p. m. I should be greatly obliged if you could give me any information on this subject which has reached you recently.

Bonnet said that relations between France and Poland were again becoming intimate. British and French loans to Poland would be given in the course of the next few days. The Poles had explained their position with regard to Danzig in detail to both the French and British Governments and their plans had received the fullest approval of the British and French Governments.

He added that the Polish, British and French Governments had decided to make no *démarche* in Berlin with regard to Danzig but that Beck might decide to communicate directly with the Danzig Senate. If he should do so he would have the support of both the British and French Governments (Lord Lothian who has just come from England has convinced me that the British Government intends to back the Poles to the limit).

Bonnet said that it was not clear whether the Germans had 10,000 German troops in Danzig or only 6,000. If some night the Germans should land heavy cannon at Danzig in addition to the machine guns and light artillery already there the Poles would be compelled to act; but for the moment the Polish Government was preserving a complete equanimity which was based upon an absolute determination to fight if necessary.

Bonnet said that Marshal Pétain, who was doing an admirable job, was now absolutely convinced that in case of war Spain would remain neutral. He was uncertain, however, whether or not in a disguised manner the Spaniards might not give bases to Italian and German submarines.

With regard to Italy, Bonnet said that Ciano and all other members of the Italian Government at the moment were becoming much more

amiable in their conversations with representatives of French Government. His impression was that the people of Italy were deeply reluctant to be dragged into war by Germany and that even Mussolini was beginning to be worried seriously by the prospects. He thought that if Germany should go to war with Poland, Mussolini still would drive Italy into the war but that the Italians would fight with little heart.

BULLITT

741.61/765 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, July 8, 1939—4 p. m.
[Received July 8—11:48 a. m.]

954. My 942, July 5, 8 p. m. first two paragraphs. The Russian demand for guaranteeing of the Baltic States against "indirect aggression" according to the Foreign Office was defined by Molotov as including "a *coup d'état* or a change of policy". Such a definition, which could be interpreted to include almost anything, is regarded by the Foreign Office as absurd and an official expressed the opinion that the Cabinet would *not* consent to undertake such an obligation. In the last instructions sent to Moscow, the British have made the counter proposals that indirect aggression be defined as something which a guaranteed state might be compelled to accept by threat of force and which would jeopardize the independence of the country or nullify its neutrality. The willingness expressed by Molotov to consider the inclusion of Holland and Switzerland in the states to be guaranteed, provided reciprocal agreements are reached between Russia on the one part and Poland and Turkey on the other, would only serve to delay further the conclusion of an Anglo-French-Russian agreement and for this reason the British are prepared to drop the question of a guarantee by Russia of Holland and Switzerland. Any present agreement could of course be implemented in this sense in the future if and when agreements are reached between Russia and Poland and Turkey.

A view has been expressed by the Foreign Office that a highly probable objective of Russia with respect to the Baltic States is to establish in effect a Russian protectorate over those countries, for which the treaty of guarantee might afford a convenient machinery.²⁵

²⁵ The enforcement by the Soviet Union of pacts of mutual assistance upon Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania is described in *Foreign Relations, The Soviet Union, 1933-1939*, pp. 934 ff. The refusal of Finland to accede to demands by the Soviet Union and the Soviet aggression against Finland are described, *ibid.*, pp. 785 ff.

Publicity regarding details of proposals and counter proposals in the negotiations is said to emanate from Russian sources in London.

KENNEDY

740.00/1931 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, July 19, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received July 19—1 : 10 p. m.]

1022. I just saw Halifax. He said that their final word to the Russians now is that they will accept the military pact but will not accept the Russians' definition of indirect aggression and, if the Russians insist on it, the English are going to call the whole deal off.

Craigie²⁶ again started discussions in Japan this morning but Halifax is not at all hopeful.

They are getting undercurrent [of] confidence that Hitler's next move, instead of against Danzig, is to be against Hungary. However, Halifax said that Beck told him last week that he did not anticipate any real trouble, but a state of jitters for the next 12 months.

I asked Halifax whether he thought the situation might become acute in the near future. He said he had no definite information but in the next breath asked me how long it would take me to get back. I told him about 5 hours and he said he would keep my office informed and would call on me to come back if he saw the situation tightening.

I am seeing the Prime Minister at 12 o'clock tomorrow.

KENNEDY

741.61/779 : Telegram

The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Grummon) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, July 19, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received July 19—2 p. m.]

393. My 378, July 10, 10 [3] p. m.²⁷ The meeting between the French and British Ambassadors, Strang and Molotov which took place on July 17 was reported in the press yesterday without comment beyond a statement that "protracted negotiations" took place.

A member of the British Embassy has stated that the latest meeting marked little or no progress towards a final solution of outstanding

²⁶ Sir R. L. Craigie, British Ambassador to Japan. Reference is apparently to the situation at Tientsin; see vol. iv, pp. 163 ff.

²⁷ Not printed.

points and indicated that the points of difference centered primarily around the definition of indirect aggression in respect of the Baltic States and the matter of the chronology of military conventions with relation to the political agreement. The impression was received that although each meeting has narrowed the gap between the Soviet and Franco-British positions on the points at issue the British negotiators themselves were still very much in doubt as to the ultimate intentions of the Soviet Government in respect of an alliance with England and France.

In respect of the general question of Soviet adherence to the anti-German front it is of some interest to note that members of the German Embassy who until recently were of the opinion that the Soviet Union would in the last resort sign some sort of an agreement with England and France are now openly confident that the Soviet Union will not align itself with England and France against Germany on the ground that the Soviet Union will not be disposed to run the risk of unnecessary war with Germany by openly aligning itself with the latter's enemies which would have the effect of directing German animosity against the Soviet Union. Insofar as I have been able to ascertain there are no specific grounds for this change in opinion in German circles here, although members of that Embassy here state in confidence that vague intimations of a Soviet reluctance to conclude an agreement with England and France have been conveyed by Soviet diplomats abroad to their German colleagues. It is possible also that the comparatively favorable reception given by Molotov to the observation of the German Ambassador (see my telegram No. 359 July 1, 9 [10] a. m.²⁸) may have had a certain effect in determining the views of the German Embassy here.

GRUMMON

740.00/1936 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, July 20, 1939—7 p. m.
[Received July 20—3:38 p. m.]

1034. I have just seen the Prime Minister. On the whole he is fairly optimistic about the outlook for the next 30 days. He is planning to go on vacation on August 5th and hopes to be away a reasonable length of time.

He told me he was sick and disgusted with the Russians and while he believes that the Russians are willing to continue talking without

²⁸ *Post*, p. 327.

accomplishing anything his patience is exhausted. He told me he had a conversation with Prince Paul of Yugoslavia and Prince Paul was definitely of the opinion that if England did not consummate a deal with the Russians, Germany would. The Prime Minister said he does not feel there is any danger of that. He thinks that the Russians have made up their minds probably not to make a deal with anybody but to watch them all tear themselves apart.

There is nothing new on the situation in China but it does not look very pleasant at the moment.

Chamberlain is now convinced that Hitler is definitely aware that England proposes to fight if need be; he is not one of those who believes that Hitler is not most intelligent. On the contrary Chamberlain believes that Hitler is highly intelligent and therefore would not be prepared to wage a world war. He thinks that England's movements, beginning with conscription and now the calling up of the reserves in the navy, have made a definite impression on Hitler and may cause him to change his mind about taking a gamble on a world war. He is not joyful over the prospects, but he is not unduly depressed.

With all the preparations that are going on for war and with all the seeming tension points all over Europe, there is still a belief that war can be averted. If that happens, we are witnessing the greatest and most expensive dress rehearsal that has ever taken place for a show that is never going to be produced.

He discussed the British political situation with me and I am writing a letter to the President today on this subject and will send a copy to you.²⁹

KENNEDY

741.61/791 : Telegram

The Chargé in the United Kingdom (Johnson) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, July 27, 1939—8 p. m.

[Received July 27—3:50 p. m.]

1077. Embassy's 1022, July 19, 5 p. m., paragraph 1. The British negotiators at Moscow were instructed on July 20 to state that the British Government would agree to simultaneous entry into force of the political and military agreements but must insist on preserving at least the substance of the British formula on indirect aggression (Embassy's 954, July 8, 4 p. m., paragraph 1), adding if essential a provision for consultation if a case of aggression should

²⁹ Not found in Department files.

arise not covered by the British definition; and would be prepared as a last resort to agree, pending discussion of the article in the agreement on indirect aggression, to immediate military conversations at whatever place might be agreed to.

According to the Foreign Office Molotov, having secured acceptance by the British and the French of his demand for simultaneous entry into force of the political and military agreements, refused on July 23 to discuss indirect aggression. He treated outstanding political points as details which would be settled during military discussions whose commencement immediately he concentrated upon as the main necessity for impressing aggressive powers. Nor would he commit himself to accept as a basis for definition of indirect aggression the two British principles that the state in question must (*a*) be acting under threat of force and (*b*) that its acting must involve abandonment of its independence and neutrality. In view of their instructions, the British and French Ambassadors were therefore compelled to state that they must inquire of their Governments whether they would be prepared to initiate military conversations immediately in Moscow while leaving the outstanding political points to be discussed in connection with the military conversations.

Instructions have now been sent to the British Ambassador at Moscow agreeing to immediate initiation of military conversations on the understanding that discussions in regard to indirect aggression, to which the British Government attaches capital importance, be resumed at once.

According to the Foreign Office a further instruction to Moscow is now under preparation, designed to reemphasize their insistence on the British formula. A Foreign Office official stated that they will not accept Molotov's definition of indirect aggression, nor are they disposed to offer another formula themselves.

JOHNSON

741.61/794 : Telegram

The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Grummon) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, July 28, 1939—4 p. m.
[Received July 28—1: 55 p. m.]

413. My 405, July 25.³⁰ The Moscow press this morning announces without comment that a further conversation took place yesterday between Molotov and the French and British Ambassadors and Strang.

³⁰ Not printed.

I am informed in the strictest confidence by the latter that substantial agreement on most points involved in the political understanding has now been reached, although important definitions and many details still remain to be agreed upon. He said that during the last conversation with Molotov the latter had expressed the view of the Soviet Government that the time has now arrived for staff talks between the military representatives of the three powers, that the British and French Governments have acceded to this Soviet viewpoint and that he expects French and British military missions, the composition of which is as yet unknown to him, to reach Moscow within approximately 10 days.

With regard to the political phase of the negotiations he stated that in the main it provides, (1) for assistance to be rendered to any one of the three powers in case of its involvement in hostilities resulting from direct attack upon it, and (2) assistance in case of direct or indirect attack upon certain countries or areas deemed what he roughly defined as of strategic importance to that country. The agreement also provides for frequent consultation between the three powers with regard to European developments involving the possible application of the pact. According to Strang's belief point (1) above would ultimately be made public, while he doubted that the second point would be published and felt sure that the military agreement, if achieved, would remain secret. Strang used the word "vital" as conveying the idea applied to the countries or areas referred to in (2) above but not as the word that would necessarily be employed in defining such a case. It is precisely this difficult phase of the political situation, he asserted, which is giving the most trouble and upon which all bargaining powers are still working to achieve an adequate definition. He added that although a large measure of agreement has now been reached between the three Governments on the general political phases of the understanding, nevertheless the Soviet Government holds to the view that neither the political nor the military offer for the probable phase can stand alone, and that therefore until the military conversations have been completed and have resulted in an agreement, any political understanding must remain in abeyance. The idea, however, he stated is deemed to be not altogether objectionable since with or without an actual signed instrument the substantial measure of political agreement now achieved, together with the military conversations agreed upon, will tend to act as a deterrent to further aggressive acts on the part of the Axis powers. Strang stated that the military conversations may be protracted, but expressed optimism regarding an early conclusion of the political agreement, and the expectation that he would be able to depart from Moscow upon the conclusion of the latter.

741.61/799 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, July 31, 1939—5 p. m.
[Received July 31—3 : 02 p. m.]

1415. Léger said to me this afternoon that no progress had been made in Moscow yesterday with regard to agreement on a definition of "indirect aggression". It would not be possible, therefore, for Chamberlain to make any very definite statement in the House of Commons.

The French and British negotiators for the military agreement would not reach Moscow for another 8 or 10 days. It would, therefore, be impossible to expect any binding agreement with the Soviet Union before the latter part of August. Léger added that neither the French nor the British representatives in Moscow had any doubt that an agreement finally would be concluded.

In spite of the delay in the Moscow negotiations Léger expressed the opinion that both Hitler and Mussolini had become most hesitant to begin the war for which they had so carefully prepared.

It was obvious to both Hitler and Mussolini that France and England would fight and were well prepared to fight. It was obvious also that Poland would fight; that the Soviet Union would probably support Poland; that Japan in view of the attitude taken by the United States could not be counted on to attack the Soviet Union or the British and French possessions in the Far East; and that Franco would give no military help to Italy and Germany. Hitler and Mussolini were therefore in the position of horses that wanted to jump a fence but were afraid to jump because it seemed too high.

He thought that Hitler's continued concentration of troops in Danzig and other activities in Danzig might bring on war for the simple reason that one of these acts finally would be the straw that would break the camel's back of Poland's patience. Any act which should infringe on Poland's rights with regard to the Westerplatte, the port, the customs, or the railroad might constitute a last straw.

If Hitler should continue to encourage the present Nazi activities in Danzig a moment would come therefore when the Poles would be obliged to act. The Polish Government would not talk but would order troops to enter Danzig. The German troops in Danzig would resist and it would be almost impossible for Hitler not to support them by making war on Poland—which would automatically produce a general European conflict.

BULLITT

741.61/798 : Telegram

*The Chargé in the United Kingdom (Johnson) to the Secretary of State*LONDON, July 31, 1939—8 p. m.
[Received July 31—3 : 59 p. m.]

1096. My 1094, July 31, 6 p. m.²¹ I understand from the Foreign Office that Molotov rejected an Anglo-French proposal for a joint statement by the three powers regarding military conversations and that the Soviet Government will make no statement until the military talks show practical results. Molotov also disapproved of unilateral statements by the French and British Governments. The British and French Governments are consulting in regard to the virtual combination of the French and British military delegations and their dispatch to Moscow at the earliest practicable date.

According to the Foreign Office the Government feels that, in view of the fact that there is no longer any hope of a political agreement with Russia being brought to early fulfillment and also in view of the fact that there is no apparent danger of an imminent breakdown of the negotiations, a stiffer line must be taken toward Russian demands during the next critical weeks unless these demands are balanced by concessions. The British Ambassador has therefore been instructed to press strongly for acceptance of the British formula on aggression (Embassy's 954, July 8, 4 p. m., paragraph 1) and is not authorized to go beyond that except for a proviso for consultation in a case of aggression not covered by the British definition (my 1077, July 27, 8 p. m.).

JOHNSON

741.61/810 : Telegram

*The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Grummon) to the Secretary of State*Moscow, August 3, 1939—3 p. m.
[Received August 3—11 : 55 a. m.]

422. My telegram No. 413, July 28. The meeting which took place yesterday between Molotov, the British and French Ambassadors and Strang was not reported in the Soviet press today. I am informed in strict confidence by Strang that no important developments took place at that meeting which was devoted largely to a discussion of certain problems of housing, et cetera, of the French and British military missions which are expected in Moscow at the end of this week or the beginning of next. In addition further discussion without notable progress took place regarding the formula to define "indirect

²¹ Not printed.

aggression". Both sides Strang stated are agreed that "indirect aggression" must be covered. However, it appears that the Russian draft is susceptible of a somewhat "sinister" interpretation. While the French and British representatives, it was stated, have assured Molotov that they do not suspect the Soviet Government of any such intentions, they nevertheless are unwilling to put their names to an instrument in any way susceptible of such an interpretation, which moreover might possibly be used for force purposes against their Governments.

I gained the impression that weeks of discussion are expected between the British and French military missions and the Soviet military and that meanwhile unless an early agreement should be reached in the political discussions the latter may possibly remain in abeyance. Strang indicated that he did not expect an early signature of the pact in view of the Soviet insistence that the military and political features of the agreement be considered as a unit.

GRUMMON

741.61/824a

The Under Secretary of State (Welles) to the Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt)

WASHINGTON, August 4, 1939.

MY DEAR AMBASSADOR: The President has asked me to send you these urgent lines, which will reach you as soon as I can get them to you,³² to let you know that in a conversation had with Oumansky³³ just before the latter left Washington, the President gave him to understand that while he was making no suggestion, much less any official indication of any desire on the part of this Government, he nevertheless wished to make it clear that this Government was viewing the present situation in an objective manner. The President said that if war were now to break out in Europe and in the Far East and were the axis powers to gain a victory, the position of both the United States and of the Soviet Union would inevitably be immediately and materially affected thereby. In such event, the position of the Soviet Union would be affected more rapidly than the position of the United States. For these reasons, while he was, of course, in no position either to accept any responsibility or to give any assurances as to the possible course which Great Britain and France might undertake in connection with their present negotiations with the Soviet Union, the President could not help but feel that if a satis-

³² In letters to Ambassador William C. Bullitt in France, dated August 4, the Under Secretary of State advised him to forward this letter by an officer of his staff on a special courier trip to Moscow, and to proceed at once (741.61/825a, 826a).

³³ Konstantin Alexandrovich Umansky, Soviet Ambassador in the United States.

factory agreement against aggression on the part of other European powers were reached, it would prove to have a decidedly stabilizing effect in the interest of world peace, in the maintenance of which, of course, the United States as well as the Soviet Union had a fundamental interest.

The President believes that it would be desirable for you at this juncture to reiterate to Mr. Molotov at the first opportunity the views which he so expressed, with the understanding, of course, that the transmission of these views shall be regarded as absolutely and completely confidential.

Please do not refer to the subject matter of this letter in any telegram which you may send the Department. I suggest that when this message is delivered you send me a personal telegram referring to the date of this personal letter to you and merely add "Message delivered".

My best regards [etc.]

[File copy not signed.]

741.61/815: Telegram

The Chargé in the United Kingdom (Johnson) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, August 8, 1939—8 p. m.

[Received August 8—2:25 p. m.]

1140. My 1096, July 31, 8 p. m. The Foreign Office sees no hope of an early termination of the Anglo-French-Russian negotiations for a political agreement and the military mission which has now left for Moscow³⁴ has been told to make every effort to prolong its discussions until October 1. Negotiations by the Ambassador for a political agreement which hangs almost entirely on the question of "indirect aggression" are to continue simultaneously.

JOHNSON

741.61/834: Telegram

The Chargé in the United Kingdom (Johnson) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, August 16, 1939—7 p. m.

[Received August 16—3:30 p. m.]

1173. My 1140, August 8, 8 p. m. I had a short conversation this afternoon with Strang who has recently returned from Moscow.

³⁴ The British and French military missions arrived in Moscow on August 11, 1939.

He says that he personally is not pessimistic as to the possibility of reaching a political agreement with Russia. The military conversations, as far as it is possible to judge, are proceeding satisfactorily with some evidence that they are being taken seriously by the Russians and that a concrete result may be reached. The military mission has therefore been instructed to push its talks to a conclusion as fast as is practicable and additional instructions are now under consideration for dispatch to the Ambassador regarding the political agreement. Strang personally believes that it is possible to find a formula covering "indirect aggression" which when published will show the guaranteed states who have been in such a guarantee that their fears had no substantial foundation.

JOHNSON

741.61/835 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, August 16, 1939—7 p. m.
[Received August 16—4:10 p. m.]

1502. I was informed by Bonnet this morning that Voroshilov³⁵ had stated to the French and British military and naval negotiators in Moscow that the first condition for Soviet military cooperation with France and England was that the Polish Government should announce to the Soviet Government its willingness to permit the Red Army to enter Poland by way of Vilna on the north and by way of Lemberg (Lwow) on the south for the purpose of combating the German armies in case France, England and Poland should become involved in war with Germany. Bonnet added that he had sent at once for the Polish Ambassador and had informed him of this condition of the Russians. He said that the Polish Ambassador had stated as a personal opinion that the Polish Government would never agree in advance of war to permit the entry of Bolshevik troops into the territory of Poland.

The Polish Ambassador agreed, however, to communicate the Soviet proposal to his Government together with Bonnet's plea that it should be accepted.

Bonnet for obvious reasons was most insistent that this proposal of the Soviet Government should be kept absolutely secret.

BULLITT

³⁵ Marshal Kliment Efremovich Voroshilov, People's Commissar for Defense of the Soviet Union.

741.61/8284

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Under Secretary of State (Welles)

Moscow, August 16, 1939.

[Received August 29.]

MY DEAR MR. WELLES: This letter is in reply to your personal and strictly confidential letter of August 4.

On the morning of August 11, the *Voelkischer Beobachter* of Berlin carried a news report from its Moscow correspondent to the effect that "Upon the visit to Molotov of the American Ambassador, before the presentation of his credentials, he handed to the Soviet Foreign Commissar a detailed letter from President Roosevelt dealing with international affairs" (see telegram number 776, August 11, 2 p. m., from our Berlin Embassy to the Department³⁶).

On the morning of August 14, the Moscow press published an official denial by the Tass Agency of the existence of any such letter or of the alleged details of its supposed contents as set forth by a *Polish* newspaper (*Ilustrowany Kurjer Codzenny*).³⁷ (See my telegram number 445 of August 14, 11 a. m., to the Department.)³⁸

On August 15 at 11 a. m., Mr. MacArthur, Second Secretary of our Embassy in Paris, arrived in Moscow and immediately handed me your letter under seal. The receipt by me on August 15 of your letter was, of course, the first knowledge that anyone in this Embassy, including myself, had of the existence of your letter to me.

From the foregoing chronology, I think there are two inescapable conclusions to be drawn: (1) that Oumansky—who arrived in Moscow about three weeks ago—in reporting his conversation with the President to Molotov must have intimated that the President was sending a communication to Molotov which would be brought by me, and that in consequence rumor of the supposed existence of such a letter was deliberately inspired by Soviet sources—presumably to serve some Soviet purpose in connection with the pending Anglo-French and German negotiations; (2) the fact that the rumor appeared *first* in the *Voelkischer Beobachter*, whereas the denial was aimed at the same item appearing two days later in a Polish newspaper, indicates that the Soviet authorities in inspiring the rumor desired that it come to the attention of the German authorities.

Immediately upon receipt of your letter, I requested an interview with Mr. Molotov, which was granted this afternoon. I conveyed the message verbally, exactly as it appears in your letter to me, and

³⁶ Not printed.

³⁷ *Ilustrowany Kurjer Codzienny* of Cracow.

after doing so inquired of Molotov whether there were any views that he cared to express. As it is the practice here for an interpreter to take down everything an Ambassador says, I could see no reason why I should not take down Molotov's reply, to which he acquiesced, so that the following is a word-for-word transcript of his reply.

He started by saying that the views I had just conveyed to him were of great interest and value to his Government, which considers the situation in Europe at the present time to be most serious, and that in consequence his Government was attaching great importance to the pending negotiations with Britain and France. He then said that he well understood that the United States was "aside" from taking any "immediate" part in European affairs, but that he knew that President Roosevelt held close to his heart a deep interest in and desire for the preservation of world peace, and that for this reason his Government would attach the greatest interest and the utmost importance to the views just expressed. He continued, that from the start of the negotiations with Britain and France his Government had been unwilling that the negotiations should end "in merely general declarations"; that he did not regard general declarations as sufficient; that for this reason at the beginning of the negotiations and "even now" his Government had been and was insisting that any agreement must deal with "obligations of mutual assistance in order to counteract any possible aggression in Europe." He then stated categorically "We are not interested in declarations. We are desirous that the present negotiations lead to a determination of the action to be taken under specific conditions or circumstances—and that there shall be mutual obligations to counteract an aggression." He observed that the mutual obligations to be undertaken were only to be of a defensive character in Europe, and "We would not go into any agreement aiming at an attack on anybody." He stopped at this point, indicating that he had nothing further to say; and, in the hope of encouraging him to continue, I asked to have his last two or three comments restated. As restated, these comments read: "All of the negotiations with Britain and France which have taken place thus far we value, in so far as they may lead to an agreement for mutual defensive assistance against direct or indirect aggression in Europe."

I then asked him whether it was a fair question for me to request his personal opinion as to the probable outcome of the negotiations. To this he replied "We have spent much time negotiating—this shows we expect the negotiations to succeed—but we are not to be blamed for the delay—the delay has not been caused by us alone. At present I cannot say any more to you than I have already said—what the outcome of the negotiations will be depends on the others as much as on us. Much has already been done towards success and, as you

know, the negotiations are continuing." After the customary amenities, the interview was concluded.

I should add that at the commencement of the interview I stressed the confidential nature of what I was about to say and obtained Mr. Molotov's assurance that there would be no publicity as a result of anything I might say and that the strictest confidence would be observed. At the close of the interview, I again enjoined secrecy upon him, to which he nodded his assent vigorously. I even went so far as to say to him that unless I could be certain that conversations on matters of a confidential nature would be treated as such I would find the difficulties of a frank exchange of views materially enhanced. To this he replied that he quite understood the situation.

It is my personal impression, from the limited background I have been able to pick up since my recent arrival here, and from the atmosphere surrounding my talk with Molotov—which, as you know, is frequently more important than the words spoken—that while the Soviet authorities are genuinely desirous that peace should be preserved, they are particularly anxious to avoid being drawn into any European conflict—at least at the beginning, if for no other reason than because of their internal difficulties and the threat to their political as well as economic program which would result from the outbreak of a general European war at the present time, the guiding principle of their European policy being to assure the non-violation of their frontiers; and they are deliberately carrying on negotiations with the French and British on the one hand and the Germans on the other, in the hope of thereby avoiding the outbreak of war before the beginning of October; that with this object in view they are intentionally dragging the negotiations out with the hope of finding Japan in a weaker position by next spring, the British and French rearmament progressed to the point where they need no longer fear Germany and can then take advantage of these developments by expanded commercial relations with Germany—which would be much to their advantage—while at the same time presenting a more aggressive front to Japan in the Far East. In all of my interviews thus far with the various higher officials of the Soviet Government, I have been forcibly struck by their active interest in and their repeated references to the situation in the Far East and their apparent indifference to the European situation. (For greater detail on this subject, I take the liberty of referring you to several despatches which I have sent to the Department in the past two or three days.)³⁸

In accordance with the instructions contained in the closing paragraph of your letter to me, I sent you a personal telegram this after-

³⁸ See despatch No. 16, August 16, from the Ambassador in the Soviet Union, *Foreign Relations, The Soviet Union, 1933-1939*, p. 775.

noon immediately after returning from the Kremlin, reading "Message delivered."

Mr. MacArthur is taking this letter with him tomorrow to Paris.

With kindest personal regards,

Sincerely yours,

LAURENCE A. STEINHARDT

761.6211/61 : Telegram

The Chargé in the United Kingdom (Johnson) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, August 22, 1939—2 p. m.

[Received August 22—10:15 a. m.]

1209. The news which was received in London very late last night, that both Berlin and Moscow have announced the intention to conclude a Russo-German non-aggression pact³⁹ and that Ribbentrop is to fly to Moscow to sign the agreement, is reported in the press with frank surprise. The Foreign Office this morning informed me that they had so far received no information in regard to the matter other than the published communiqués from Berlin and Moscow. According to the press, this latest news has caused the Prime Minister to summon for this afternoon a meeting of the entire Cabinet instead of the limited meeting of Ministers which had been previously contemplated. All members of the Cabinet are understood now to be in London with the exception of Lord Maugham,⁴⁰ who is in Canada.

A reliable American press correspondent informed me that he talked last night with Ambassador Maisky after midnight; that the Ambassador apparently had had no previous information regarding the reported Russo-German move and warned the correspondent against drawing too many implications; the Ambassador suggested that it might be simply another maneuver on the part of Germany to drive a wedge between Great Britain and Russia.

However that may be, it appears to me that it signifies at least the failure of one of the principal conferences on that subject, objectives of the Anglo-French-Russian negotiations which was to prevent Russia from aligning herself in any way with the Axis powers. While it is too early, with imperfect knowledge of what the move means and what is intended, to draw any conclusions, it appears from any interpretation to be a serious setback for the Anglo-French "stop Hitler" movement, and can hardly fail to be so regarded here.

³⁹ For notice of the German announcement of the intention of the German and Soviet Governments to conclude a nonaggression pact, see telegram No. 852, August 21, midnight, from the Chargé in Germany, p. 337.

⁴⁰ Lord Chancellor in the British Cabinet.

The news came too late to allow for much comment or reaction in this morning's papers. Insofar as expressed, however, the common reaction has been well stated by the *Daily Herald*: "The announcement is so staggering as to appear hardly credible" after observing that by all standards of international good faith it would seem inconceivable that such a pact of friendship should be negotiated by Soviet Russia with Germany at this stage when Germany directly threatens the peace of Europe and when Russia is in the very midst of negotiations with Great Britain and France. The *Daily Herald* observes "such a pact can represent at this moment only a direct incentive to Germany to continue her campaign against Poland—almost an invitation on Russia's part for her to take what action she wills".

In a more partisan vein, the *Daily Herald*, commenting on the criminal hesitation on the part of the British and French Governments in their relations with Russia and the latter's comprehensible distrust of them, goes on to say "but it can provide no excuse for what, if it is true, is a bigger betrayal of peace and of European freedom even than Munich. The issues which now face Britain and Europe are of the gravest character. . . .⁴¹ During the next few days the issue of peace or war may well be decided".

The *Daily Mail* comments very briefly. After referring to the unparalleled situation which thus appears to have been created, it suggests the far reaching implications that such a step must have, namely in signifying the end of the Franco-Russian Treaty for Mutual Assistance and in cancelling the Anti-Comintern Pact entered into by Germany, Italy, Japan and Spain.⁴²

JOHNSON

760C.62/1152

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Under Secretary of State
(Welles)*

[WASHINGTON,] August 22, 1939.

The Polish Ambassador⁴³ called to see me this morning. The Ambassador read to me a telegram he had just received from his Foreign Minister. Colonel Beck stated that the Polish Government

⁴¹ Omission indicated in the original telegram.

⁴² The Anti-Comintern Pact was concluded between Germany and Japan on November 25, 1936; for text, see *Foreign Relations, Japan, 1931-1941*, vol. II, p. 153, and for the text of the secret additional protocol, see *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, Series D, vol. I, p. 734, footnote 2a. Italy adhered to the Anti-Comintern Pact by a protocol signed at Rome on November 6, 1937; for text, see *ibid.*, p. 26. The adherence of Spain took place on March 27, 1939, by a protocol signed at Burgos; for text, see *ibid.*, vol. III, p. 881.

⁴³ Count Jerzy Potocki.

had never believed that the Soviet Government was sincere in its alleged desire to conclude any political or military agreement with France and Great Britain, and that the announcement of the intended conclusion of a non-aggression pact between Russia and Germany consequently did not affect the Polish position in any way. Colonel Beck stated that Poland from the outset had stated clearly its unwillingness to enter into any agreement providing for the passage of Russian troops, or even Russian airplanes, over Polish territory, and that consequently the attitude of Poland in this regard could in no sense be regarded as the cause for the breakdown in the negotiations between Great Britain and France and the Soviets. Colonel Beck stated that it was his understanding that the Soviet agreement with Germany would contain a clause automatically voiding the contemplated non-aggression pact provided war broke out as a result of an attack by Germany on any third European country. He was also informed that no agreement had as yet been reached in principle between Germany and the Soviet with regard to many important points, particularly the policy to be pursued by Germany vis-à-vis Japan. In general the message was very calm and reiterated the fact that the Polish Government would rely on the pledges given it by Great Britain and France and would make no concessions of any kind to threats of aggression from Germany.

The Ambassador said that this message from his Government was very reassuring; that he individually was deeply concerned because of the possible effect which the announcement of the intended agreement would have upon public opinion in England and in France. He said that he was afraid it might force the British Government into a further appeasement policy. I said that as yet I had no information as to the attitude of these two Governments from our Embassies in London or Paris.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

740.00/2106 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, August 22, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received 5:30 p. m.]

1543. Daladier said to me this afternoon that the action of the Soviet Government in signing a non-aggression pact with Germany,⁴⁴ the secret clauses of which were unknown, placed France in a most tragic and terrible situation.

⁴⁴ For text of the treaty, together with the secret additional protocol, signed at Moscow on August 23, 1939, see Department of State, *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941* (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1948), p. 76.

He said that he could not understand how the French diplomats and negotiators could have been so deceived by the Russians. He reminded me that at least six times since last January I had warned him that most serious negotiations were under way between the Germans and the Russians and said that he had told all the French Government services to attempt to verify my statements to him but had been reassured that there were no negotiations other than the commercial negotiations in progress between Germany and the Soviet Union.

The entire diplomatic structure which he had attempted to build up had been destroyed by this act of the Russians. Turkey had made it clear that unless an alliance should be signed between the Soviet Union, France and England, Turkey could not give military assistance to Rumania. Rumania deprived of both Russian and Turkish support was bound to fall without resistance into the arms of Germany. Poland could not be supplied with arms and ammunition except by way of Russia and the agreement between the Soviet Union and Germany would mean that the Poles would have to fight their battle against the Germans alone except for the support the French could give by engaging a number of German divisions on the French-German frontier.

He believed that in spite of their courage the Poles could not hold out against the German armies for more than 2 months. Thereafter the entire brunt of the war on land against Germany and Italy would fall on the French Army. The British could not have a serious army ready for another 2 years.

Furthermore he believed that as soon as England and France should become engaged in Europe, Japan would begin taking over French, British and Dutch possessions in the Pacific.

Under the circumstances he was faced with the alternative of sacrificing the lives of all able-bodied men in France in a war, the outcome of which would be to say the least doubtful; or the worse alternative of abandoning the commitments of France to support Poland which would be a horrible moral blow to the French people and would result in Germany swallowing one after another, Poland, Rumania, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey. In the end Germany would turn on France and England with all the economic resources of these countries at her disposal.

The decision which he faced was therefore one of the most profound gravity.

He felt that the Poles had been guilty of criminal folly in not replying in the affirmative to the Russians' proposal for active assistance to Poland. This morning Beck had received the French Ambassador to Warsaw and had pretended to be delighted that the Russians had now made their position clear. Beck had stated to the French Amba-

sador that Poland would fight the moment Hitler should make any move against Danzig. Daladier said he believed this was true.

Finally he said that he realized that the Russians had hoodwinked the French and British completely and that possibly even though the Poles had agreed to accept Russian assistance the Russians would have found an excuse not to conclude their negotiations with France and England and to conclude the agreement with Germany.

Daladier said that he had not yet decided to order general mobilization; but believed he would issue the order tomorrow morning. Later in my presence he repeated this statement to General Gamelin⁴⁵ and ordered Gamelin today to mobilize further reserves and advance certain troops to the German frontier.

Later I asked General Gamelin if he was not also mobilizing reserves on the Italian frontier. He replied that he was not since the French Government did not desire at the present moment to excite the Italians.

Daladier, also in my presence, ordered Admiral Darlan⁴⁶ to keep the fleet in immediate readiness for action. Darlan stated to me that the fleet was already on a war footing and prepared to act at once.

I discussed the general situation at great length with Léger at the Foreign Office. He blamed the Poles for the failure of the negotiations of the French and British with the Soviet Union. He said that it was on Sunday, August 20, that Beck had rejected the proposal to permit the Soviet Army to enter Polish soil to support the Polish Army.

Throughout our conversation politicians kept calling him on the telephone urging that it would be folly to go to war in support of Poland in view of the agreement between the Soviet Union and Germany. Léger replied to them as he did to me that France must fight since if Poland should be abandoned the whole of Eastern and South-eastern Europe would fall without a struggle into Hitler's hands and with the resources of this vast area behind him Hitler would be able to overwhelm France and England.

I asked Léger what he thought the result of war would be in case it should begin. He said that obviously a war now would begin at an exceedingly bad moment for France and England. If the Germans should attack and conquer Poland, they could then receive supplies of all sorts from the Soviet Union and Rumania. It was exceedingly doubtful, to put it mildly, that France and England would be able to win the war. Nevertheless the chance must be taken since the chance would be even less if France should permit Poland to be destroyed.

⁴⁵ Gen. Maurice Gustave Gamelin, Vice President of the French Supreme War Council.

⁴⁶ Vice Admiral Jean François Darlan, Chief of Staff of the French Navy.

He added the nebulous hope that if Poland, recognizing the seriousness of the situation, should begin to try to work intimately with the Bolsheviks, the Soviet Union might turn around and abandon the agreement it had entered into with Germany.

Both Léger and Daladier said to me that they were not sure that Italy would decide to enter war on the side of Germany immediately.

The stupefaction of the French Foreign Office which has been most optimistic with regard to the conclusion of the agreement between the Soviet Union, France and England is so great that no constructive ideas have yet been evolved.

The British Government has not yet communicated to the French Government its opinions on the present situation.

In brief the opinion of Daladier, Gamelin, Darlan, Léger, Guy La Chambre⁴⁷ and other Ministers with whom I have talked today is that Hitler is not likely to lose his present opportunity to strike with hope of success, that France must support Poland even though the successful issue of a war thus engaged may be most doubtful since the abandonment of Poland would mean that France and England would have to fight somewhat later in an even worse position and that they would lose their moral standing in the world.

Daladier said to me that his guess was that as soon as Ribbentrop should have signed in Moscow the agreement between Germany and the Soviet Union and should have returned to Germany, Hitler would launch his attack against Poland.

BULLITT

SECRET

761.6211/69: Telegram

The Chargé in the United Kingdom (Johnson) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, August 22, 1939—7 p. m.

[Received August 22—3 p. m.]

1211. My 1209, August 22, 2 p. m. The Foreign Office has still received no official information regarding the reported agreement between Russia and Germany to conclude a non-aggression pact other than the official communiqué issued in Moscow and Berlin. They have telegraphed the British Ambassador at Moscow to make a direct request of the Soviet Government for an official clarification of its own communiqué and of Russian intentions. The military mission is remaining in Moscow pending receipt of this reply.

Colonel Beck sent for an officer of the British Embassy in Warsaw at 1:30 this morning and asked that a message somewhat to the fol-

⁴⁷ French Minister for Air.

lowing effect be sent to London: The report of the agreement between Germany and Russia does not greatly disturb him—he has always known that the Russians were double-crossers—and that it will have no effect on Polish policy. In view however of the importance which public opinion throughout the world has seemed to attach to pacts with Soviet Russia, he is apprehensive lest the press play the news up in such a way as to alarm world opinion unduly and strengthen the position of Germany. He expressed the hope that the British Government would give calming guidance to the press in this country.

A reply has been telegraphed to Colonel Beck through the British Ambassador substantially as follows: The attitude being maintained here is one of calm and of reserved judgment until the full implications of the agreement are known. Even if an agreement should finally be signed between Germany and Soviet Russia it will cause no change in British policy nor in Anglo-Polish relations. Colonel Beck was also informed that the British press was being requested to maintain an attitude of calm and reserve.

Responsible officials of the Foreign Office say that the Government is completely reserving judgment until more facts are known and until the nature of the proposed agreement is made clear. An official pointed out that in the non-aggression pacts so far concluded by Soviet Russia there was an escape clause that if one of the two parties to the agreement attacked a third country the other party to the agreement was absolved from the obligations of the pact. They do not think it likely that Germany will be able to conclude an agreement entirely to her own liking with Russia any more easily or quickly than have the French and the British nor one more favorable to German purposes than other countries have been able to get from Russia.

The Soviet Embassy in London is busily disseminating propaganda to the effect that a Russo-German pact is in no way incompatible with a defensive alliance between the Soviet Union and England and France. It is also drawing particular attention to the escape clause of Russian non-aggression agreements referred to in the paragraph above.

JOHNSON

740.00/2101 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Italy (Phillips) to the Secretary of State

ROME, August 22, 1939—8 p. m.

[Received August 22—5:40 p. m.]

322. I had an interview with Ciano this afternoon and referred to the hope which he had expressed during our last conversation that he would have a reassuring message to give me following his re-

turn from Salzburg.⁴⁸ He replied that since his return he had passed through periods of pessimism and optimism, and that today he was inclined to be optimistic. The German-Soviet pact of non-aggression which was to be signed tomorrow had changed the situation completely, destroying the British-French encirclement plan and making it very doubtful whether the British and French could embark on war. Chamberlain, he said, had been building up public opinion in England for months to the necessity of some form of military alliance with Soviet Russia before the British could safely embark on war against Germany and he was confident therefore that now both British and French would have to recede from their former positive positions.

I said that it was naturally of great interest to me to know where the Italian Government stood in this difficult situation, that there were no apparent warlike preparations being made here, no warlike propaganda, and that the Italian people seemed to me calm and distinctly hostile to the idea of taking part in any war. I knew of course of the precautionary measures which were being taken but could not believe that Italy was planning to join with Germany in the event of a European war. Ciano did not undertake to refute any of the above remarks but merely referred to Italy's obligations under the Italo-German treaty of alliance.⁴⁹

In conclusion I expressed my earnest hope that the Italian Government was doing everything in its power to prevent the outbreak of the threatened cataclysm. Ciano remarked "There will be no cataclysm"; to which I said in reply that I did not feel so certain but I hoped he was right.

Ciano's optimism is not shared by my British and Polish colleagues with whom I have been in contact today.

Repeated to Berlin, Paris and London.

PHILLIPS

741.61/848 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, August 23, 1939—3 p. m.
[Received August 23—11:22 a. m.]

460. The French Ambassador stated to me this morning that notwithstanding the events of the past 2 or 3 days the principal respon-

⁴⁸ See telegram No. 304, August 9, 8 p. m., from the Ambassador in Italy, p. 208.

⁴⁹ Signed on May 22, 1939; for text, see Martens, *Recueil de traités*, vol. CXXXIII, p. 323.

sibility for the delay and the apparent collapse of the Anglo-French-Soviet negotiations must rest with Poland which has consistently refused to agree to accept Soviet military assistance under any circumstances. He said that most of the delay was occasioned by the efforts of London and Paris to induce Warsaw to agree to accept such assistance and that 2 weeks ago the Soviet Government had advised the British and French that unless Poland would agree to accept Soviet military assistance the conversations were purposeless.

The Ambassador added that in his interview with Molotov yesterday the latter had pointed out that a non-aggression pact with Germany was not inconsistent with a mutual defensive alliance between Great Britain, France and the Soviet Union but that such an alliance could not be accomplished as long as Poland persisted in refusing Soviet military assistance.

It is difficult to reconcile my information as to the terms of the proposed agreement with Germany (see my telegram No. 457, August 23, noon⁵⁰) with almost any kind of Anglo-French-Soviet agreement under existing conditions and it would appear that even were the Poles now to acquiesce in the acceptance of Soviet military assistance such acquiescence would come too late to prevent a Soviet-German agreement.

STEINHARDT

761.6211/78 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, August 23, 1939—5 p. m.
[Received August 23—1:55 p. m.]

1553. Rochat informed me this morning that the conversation Naggiar, French Ambassador in Moscow, [had] with Molotov had been most unsatisfactory. Molotov had refused to give any details whatsoever with regard to the German-Soviet agreement and had merely said that it was the point of view of the Soviet Government that the military conversations with France and England could be recommenced just as soon as the situation was somewhat more clear.

The French Government therefore has no idea what may be in the text of the Soviet-German agreement but, hoping against hope that the German-Soviet negotiations may break down at the last moment, the French and British Governments have decided to keep their military negotiators in Moscow until the Soviet Government shall have made it clear that their presence is no longer desirable.

⁵⁰ Not printed.

The French Government is continuing quietly to summon men to the front and now has well over a million and a half men on the frontiers.

The Italians yesterday began reinforcing their troops on French frontier and it is probable that now the French Government will inform the Italian Government that in view of these measures the French will be obliged to reinforce their troops on the Italian frontier. Up to the present time all French reinforcements are evidently sent to the German frontier.

Ciano has not yet received the French Ambassador, François-Poncet, and there are no conversations whatsoever in progress between the French and Italian Governments.

Reports reaching the French Foreign Office from all quarters have produced the impression that Hitler may send an ultimatum to Poland on the day after tomorrow, Friday, and that in any event such an ultimatum may be expected within a week at the outside.

Reports from Poland indicate that the Poles certainly will fight.

The Rumanians are reported to be in a state of acute anxiety and there is little confidence that they will resist German pressure.

On the other hand reports from Hungary indicate that Horthy⁵¹ and Teleki⁵² are remaining firm in their opposition to German threats and blandishments and are unwilling to enter the German's orbit.

Reports from Yugoslavia indicate a determination on the part of the Yugoslavs to maintain their independence.

Greece is reported to be absolutely determined to resist any Italian pressure and to contemplate entering war on the side of France and England.

It is still believed that in spite of the Russian defection, Turkey will enter war on the side of France and England, and will occupy the Dodecanese.

All reports from Spain tend to show that General Franco's⁵³ government will maintain a strict neutrality.

Reports from Japan state that the Japanese Government has been completely bewildered by the German action in making a pact with the Soviet Union, and that a great opportunity has been presented for England to improve her relations with Japan.

The British Government has given no indication of weakening in its intention to support Poland. The French Government remains determined to fight in support of Poland.

BULLITT

⁵¹ Adm. Nicholas Horthy de Nagybánya, Regent of Hungary.

⁵² Count Paul Teleki de Szék, President of the Council of Ministers of Hungary.

⁵³ Generalissimo Francisco Franco Bahamonde, Head of the Spanish Government.

761.6211/102 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, August 24, 1939—6 p. m.
[Received August 24—4 p. m.]

1576. Léger informed me today that the French Government had sent orders to the French Ambassador in Moscow to demand an immediate interview with Molotov and to request within 24 hours an interpretation of the agreement entered into between Germany and the Soviet Union and an explanation of whether or not it is incompatible with the Franco-Soviet treaty of mutual assistance. He added that if Molotov should refuse such an explanation the French and British military missions would be recalled from Moscow at once.

Léger said that the Turkish Government today had asked the French Government for its interpretation of the position created by the German-Soviet agreement. The Turks obviously were intensely disturbed to find that the Soviet Union might be on the side of Germany. Léger said that he still felt that the Turks would fight on the side of the French and British but was no longer sure.

Léger said that he considered war in the next few days almost inevitable and that he could see no way to avoid it. The French Government was persistently determined to support the Poles and the British Government had assured the French Government that it was no less determined to honor its obligations to Poland.

BULLITT

741.61/856 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow [undated].

[Received August 25, 1939—11:35 a. m.]

470. My 466, August 24.⁵⁴ The French and British missions which were to depart last night and this morning, respectively, were instructed by London and Paris late yesterday evening to stay in Moscow and await further developments. A member of the British Embassy has informed me in strict confidence that yesterday Admiral Drax, head of the British mission, wrote a letter to Voroshilov stating that in view of the conclusion of the treaty with Germany there would seem to be no purpose in continuing the conversations and consequently the British mission was departing that evening "unless Voroshilov desired to see them again". Although no reply has been received to

⁵⁴ Not printed.

this letter the Soviet authorities are avoiding any initiative in terminating the discussion with the British and French. It was stated that the heads of the British and French missions will probably see Voroshilov this afternoon. The opinion was expressed that in view of the terms of treaty, particularly article 3 which provides for exchange of information on problems of common interest, the continuance of the military conversations would appear to be impossible and that the Soviet authorities are maneuvering to place the onus for the formal breakdown upon the British and French. It was added that unless the proposed meeting with Voroshilov this afternoon produces unexpected and almost inconceivable results the missions will probably leave this evening.

Please convey the foregoing to the War Department.

STEINHARDT

741.61/856 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, August 25, 1939—10 p. m.

[Received August 25—3 : 32 p. m.]

473. The French and British military missions after seeing Voroshilov this afternoon are definitely leaving for Finland tonight.

STEINHARDT

740.00/2133

The British Ambassador (Lindsay) to the Chief of the Division of European Affairs (Moffat)

WASHINGTON, August 26, 1939.

DEAR MOFFAT: I enclose herein a copy of the latest telegram which we have had from the Foreign Office regarding the international situation.

Yours sincerely,

R. C. LINDSAY

[Enclosure—Extract]

Telegram of August 24th

• • • • • • • •
 Russia.

Molotov's reply to our enquiry

(a) Interpreted unpreparedness of Anglo-French Military Missions to deal with fundamental point such as passage of Soviet troops through Polish and Roumanian territories as insincerity.

(b) Denied bad faith in accepting German proposal for negotiations without informing this Government or France.

Asked whether non-aggression pact with Germany meant that Russia would allow Poland to be overrun, M. Molotov replied that we must wait and see how negotiations with Ribbentrop would work out. After a bit, say a week, negotiations with France and this country might be continued.

Poland.

If approached you should take the line that report about Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact should be treated with calm and reserve; its consequences being as yet unpredictable. It does not modify attitude of His Majesty's Government or relations between this Government and Poland. French Government are of like mind.

741.61/862 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, August 27, 1939—3 p. m.

[Received August 27—11:15 a. m.]

476. The Soviet press this morning carries on the front page an interview given by Voroshilov to a correspondent of *Izvestiya* on the military conversations with the British and French. In reply to questions Voroshilov stated that the military conversations had been broken off due to differences of opinion resulting from the refusal of Poland to permit Soviet armed forces under any conditions to enter its territory, a necessary prerequisite to Soviet military assistance to Britain, France and Poland. Voroshilov further stated that the question of supplying Poland with raw materials and military supplies did not arise in the military conversation since no pact of mutual assistance or even less of military intervention was required for this purpose and cited as an example the fact that the "United States and other countries" having no such pacts with Japan have nonetheless supplied Japan with raw materials and military supplies for the last 2 years. Voroshilov further denied as a "complete lie" a report in the London *Daily Herald* that the Soviet Union during the conversations had declared its intention to occupy certain portions of Poland in the event of a Polish-German war. In conclusion Voroshilov denied a Reuter's report that he had told the French and British missions that further conversations were useless in view of the Soviet-German pact of non-aggression and stated that the talks with England and France were not broken off as a result of the

agreement with Germany but, on the contrary, that the Soviet Union had concluded a pact with Germany because the military conversations had reached an impasse. The Soviet press likewise continues to publish selected comments from the foreign press justifying the Soviet conclusions of a pact with Germany and placing the blame therefor on the British and French Governments. In contrast to Voroshilov's statement that the refusal of Poland to permit Soviet troops on its territory was the determining factor, a Tass despatch from Paris in today's press commenting on a statement by de Kérillis⁵⁵ that the Soviet-German pact means the end of the eastern front, charges that this statement reveals that the French dissatisfaction with the Soviet-German pact is due to the fact that it disrupted the plan to bring about a Soviet-German conflict.

STEINHARDT

VII. THE IMPROVEMENT OF GERMAN-SOVIET RELATIONS CULMINATING IN THE TREATY OF NONAGGRESSION SIGNED AT MOSCOW, AUGUST 23, 1939

661.6231/187: Telegram

The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, January 16, 1939—2 p. m.
[Received January 16—10:35 a. m.]

21. I am informed in strict confidence by a member of the German Embassy here that as a result of negotiations which have been proceeding in Berlin a commercial arrangement will shortly be concluded between the German and Soviet Governments for the expansion of German-Soviet trade. Although full details of the proposed agreement are not yet available to the German Embassy here it is believed that it will involve the extension of credits guaranteed by the German Government in excess of 200 million marks to be utilized by Soviet trade organizations for the purchase of German goods. In return Germany will take Soviet raw materials such as manganese and other mineral ores and timber. It is expected that the principle of parity between exports and imports between the two countries will be embodied in the agreement and that the credit facilities referred to above will be used for the purpose of permitting the placing of large orders immediately with German firms. According to the German Embassy here the progress of German rearmament has made it possible to remove the chief previous obstacle (see my despatch No. 1463, July 9, 1938 and telegram No. 410, December 3 [5]⁵⁶) to the

⁵⁵ Henri de Kérillis, member of the French Chamber of Deputies, former editor of *Époque*.

⁵⁶ Neither printed.

expansion of German-Soviet trade; namely, the inability of German firms to fill orders for delivery within a reasonable time. According to my informant the proposed agreement has no political significance.

In view of the impossibility of communicating with other missions in this code this message has not been transmitted to Berlin Embassy.

KIRK

761.62/487 : Telegram

The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, January 20, 1939—10 a. m.

[Received January 20—9:15 a. m.]

30. American press correspondents here have been informed by their London offices that reports are circulating that a secret meeting between German and Soviet officials is to take place in Stockholm or Copenhagen in the near future for the purpose of working out an economic and military collaboration between the two countries. In these reports mention is made of Hitler's cordiality to the Soviet Ambassador⁵⁷ at the reception inaugurating the new Chancery building in Berlin during which he is said to have requested the Soviet Ambassador to inform Stalin that Germany entertained no designs on the Ukraine at the present time and had proposed an exchange of views to which Stalin had agreed.

In reply to the inquiries from the correspondents the Soviet office has stated that it has no information on this subject. No confirmation or denial of these reports is available here. It is conceivable, however, they are connected with rumors which may have circulated abroad regarding the proposed German-Soviet commercial agreement (see my telegram 21, January 16, 2 p. m.).

Repeated to Berlin.

KIRK

761.62/488 : Telegram

The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, January 31, 1939—noon.

[Received January 31—10 a. m.]

44. *Pravda* today prints a Tass⁵⁸ despatch from London reviewing an article by Vernon Bartlett⁵⁹ on the possibility of a Soviet-German *rapprochement*. According to this despatch Bartlett after asserting

⁵⁷ Alexey Fedorovich Merekalov.

⁵⁸ Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union, an official communications agency of the Soviet Government.

⁵⁹ Diplomatic correspondent of the *London News Chronicle*.

that the Soviet Union has been deliberately ignored by the British and French Governments and that the initiative for the Polish-Soviet and German-Soviet trade negotiations came from Warsaw and Berlin respectively, writes that "at present the Soviet Government evidently has no intention of giving any help to Great Britain and France if the latter come into conflict with Germany and Italy. The U. S. S. R. intends to conclude agreements with its neighbors on the condition that it be left in peace. From the point of view of the Soviet Government there is no great difference between the positions of the British and French Governments on the one hand and the German and Italian on the other, which would justify serious sacrifices in the defense of the Western democracy". It is stated that after declaring the Soviet-German trade talks are the result of the press campaigns in England for the denunciation of the Anglo-Soviet commercial agreement, Bartlett concludes with the statement that it would be unwise to consider the present difference between Moscow and Berlin as an insurmountable factor in international politics.

The foregoing was published by the *Pravda* without any comment indicating Soviet evaluation of the views attributed to the author of the article. The obvious inferences to be drawn from this publication however are either that the views quoted actually represent Soviet policy or that the publication thereof in the Soviet press is intended to serve only as a warning to other countries. Whatever may be the intention of the Soviet Government in ventilating such views in the press the fact of their publication is a marked departure to the previous treatment of rumors in regard to a possible *rapprochement* with Germany which have heretofore been publicly ignored and privately denied.

Repeated to Berlin.

KIRK

661.6231/195

The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

No. 2103

Moscow, February 15, 1939.

[Received March 6.]

SIR: As reported in my telegram No. 42, January 30, 9 p. m.,⁶⁰ Herr Schnurre,⁶¹ the Eastern European expert of the Economic Section of the German Foreign Office, who was to have accompanied the German Ambassador⁶² on his return to Moscow on January 31 for the purpose

⁶⁰ Not printed.

⁶¹ Karl Schnurre, head of the Eastern European and Baltic Section of the Commercial Policy Division of the German Foreign Office.

⁶² Friedrich Werner, Count von der Schulenburg.

of conducting commercial negotiations with Soviet officials, was unexpectedly recalled to Berlin for unspecified reasons.⁶³ A member of the German Embassy here has stated in confidence that it is not believed that the postponement of Herr Schnurre's visit indicates any change in the intention of the German Government in regard to the conclusion of an agreement with the Soviet Government for the expansion of Soviet-German trade and it is consequently expected that Herr Schnurre will come to Moscow at some later date, possibly in March. Although it is stated here that Herr Schnurre's visit was postponed because his presence in Berlin was essential in connection with certain German-Polish commercial negotiations, it has likewise been intimated in confidence that the sudden recall of Herr Schnurre, who was stopped in Warsaw on his way to Moscow, was not unconnected with the political significance which in certain interpretations had been placed upon the possibility of a commercial agreement between Germany and the Soviet Union. These interpretations, it was believed, had aroused the anger of Hitler and other high Nazi officials and had resulted in decision to postpone negotiations with the Soviet Government until publicity had subsided.

The Commercial Counselor of the German Embassy,⁶⁴ who has recently returned from Berlin, in general confirmed the information contained in my telegrams numbers 21, January 16, and 36, January 26,⁶⁵ concerning the economic aspects of the proposed agreement. He stated that the Soviet trade representative in Berlin had requested that the German Government send a delegation to Moscow for the purpose of exploring the possibilities of increasing the trade between the two countries and that it had been in compliance with this request that Herr Schnurre had been delegated to come here. According to the German Commercial Counselor, Schnurre's visit was cancelled at the last moment because his services were urgently needed in Berlin. He added that it was expected that Germany would endeavor to increase its purchases in the Soviet Union of manganese, timber, and apatite, and possibly iron ore, and would export primarily machinery, but in this connection he stated that in his opinion it was "psychologically impossible" to sell any equipment of a military nature or even machinery that would be utilized in the munitions industry. Although the German Commercial Counselor made no mention of the question of the extension of German credits to the Soviet Union, it has nevertheless been ascertained from another member of the German Embassy that, according to present information, such credits will form

⁶³ For German explanations that "technical reasons only" caused the return of Schnurre to Berlin, see Department of State, *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941* (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1948), pp. 6, 12-13.

⁶⁴ Gustav Hilger.

⁶⁵ Latter not printed.

part of any commercial agreement which may be reached between the two Governments. It is pointed out, however, that by no means all of the difficulties involved in the conclusion of such an agreement have been overcome, and that the Soviet Government is still endeavoring to obtain military and semi-military equipment which, as indicated above, the German Government is unwilling to export to the Soviet Union.

On the basis of the foregoing information, it would appear that for the present any negotiations relating to the proposed commercial agreement between the Soviet Union and Germany and the exploration of the possibilities of expanding trade between the two countries will be carried on in the regular course of diplomatic business. According to the somewhat meager information available to the Embassy at the present time, the agreement envisaged will follow closely along the lines of those formerly in effect between the Soviet Union and Germany prior and immediately subsequent to the establishment of the Nazi Government in that, from the German point of view, it appears to be based more upon the necessity of finding export markets than on the need of obtaining raw materials, although the latter element should not, of course, be underestimated. Although an improvement in Soviet-German commercial relations along the lines envisaged in the proposed agreement would, in itself, be an event of some political significance, there is no indication as yet that it forecasts the much-publicized possibility of a genuine political *rapprochement* between the two countries.

Respectfully yours,

ALEXANDER C. KIRK

661.6231/193 : Telegram

The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, February 20, 1939—9 a. m.

[Received February 20—6:10 a. m.]

79. A member of the German Embassy here has furnished in strict confidence and with urgent recommendations as to secrecy the following.

Upon the failure of Schnurre to reach Moscow negotiations in regard to the commercial agreement between Germany and Soviet Union have recently taken place between the German Ambassador here and the Soviet Commissar for Foreign Trade⁶⁶ and within the last few days a virtual agreement with a few unimportant exceptions has been reached between them. According to this information which was characterized as preliminary the accord will consist of the following two agreements.

⁶⁶ Anastas Ivanovich Mikoyan.

1. An agreement regulating trade between the two countries on a basis of parity between exports and imports whereby the Soviet Union will purchase in Germany machinery and equipment other than those clearly for military purposes and will sell to that country an amount equal in value of some 15 categories of raw materials including timber, mostly pulp logs, manganese ore, flax, cotton and small quantities of iron and oil. It is expected that timber will constitute approximately 45% of the total value of Soviet goods to be sold to Germany. Payments under this agreement will be effected through a clearing arrangement in German marks. Exact information as to the amounts involved are not available, it is believed that the total turnover under this agreement between the two countries may equal in the neighborhood of 200 million marks.

It is proposed that the above agreement will run for 5 years, although this point is not yet definitely settled.

2. A separate agreement involving the extension of credits to the Soviet Union for additional purchases in Germany, guaranteed 100% by the German Government of approximately 200 million reichsmarks. This credit will run for a period stated to be slightly under 10 years. The Soviet Government will not be required to expend a minimum amount of the credit per year. It cannot be utilized for the purchase of military equipment.

Although the German Embassy here insists that no strictly military equipment or supplies will be sold to the Soviet Union under the above agreements it is admitted that certain types of implements susceptible of military use such as optical instruments may be included.

The German Commercial Counselor here planned to leave for Warsaw last night to consult with Schnurre, who is in that city in connection with commercial negotiations with Poland and the Counselor is expected to return to Moscow on February 22nd. The German Embassy here states that unless objections are raised in Berlin the two agreements between the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics and Germany may possibly be signed in Moscow within 10 days or 2 weeks. Although the German Embassy here persists in maintaining that the foregoing agreement is without political significance, it is impossible in the present circumstances to ignore the fact that within a brief period of time Italy and Germany have been proceeding with the negotiation of commercial agreements with the Soviet Union and that, in view of the antagonism which has characterized the relations between the Soviet Government and the Governments of those countries, the conclusion of accords even of a commercial nature can scarcely be divorced in thought from considerations involving possible political implications. In any event even on the basis of the commercial aspects of the agreements in question any improvements in trade resulting from those agreements would in themselves tend to exert a modifying influence on the course of the relations between the contracting parties.

661.6231/197: Telegram

The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, March 20, 1939—4 p. m.
 [Received March 20—2:55 p. m.]

126. My telegram No. 87, February 27, 3 p. m.⁶⁷ A member of the German Embassy here stated that the Soviet proposals, in regard to the raw materials which could be furnished under the proposed Soviet-German economic accord, as reported in my telegram under reference, are still being considered in Berlin and that the negotiations for the conclusion of this accord might be characterized as "lingering". The same informant again emphasized that since the negotiations on this subject have no special political significance the delay which has been encountered is not the result of any political considerations and is believed to be due to the technical-economic aspects of the matter involving the amount of raw materials which could be obtained from the Soviet Union. The opinion was offered, however, that new factors may have been injected into the consideration of the German-Soviet commercial accord as a result of the economic consequences of acquisition of Bohemia and Moravia.⁶⁸

KIRK

[For a report on basic considerations of Soviet foreign policy, and detection of a possible inclination on the part of the Soviet Union to reduce the amount of friction in relations with Germany, see telegram No. 169, April 6, 1939, from the Chargé in the Soviet Union, *Foreign Relations, The Soviet Union, 1933-1939*, page 750.]

761.62/511: Telegram

The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Grummon) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, May 17, 1939—11 a. m.
 [Received May 17—7:30 a. m.]

251. A member of the German Embassy who has just returned from Tehran has stated in the strictest confidence that the German Ambassador here, who was the official German representative at the recent marriage ceremonies in that city, had intended to return directly to Moscow but that just prior to his departure he had been urgently summoned to Berlin for consultation by Ribbentrop.⁶⁹ It was added

⁶⁷ Not printed.

⁶⁸ German seizure and proclamation of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia occurred on March 15, 1939. For correspondence on this subject, see pp. 34 ff.

⁶⁹ Joachim von Ribbentrop, German Foreign Minister.

that the Ambassador is arriving in Moscow tomorrow bearing instructions from the German Government, the tenor of which is not known to the German Embassy here, and that at the request of Berlin appointments for the Ambassador to see Molotov⁷⁰ and Potemkin⁷¹ have been made for Saturday⁷² morning. In this connection it was categorically stated that the rumors of a German approach to the Soviet Government which were current at the time of Litvinov's replacement⁷³ (see my telegram No. 218, May 4, 7 p. m.⁷⁴) were completely without foundation.

The same source stated that the Assistant Military Attaché⁷⁵ here was called to Berlin last week where he was asked by the German War Ministry whether there was any reason to believe that the Soviet Union was stronger in a military sense or in a better position to undertake offensive action than in September of last year and that the Attaché had replied in the negative.

GRUMMON

761.62/516 : Telegram

The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Grummon) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, May 20, 1939—1 p. m.
[Received May 20—11:15 a. m.]

256. The following information has been received with reference to the subject of the Embassy's strictly confidential telegram No. 251, May 17, 11 a. m.

On his return to Berlin from Tehran the German Ambassador was told by Ribbentrop, obviously reflecting Hitler's views, that in the opinion of the German Government Communism had ceased to exist in the Soviet Union; that the Communist International was no longer a factor of importance in Soviet foreign relations and that consequently it was felt that no real ideological barrier remained between Germany and Russia. Under the circumstances it was desired that the Ambassador return to Moscow to convey very discreetly to the Soviet Government the impression that Germany entertained no animosity toward it and to endeavor to ascertain the present Soviet attitude toward Soviet-German relations. Ribbentrop impressed

⁷⁰ Vyacheslav Mikhailovich Molotov, People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union from May 3, 1939.

⁷¹ Vladimir Petrovich Potemkin, Assistant People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union.

⁷² May 20.

⁷³ Maxim Maximovich Litvinov, People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union until May 3, 1939.

⁷⁴ *Foreign Relations, The Soviet Union, 1933-1939*, p. 758.

⁷⁵ Capt. Vladimir Schubuth.

upon the Ambassador the necessity of exercising the greatest caution in the premises as any appearance of a German approach to the Soviet Union would alarm Japan, which in view of the special relationship existing between Germany and that country would be very undesirable. In reply to the Ambassador's query as to whether in view of the Soviet-British negotiations⁷⁶ some more specific and direct approach would not be desirable, Ribbentrop replied that the German Government was not alarmed at the prospect of an agreement between Great Britain and the Soviet Union as it was not convinced that England and France would be disposed to lend extensive or whole-hearted military assistance to any country in Eastern Europe. Ribbentrop then told the Ambassador that Germany desired mediation to settle the question of Danzig and the auto-road across the Corridor and that even in the event of a conflict with Poland, Germany had no intention of attempting to occupy the whole of that country. Ribbentrop's instructions were oral and they left to the Ambassador's discretion the manner of bringing the foregoing to the attention of the Soviet Government. The impression, however, was received that without committing the German Government to any line of action vis-à-vis the Soviet Government, he was to convey an indication of the change in attitude on the part of the higher circles in Berlin toward this country as well as the assurance that Germany was in favor of the maintenance of an independent Poland. Despite Ribbentrop's statement to the contrary it was believed that the purpose of this approach was not unconnected with the Soviet-British negotiations.

In conveying the above information it was emphasized that the Ambassador's instructions were general in nature and could not yet be taken as a definite German proposal to the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, although a possible first step in that direction, and that future developments along this line would depend upon the reaction encountered by the Ambassador in his conversations here. In this connection it was stated that officials of the Soviet Embassy in Berlin and especially the Counselor, Astakhov,⁷⁷ have intimated recently to members of the German Foreign Office that Soviet foreign policy was now on a new basis,⁷⁸ a statement which has been repeated here to a German correspondent by the new Chief of the Press Section of the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs.

In view of the nature of this information which has been obtained from the source indicated previously which in the past has proved

⁷⁶ For the Anglo-French-Soviet negotiations attempting to reach an agreement against aggression, see pp. 232 ff.

⁷⁷ Georgy Alexandrovich Astakhov.

⁷⁸ See the German Foreign Office memoranda of May 9 and May 17, *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941*, pp. 3 and 4.

reliable it is requested that in any use which the Department may make of the foregoing every effort be made to protect both its source and place of origin.

GRUMMON

761.62/517 : Telegram

The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Grummon) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, May 22, 1939—11 a. m.
[Received May 22—9: 15 a. m.]

258. My No. 251, May 17, 11 a. m. The German Ambassador saw Molotov on Saturday for 1 hour and immediately afterwards had a short conversation with Potemkin. The following version of the Ambassador's conversation with Molotov has been obtained from the source indicated in my telegram under reference.⁷⁹

The Ambassador, after commenting on the more favorable atmosphere in regard to the Soviet Union which he had found in Berlin, inquired of Molotov as to the possibility of continuing the economic negotiations which had been in abeyance for some months (see my telegram 126, March 20, 4 p. m.). In reply Molotov expressed doubt as to the feasibility of a development of economic relations between the two countries in the absence of a "political basis" and requested the Ambassador's views on this subject. The Ambassador, it was stated, replied that since as an Ambassador he did not determine policy he could not offer any authoritative opinion on this matter but that perhaps Molotov as Prime Minister of the Soviet Government would be in a position to explain exactly what the Soviet Government envisaged by a "political basis". Molotov, however, evaded the question by a vague reference to the necessity of giving the matter further consideration.

In his conversation with Potemkin which consisted largely of an exchange of courtesies, the Ambassador again referred to his belief in the possibility of an improvement in Soviet-German relations at the present time.

In general the impression was received, and I understand reported to Berlin, that Molotov was purposely reserved in regard to the general question of an improvement in Soviet-German relations and that only a definite proposal from the German Government would be seriously considered here. Consequently, it was believed that any fur-

⁷⁹ For the report by the German Ambassador of his conversations with Molotov and Potemkin, see his memorandum of May 20, 1939, *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941*, p. 5.

ther developments along this line would depend upon whether the German Government was prepared at the present time to make a clear and definite approach to the Soviet Government, and the personal opinion was offered that in the light of Ribbentrop's concern over the possible effect on Japan, such a step was doubtful at least pending the outcome of German-Japanese conversations which it was stated are now being carried on.⁸⁰

GRUMMON

761.62/526 : Telegram

The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Grummon) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, May 25, 1939—7 p. m.

[Received May 25—3:38 p. m.]

265. My number 258, May 22, 11 a. m. It has been ascertained from the same source indicated in my telegram under reference that in reply to the German Ambassador's report of his conversation with Molotov he was instructed by Berlin to take no further steps in the matter of an approach to the Soviet Government.⁸¹ Although I am informed no reasons were given for this instruction the opinion was offered that it was probably motivated by a desire to avoid alarming Japan and possibly indicates that the conversations with that country are progressing favorably.

GRUMMON

661.6231/203 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, June 6, 1939—10 a. m.

[Received June 6—9:12 a. m.]

446. A source of information in close connection with German trade negotiations stated that it is probable that Germany would again shortly resume commercial negotiations with Russia but he added that he did not anticipate that any important results would follow. He remarked that on several occasions during the past 2 years both Germany and Russia had expressed interest in restoring their trade but that nothing of importance had resulted. He said that the fact was that Russia needed for her own military and industrial development most of the raw materials including petroleum products and manganese which Germany wanted to import from her and that furthermore

⁸⁰ For correspondence regarding German-Japanese relations, see vol. III, pp. 1 ff.

⁸¹ For this German decision, see *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941*, pp. 7, 9, and 10.

during the last 2 years Russia had been unwilling to furnish in any considerable quantity materials that might directly or indirectly add to Germany's military strength. The informant added that on the German side there is equal reluctance to sell to Russia the war matériel or machine tools and other products designed to build up Russia's munition industry.

KIRK

661.6231/203 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, June 6, 1939—11 a. m.
[Received June 6—9: 30 a. m.]

447. Continuing my 446, June 6, 10 a. m. In a recent conversation with the Soviet Chargé in regard to the matter of German-Soviet trade negotiations based on the reference thereto in Molotov's speech⁸² he refrained from stating whether negotiations had been actually resumed but commented on the cessation of German press attacks against Soviet Russia and added that the Soviet Government would not be averse to discussing the matter of the improvement of trade between the two countries with special reference to the possibility of purchasing machinery in Germany. Although the Chargé was non-committal in the matter he conveyed the impression that it might now be expected that Schnurre, who was on his way to Moscow when the Soviet-German trade negotiations were interrupted several months ago, would proceed to Moscow in the near future for consultation. He added however that there was no question of a German trade commission proceeding from Berlin to Moscow.

KIRK

761.62/527 : Telegram

The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Grummon) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, June 9, 1939—noon.
[Received June 9—9: 03 a. m.]

300. I am informed in strict confidence that although the instructions to the German Ambassador reported in my telegram 265, May 25, 7 p. m. to take no further steps in regard to an approach to the Soviet Government at the present time have not been superseded, nevertheless, contact between the German and Soviet Governments had been

⁸² For a summary of Molotov's speech of May 31, 1939, before the Supreme Council of the Soviet Union, see telegram No. 282, June 1, 1939, from the Chargé in the Soviet Union, *Foreign Relations, The Soviet Union, 1933-1939*, p. 764.

maintained on the subject of a possible improvement in economic relations. It was stated that during the last 10 days the Soviet Counselor in Berlin had had a number of conversations on this subject with members of the German Foreign Office and that the German Commercial Counselor here on June 2 had under instructions seen Mikoyan, the Commissar for Foreign Trade. It was emphasized that the conversations both here and in Berlin had been of an exploratory character and that no concrete proposals had been advanced by either side.⁸³

GRUMMON

661.6231/205 : Telegram

The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Grummon) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, June 12, 1939—1 p. m.
[Received June 12—11:42 a. m.]

307. The German Ambassador is leaving tonight for Berlin to take up with his Government the question of a commercial agreement with the Russian Soviet Government. I am informed that the Commercial Attaché of the German Embassy here saw Mikoyan again on June 8, but that little progress was made in this conversation as the chief difficulty which had impeded the conclusion of an agreement last March, namely, the inability of the Soviet Union to supply the amount of raw materials desired by Germany in return for the granting of a 200 million mark credit, still persisted. It was added that one of the purposes of the Ambassador's visit to Berlin was to discuss with his Government the possibility of suggesting to the Soviet Government that the deficiency in raw materials might be overcome by a Soviet agreement to pay for a certain proportion of German goods in foreign currency.

GRUMMON

661.6231/206 : Telegram

The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Grummon) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, June 13, 1939—3 p. m.
[Received June 13—12:45 p. m.]

310. My telegram 307, June 12. I am informed in strict confidence that the German Ambassador in connection with his discussions in Berlin concerning commercial negotiations between Germany

⁸³ For the German version of these conversations, see *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941*, pp. 11-20.

and the Soviet Union will take up the question of the political relations with the Soviet Government. It was stated that in the light of his conversations with Molotov (see my telegram No. 258, May 22, 11 a. m.) the Ambassador intends to recommend to his Government not only for the purpose of facilitating a commercial agreement but also for the possible effect on the Anglo-Russian negotiations the desirability of some steps of a concrete nature to remove Soviet distrust of German inhuman treatment and to make apparent to the Soviet Government that Germany entertains no aggressive designs against the Soviet Union. Although the exact nature of the steps which the Ambassador will suggest was not disclosed, the personal opinion was offered that the Soviet-German treaty signed in Berlin in April 1926⁸⁴ which has never been denounced might serve as a basis for a discussion with the Soviet Government. It was stated that it was impossible to anticipate what would be the reaction of the German Government to any such suggestion since the decision would presumably be based on consideration touching the relations with other countries not easily ascertainable in Moscow.

GRUMMON

661.6231/207: Telegram

The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Grummon) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, June 19, 1939—4 p. m.
[Received June 19—2:03 p. m.]

324. My 310, June 13. The following information with respect to Soviet-German relations has been received in strict confidence. The German Ambassador had expected to return to Moscow last weekend but was requested by Ribbentrop to wait until the end of this week or the beginning of next pending the decision of the German Government in respect to relations with the Soviet Union.

The Commercial Counselor of the German Embassy here saw Mikoyan on June 17⁸⁵ and informed the latter that the German Government was willing to send Schnurre to Moscow to renew conversations for the conclusion of a commercial accord.

As a basis for discussion he submitted certain proposals involving an increase in the quantity of machines to be supplied by Germany to the Soviet Union under the proposed agreement including certain industrial equipment for the production of military supplies which

⁸⁴ For text of the Treaty of Neutrality and Nonaggression signed on April 24, 1926, see League of Nations Treaty Series, vol. LIII, p. 387.

⁸⁵ For report of this meeting by the German Chargé in the Soviet Union on June 18, see *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941*, p. 21.

had been desired by the Soviet Government in return for a certain increase in the quantity of raw materials to be made available to Germany. Mikoyan promised to submit the suggestion to his Government but although he expressed an interest in renewing economic conversations nevertheless indicated that the proposals involving an increase of raw materials were "not entirely satisfactory".

I hope to obtain shortly further details in regard to the exact nature of the German proposals.

GRUMMON

661.6231/210 : Telegram

The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Grummon) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, June 29, 1939—11 a. m.
[Received June 29—10:55 a. m.]

351. My 324, June 19, 4 p. m. The German Ambassador returned from Berlin on June 26. The following information in regard to his conversations in Berlin and the instructions which he received there has been conveyed in the strictest confidence.

The Ambassador had several conversations with Ribbentrop while he was in Berlin but was unsuccessful in obtaining from him any precise instructions in regard to any approach to the Soviet Government at the present time. Ribbentrop told the Ambassador that although it was expected in Berlin that the Soviet negotiations with Great Britain and France would probably be successful in the end, the German Government was not greatly concerned at the prospect, and added that the question of a definite approach along political lines to the Soviet Government should in any event await the outcome of the present negotiations. Ribbentrop, however, did inform the Ambassador that Germany had no aggressive intentions in regard to the Soviet Union but without specifying that the Ambassador on his return to Moscow should convey this intimation to the Soviet Government. The Ambassador had a long and satisfactory conversation with Astakhov, the Soviet Chargé d'Affaires in Berlin, during which the latter expressed his hope for an improvement in Soviet-German relations and stated that up to the present no progress had been made in this direction due to uncertainty as to the real intentions of the German Government which had not been made clear in either the Ambassador's conversation with Molotov (see my telegram No. 300, June 9) or Astakhov's conversations with officials of the German Foreign Office. The Ambassador on his own initiative told Astakhov that Germany had no intention of attacking the Soviet Union and that consequently it would be a pity were the Soviet Union to become involved in the "encirclement" policy of other states.

I was informed that the Ambassador had discussed in Berlin the matter of German-Soviet commercial relations only in very general terms but that the German Commercial Counselor here had again seen Mikoyan and that the latter had stated that the Soviet Government was willing to renew discussions on this subject but only on the basis of the Soviet proposals made last February and that he had conveyed the impression that the arrival of Schnurre or any German official from Berlin for that purpose was not desired at the present time. I was given to understand that this impression has been conveyed to Berlin with the explanation that the Soviet Government apparently feels that the presence of a German official in Moscow might be embarrassing while the negotiations with Great Britain and France are in progress.

It was stated in the strictest confidence that it was apparent from the Ambassador's conversations in Berlin that Ribbentrop is unable to make up his mind in regard to German relations with the Soviet Union and consequently that future developments in these relations were uncertain; that, however, the Ambassador would shortly see Molotov for a general discussion of Soviet-German relations and would probably on his own initiative repeat the assurance given to Astakhov in regard to the absence of any aggressive designs on the part of the German Government towards the Soviet Union.

GRUMMON

761.62/530 : Telegram

The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Grummon) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, July 1, 1939—10 a. m.

[Received July 1—8:30 a. m.]

359. My telegram No. 351, June 29, 11 a. m. The German Ambassador saw Molotov on June 28 and I am informed that the request for an appointment was granted almost immediately. The following information in regard to the Ambassador's conversation with Molotov has been received in strict confidence: ⁸⁶ The Ambassador told Molotov that, following his visit to Berlin, he could assure him that Germany entertained no aggressive designs against the Soviet Union and in confirmation thereof pointed out that the German press had ceased entirely the publication of any anti-Soviet views or articles; that acquiescence in the Hungarian annexation of Ruthenia could be regarded as proof that Germany entertained no designs on the Ukraine and that furthermore the conclusion of non-aggression pacts with

⁸⁶ For an account of this interview, see telegram of June 29, from the German Ambassador in the Soviet Union to the German Foreign Office, *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941*, p. 26.

the Baltic countries⁸⁷ was additional proof of the absence of any German intention to attack the Soviet Union. In respect of the non-aggression pacts with the Baltic States, Molotov remarked that these treaties were with third countries and not with the Soviet Union. The Ambassador thereupon inquired whether the Soviet Government desired a similar treaty with Germany. Molotov evaded the question. The Ambassador then remarked that the non-aggression treaty of 1926 between Germany and the Soviet Union was still in existence. To this Molotov replied that he was interested to hear the Ambassador say so inasmuch as the Soviet Government had had certain doubts as to the continued validity of that treaty in view of subsequent agreements entered into by the German Government. The Ambassador said that if Molotov referred to the German-Italian alliance⁸⁸ he could assure him that this in no way affected the treaty. Molotov then stated that the denunciation of the non-aggression treaty with Poland⁸⁹ had raised doubts as to the value of such treaties at the present time, to which the Ambassador replied that the situation in respect of Poland was somewhat different, in that the German Government felt that Poland by joining the "encirclement" policy of Great Britain had in fact contravened the non-aggression pact with Germany.

The subject of the new commercial negotiations was then discussed and Molotov informed the Ambassador that as he was not familiar with the details of the matter it would be better for the German Commercial Counselor to continue his discussions with Mikoyan. Upon departing, the Ambassador inquired whether he was correct in assuming that the Soviet Union desired normal relations with all countries which did not transgress Soviet interests and whether that was equally applicable to Germany. Molotov replied in the affirmative.

In discussing the above conversation, my informant stated that Molotov had again displayed an attitude of reserve in respect of German-Soviet relations but had manifested a certain interest in the possibility of a concrete offer of a political character from Germany; that, however, he had apparently abandoned his previous views that a political basis was a prerequisite of any improvement in commercial relations and that to this extent an element of progress could be noted. He, however, repeated the opinion previously advanced that the lack

⁸⁷ Treaties of nonaggression were concluded between Germany and Estonia and Latvia in Berlin on June 7, 1939; for texts, see German White Book, *Documents on the Events Preceding the Outbreak of the War* (New York, German Library of Information, 1940), doc. Nos. 346 and 347, pp. 367-369.

⁸⁸ Pact of friendship and military alliance signed on May 22, 1939; for text, see Department of State, *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, Series D, vol. VI, doc. No. 426.

⁸⁹ For the German memorandum of April 28, 1939, denouncing the German-Polish peace declaration of nonaggression of January 26, 1934, see German White Book, doc. No. 213, p. 222. For text of the declaration of nonaggression, see *ibid.*, doc. No. 37, p. 55

of clarity in German policy towards the Soviet Union undoubtedly tended to reinforce the existing Soviet suspicion in regard to the real motives and intentions of the German Government.

GRUMMON

661.6231/211 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, July 3, 1939—6 p. m.
[Received July 3—4: 07 p. m.]

583. My 535, June 21, 7 p. m.,⁹⁰ and 447, June 6, 11 a. m. Although as stated in my telegram No. 535 of June 21 the Soviet Chargé in Berlin stated that the trade talks were being carried on in Moscow by the German Embassy there an authoritative German source yesterday informed a member of this Embassy that conversations on Soviet-German commercial matters have been in progress in Berlin for several days between a German group headed by Schnurre and the Economic Section of the Russian Embassy here which it is understood is independent of the Embassy proper. This informant stated that no decision was taken to send Schnurre to Moscow to carry on negotiations because of a conflict of views within the Reich's Government which has not yet been solved and which is under one group of officials who oppose any improvement of relations with Russia and by others who favor a *rapprochement* between the two countries both economic and political. The fact of holding the trade discussions here instead of sending a delegation to Moscow represents, it was added, a temporary compromise of the points of view. The informant was skeptical however of any real results issuing from the trade talks now in progress owing, he believed, to the inability and apparent unwillingness of Soviet Russia to furnish raw materials useful to Germany.

In view of the impossibility of communicating in this cipher with the Embassy in Moscow I should appreciate obtaining for my information and guidance such material as the Department may receive from Moscow on this subject.

KIRK

761.62/532 : Telegram

The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Grummon) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, July 10, 1939—1 p. m.
[Received 2: 30 p. m.]

376. My 359, July 1. I am informed in strict confidence that since the [German] Ambassador's conversation with Molotov reported in

⁹⁰ Not printed.

my telegram under reference, there have been no further developments here in Soviet-German relations; that in reply to his report of the above conversation the Ambassador was instructed by Berlin to take no further steps for the present in the matter of an approach to the Soviet Government.⁹¹ It was added that the German Embassy was awaiting further instructions from Berlin in regard to the conversations for a renewal of commercial negotiations.

GRUMMON

661.6231/212 : Telegram

The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Grummon) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, July 11, 1939—noon.

[Received July 11—11 a. m.]

379. My 376. I am informed that on the basis of further instructions from Berlin the German Commercial Attaché saw Mikoyan yesterday and replied to certain questions which the latter had put on the question of their last meeting (see my 351, June 29) in respect of the basis for further restriction concerning a commercial agreement between Germany and the Soviet Union. In replying to these questions I understand that the German Government made certain concessions to the Soviet desires concerning interest rates on the 200 million mark credit, and in return requested certain increases in the amount of raw materials over those contained in the Soviet proposals made here; that Mikoyan indicated a disposition to accept these suggestions as a basis of negotiation, but stated that he would have to refer the matter to his Government, and that a reply would be forthcoming within a few days.

GRUMMON

661.6231/216 : Telegram

The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Grummon) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, July 22, 1939—10 a. m.

[Received July 22—6:35 a. m.]

399. An announcement in the Soviet press today entitled "In the Commissariat for Foreign Trade"⁹² states that recently negotiations concerning trade and credit have been renewed between Germany and the Soviet Union and that these negotiations are being carried on for

⁹¹ See telegram of June 30, to the German Ambassador in the Soviet Union, *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941*, p. 27.

⁹² The text of this announcement was sent to the German Foreign Office by the German Ambassador in the Soviet Union in his telegram of July 22, *ibid.*, p. 32.

the Commissariat for Foreign Trade by the Soviet trade representative in Berlin and for Germany by Schnurre.

The above announcement confirms the information reported in my telegram 394, July 19, 7 p. m.,⁹³ and indicates that the German Government has acceded to the Soviet request to transfer the negotiations to Berlin.

Repeated to Berlin.

GRUMMON

761.62/537

The Ambassador in Poland (Biddle) to the Secretary of State

No. 1191

WARSAW, August 3, 1939.

[Received August 15.]

SIR: I have the honor to report that in recent conversation with Beck⁹⁴ we discussed the matter of reported speculation in Western European political circles as of about 3 weeks ago on the possibility of Berlin's and Moscow's "getting together."

Beck did not believe there was a likelihood of Berlin's coming to terms with Moscow in the near future at least. By way of clarification he pointed out that, while it might be possible for the two capitals to see eye to eye in terms of commerce and other economic aspects,* the broad gap between the two doctrines of Naziism and Communism was a fundamental hindrance to complete agreement. He and his associates were convinced that the doctrine behind Stalin's policy was still world revolution. Indeed, this doctrine was just as essential a part of Stalin's policy as the Nazi doctrine was a part of Hitler's policy. In the case of existent, so to speak, systems through the rest of the world, one might find a basis for compromise, even to the extent of political dealings between the various powers, but in the case of doctrines it was a different matter. As a matter of fact, Beck felt that it would be less difficult for the Western European democracies to adjust their line of thought in event they sought an understanding with the Axis powers than it would be for either Naziism or Communism to adjust their respective lines of thought were either or both in search of a common understanding.

⁹³ Not printed.

⁹⁴ Józef Beck, Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs.

*As pointed out in my letter to the President of April 7, 1939, Memorandum No. 2, page 2, I do not overlook possibility that Hitler, reportedly counting upon an exceptional strain and wear and tear on machinery in Russia (due to inexperienced and inefficient operators) to bring about a premature wear-out, hopes German heavy industry will figure as the largest supplier of Russian machinery replacement over the next several years. [Footnote in the original. The letter referred to is not in the Department files.]

He then reiterated his remarks to me on previous occasions that Poland's relations with Russia were very correct and that a marked improvement in commercial relations was proving a real source of satisfaction, both for him and his associates.

Respectfully yours,

A. J. DREXEL BIDDLE, JR.

761.62/536 : Telegram

The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Grummon) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, August 6, 1939—3 p. m.
[Received August 6—1:55 p. m.]

431. My 379, July 10. I am informed in the strictest confidence that the German Ambassador saw Molotov on August 3⁹⁵ and assured the latter under instructions from his Government that Germany entertained no aggressive designs against the Soviet Union itself; had no intention of impairing the *status quo* in the Baltic; and would respect all Soviet interests. Molotov, I am informed, expressed the greatest interest in the Ambassador's communication and inquired whether the reference to the Baltic included Lithuania, to which the Ambassador replied in the affirmative. Molotov then frankly set forth the specific bases of Soviet distrust of Germany which he outlined as follows: (1) the Anti-Comintern Pact;⁹⁶ (2) the direct or indirect encouragement given by Germany to Japan in the Far East; and (3) the apparent intention of Germany since the advent of Hitler to "outlaw" the Soviet Union as evidenced by the refusal of Germany during recent years to attend any European Conference at which the Soviet Union was represented. The Ambassador stated that the Anti-Comintern Pact was in reality not directed against the Soviet Union but against England and that Germany was interested in developing good relations with the Soviet Union. He added however that if the Soviet Union allied itself with England and France it could naturally expect to incur a share of the German hostility directed against those countries. Molotov replied that the Soviet Government was interested in "normalizing" and improving its relations with Germany but at the same time would continue its policy of attempting to assure a "genuine defence against aggression".

⁹⁵ For report of this meeting, see telegram of August 4, from the German Ambassador in the Soviet Union to the German Foreign Office, *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941*, p. 39.

⁹⁶ The Anti-Comintern Pact was concluded between Germany and Japan on November 25, 1936; for text of the treaty, see *Foreign Relations, Japan, 1931-1941*, vol. II, p. 153, and for text of the secret additional protocol, see *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, Series D, vol. I, p. 734, footnote 2a.

My informant offered the opinion that Molotov's reception of the Ambassador's assurances indicated that an improvement of Soviet-German relations was possible but that because of past German policy it would take some time to remove Soviet distrust. He stated that Molotov's reference to the continuation of present Soviet policy of attempting to assume a "genuine" defence against aggression would appear to indicate that the Soviet Union is prepared to conclude a pact with the British and French but only on Soviet terms.

My informant added that the instructions to the Ambassador here had resulted from political conversations along the above lines which had taken place in Berlin between the Soviet Chargé d'Affaires Astakhov, Schnurre, and Ribbentrop in connection with the economic negotiations there.⁹⁷ In respect of the economic negotiations my informant stated that they were progressing satisfactorily and that there was reason to expect a successful conclusion within 2 or 3 weeks.

In respect to German-Japanese relations my informant stated that there were indications that the Japanese were alarmed at the recent developments in Soviet-German relations and that at the present moment the Japanese were more disposed as a result thereof to join the military alliance of the Axis powers but that for the same reason the German Government was less eager to conclude such an alliance with Japan.

GRUMMON

661.6231/220: Telegram (part a1r)

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, August 9, 1939—6 p. m.
[Received August 10—8:25 a. m.]

757. My 724, August 2, 7 p. m.⁹⁸ The Soviet Chargé d'Affaires informed a member of the Embassy staff today that rapid progress was being made in the German-Russian trade negotiations here and that it was quite probable that a trade arrangement would shortly be concluded. He said that there were a large number of German designed and equipped factories for which new machinery was needed and that Germany was the only country that would give long term credits. He said that the Germans were discussing credits of 5, 6 and 7 years' duration, payment to be made in Russian commodities. He said further that Germany was not insisting on payment solely in important commodities such as manganese and petroleum products but was quite

⁹⁷ See the German accounts of these conversations in *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941*, pp. 32-33.

⁹⁸ Not printed.

willing to accept almost anything that Russia had to dispose of including products such as cotton waste of which Russia had a surplus and could neither use nor easily sell abroad.

Repeat to Treasury as No. 54 from Heath.⁹⁹

KIRK

761.62/538 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, August 16, 1939—11 p. m.

[Received August 16—4:15 p. m.]

447. My telegram No. 431, August 6, 3 p. m. The German Ambassador saw Molotov last night¹ for an hour and a half and under instructions from his Government² made to Molotov the following statement in respect of German policy towards the Soviet Union which, it is understood, emanated from Hitler himself: After reiterating that the German Government had entertained no aggressive intentions whatsoever against the Soviet Union and that there was no conflict of interests between the two countries from "the Baltic to the Black Sea," the statement continued that the German Government was prepared to discuss in advance with the Soviet Government "any territorial questions in Eastern Europe;" that the German Government felt that serious conversations between the two Governments should begin soon, since events might otherwise develop which might adversely and unnecessarily affect Soviet-German relations. The statement concluded that the German Government was prepared to send a high ranking official to discuss these questions in Moscow. The Ambassador, I understand, left no written memorandum of this statement but his remarks were taken down verbatim by a stenographer. The Ambassador added that Hitler had requested that the contents of this statement be brought to the attention of Stalin himself. Molotov in reply, after promising to bring the contents of the statement immediately to Stalin's attention, added that for the first time the Soviet Government was convinced of the seriousness of Germany's desire to improve its relations with the Soviet Union, and he informed the Ambassador that the Soviet Government would "welcome" the continuation of the political conversations, but only if there was reasonable assurance that they would lead to definite and con-

⁹⁹ Donald R. Heath, First Secretary of Embassy.

¹ For the German Ambassador's accounts of his meeting with Molotov, see *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941*, pp. 52-57.

² These instructions are contained in the telegram of August 14, from the Reich Foreign Minister, *ibid.*, p. 50.

crete results. As possible results Molotov mentioned: (1) the conclusion of a non-aggression pact between the Soviet Union and Germany; (2) the cessation of any direct or indirect encouragement on the part of Germany to Japanese aggression in the Far East, and, (3) regulations of mutual interests in the Baltic. Molotov felt that these three subjects should be discussed in preliminary conversations before the question of sending a German emissary to Moscow should be definitely decided. The results of the Ambassador's interview with Molotov were telegraphed to Berlin last night and a complete account is going forward by special courier from the German Embassy on Thursday.³ Although I have no means of checking the accuracy of this information, it may be stated that previous information on the subject of Soviet-German relations obtained from the same source have in the past proved to be accurate. In view of the nature of the above information I venture to request the Department to use every means to protect the source and Moscow origin thereof. Although it is possibly too soon to speak of a definite German-Soviet *rapprochement* at the present time, as will be observed from the Embassy's telegram under reference and previous on the subject of German-Soviet relations, a steady progress can be noted in the conversations which the German Ambassador here has had with Molotov during the past two and a half months. Furthermore I have every reason to believe that the Soviet Government has not in connection with the present negotiations informed the French and British Governments of these developments in its relations with Germany.

STEINHARDT

661.6231/224 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, August 21, 1939—3 p. m.
[Received August 21—11:10 a. m.]

453. My telegram No. 452, August 20.⁴ A Tass announcement in today's press reports the conclusion after long negotiations on August 19 of a commercial credit agreement between the Soviet Union and Germany,⁵ signed by the Soviet trade representative, Babarin, and Schnurre. The report continues: "The commercial credit agreement envisages the granting by Germany to the Soviet Union of a credit in the amount of 200 million German marks at 5% interest maturing

³ August 17.

⁴ Not printed.

⁵ A similar report based upon press accounts was received from the Chargé in Germany in telegram No. 846, August 21, 1 p. m., not printed. For a description of the provisions of the trade agreement, see memorandum of August 29, by Karl Schnurre, *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941*, p. 83.

in 7 years for the purchase of German goods within 2 years from the date of the signature of the agreement. The agreement envisages also the delivery of goods on the part of the Soviet Union to Germany during the same period, namely, within 2 years in the amount of 180 million German marks." According to the German Embassy here the agreement was signed at 2 a. m., on August 20 but is apparently considered as of August 19.

Pravda and *Izvestiya* this morning devote their leading editorials to the new agreement. Both editorials emphasize that, although the negotiations were difficult because of the strained political relations between the two countries, nevertheless in view of the desire on both sides to improve the commercial relations an agreement was successfully reached. The *Izvestiya* editorial, after reviewing the decline in Soviet-German trade which resulted from the tension in political relations, states that "it is possible to state boldly that the new agreement is a turning point in the business relations between the two countries." In respect of the agreement itself both editorials state that the 200 million mark credit is in reality a financial credit since it is guaranteed 100% by the German Government and will enable the Soviet trade representative in Germany to pay in cash for the goods purchased. In addition the editorial states that the German Government has agreed to prompt fulfillment of Soviet orders and will for this purpose assist the Soviet trade delegation in its dealings with individual German firms. Mention also made of the low rate of interest in comparison with previous credits and also the length of time for repayment which will be seven years on an average with 30% repayable within six and one-half years, 40% in seven, and the remaining 30% within seven and one-half years. Both editorials forecast that the credit agreement will result in a wide expansion of trade between the two countries and *Pravda* concludes with the following words: "The new commercial credit agreement between the Soviet Union and Germany which was born in an atmosphere of strained political relations is summoned to relieve this atmosphere. It may represent a serious step in the matter of the further improvement of not only the economic but also the political relations between the Soviet Union and Germany".

Although full details of the agreement are not yet available, it would appear from the information contained in the Soviet press that it follows in general along the lines indicated in the Embassy's telegram No. 79, February 19 [20], 1939, and presumably provides for Soviet purchases in Germany of goods in the amount of 380 million marks within the next 2 years and Soviet Russian exports to Germany amounting to 180 million marks during the same period, the discrepancy to be met by the operation of the credit.

STEINHARDT

761.6211/57: Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, August 21, 1939—midnight.

[Received August 21—10:50 p. m.]

852. The German official telegraphic agency and the German radio system has just announced that, "The German and Soviet Governments had agreed to conclude a non-aggression pact with each other" and that "Ribbentrop would arrive in Moscow on Wednesday, August 23, to conclude the negotiations".

KIRK

761.6211/58: Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, August 22 [21], 1939—midnight.

[Received August 22—6:55 a. m.]

454. A Tass announcement on Soviet-German relations in today's⁶ press after stating that following the conclusion of the commercial agreement the question of the improvement of the political relations between Germany and the Soviet Union arose, continues "The exchange of opinions between the Governments of Germany and the Soviet Union which took place on this question established the presence of a desire on both sides to relieve the tension of the political relations between them, to eliminate the threat of war and to conclude a pact of non-aggression. In connection therewith the German Minister for Foreign Affairs Von Ribbentrop will shortly arrive in Moscow for the necessary negotiations". News reports reaching Moscow last night⁶ concerning a similar announcement by the German Government stated that Von Ribbentrop will leave Berlin by air tomorrow⁷ for Moscow. A further news report stated that the Soviet Chargé d'Affaires Astakhov left Berlin yesterday⁶ for Moscow by air.

The announcement of Ribbentrop's proposed visit would indicate that the preliminary discussions in respect of a non-aggression pact suggested by Molotov were conducted with extreme rapidity in Berlin and it is probable that the other points indicated by Molotov as Soviet desiderata in any negotiations with Germany namely the cessation of German encouragement to Japan in the Far East and

⁶ Presumably August 21 is intended.

⁷ Presumably August 23 is intended. See telegram No. 852, August 21, midnight, from the Chargé in Germany, *supra*.

the regulation of the question of the Baltic States were also discussed and will be the subject of negotiation here during Ribbentrop's visit.

The swift development of Soviet-German relations came as a complete surprise to the British and French Embassies here and members thereof were quite openly concerned already yesterday at the announcement of the conclusion of a trade agreement and particularly at the prediction contained in the *Pravda* editorial reported in my telegram 453, August 21 of an improvement in the political relations between the two countries.

STEINHARDT

761.6211/67: Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, August 22, 1939—8 p. m.
[Received August 22—5:50 p. m.]

863. My 862, August 22, 7 p. m.⁸ According to a member of the Soviet Embassy here the Soviet Chargé d'Affaires who returned to Moscow last night was first informed concerning the nonaggression pact 2 or 3 days ago and then merely partially so for the purpose of arranging Ribbentrop's visit and that Maisky⁹ in London was apparently not informed and sought news of the pact from the Embassy here last night. As described by this source the reasons for Russia's new alignment with Germany are: refusal of the British and French military authorities to accord full information respecting their armies; the British and French refusal to provide for more than a basis of consultation in case of war; the concessions made by the British to the Japanese in the Far East and mistrust of the character of the present British Government which it was feared was prepared to arrange a "second Munich" with respect to Poland. On that consideration the Soviet Government regarded that in its own defense it was necessary to mark a definite improvement in its relations with Germany and accordingly had decided to agree to the present pact. The same informant without making any definite assertion sought to convey in his conversation the impression that there was no intention to exclude the possibility that the Anglo-French-Soviet negotiations would be continued and intimated that even after a conclusion of the pact, in the event of a flagrant act of aggression on the part of Germany against Poland, Russia might align itself against Germany. The opinion was also expressed that the announcement of the accord might postpone for a few days what-

⁸ Not printed; it reported Berlin press comment on the prospective German-Soviet pact of nonaggression.

⁹ Ivan Mikhailovich Maisky, Soviet Ambassador in the United Kingdom.

ever German action was intended in order that time might be given to sound out foreign reaction and to await the effect on Polish resistance.

KIRK

761.6211/71: Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, August 23, 1939—4 p. m.

[Received August 23—10:30 a. m.]

461. Ribbentrop arrived promptly at 1:00 by air and was met at the airport on behalf of the Soviet Government by Potemkin, the Commander of the Moscow garrison, and other Soviet officials. He was to see Molotov at 3 o'clock this afternoon.

STEINHARDT

761.6211/82: Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, August 23, 1939—7 p. m.

[Received 7:38 p. m.]

1219. Embassy's 1211, August 22, 7 p. m.¹⁰ I have just seen Halifax. He told me of Seeds' ¹¹ report received this morning regarding his visit to Molotov. Molotov admitted that agreement had been reached to sign a nonaggression pact with Germany and said that their communiqué represented the facts. When Seeds asked him whether the agreement would contain the usual clause in Russian nonaggression pacts, that is that if one of the parties committed an act of aggression on another country the pact would automatically be dissolved, Molotov seemed very embarrassed and said, "We will have to wait and see what happens later on." Halifax told me that Vansittart ¹² believes there is a provision in the agreement providing for the fourth division of Poland.

A point which Molotov raised with considerable bitterness was that the British and French had rejected the repeated Russian requests regarding the passage of Russian troops through Polish and Rumanian territory. Halifax says that whether this is really a valid excuse on

¹⁰ *Ante*, p. 304.

¹¹ Sir William Seeds, British Ambassador in the Soviet Union.

¹² Sir Robert Gilbert Vansittart, Chief Diplomatic Adviser in the British Foreign Office.

the part of Molotov or not, it serves to give Russia a righteous feeling of indignation against Poland who so far has been adamant in refusing this permission to Russia.

The Russian reply could hardly be more unsatisfactory. Molotov rejected the British accusation of bad faith, refusing to admit their right to use such an expression or to stand in judgment on the Soviet Government. He also repudiated any suggestion that Russia was under obligation to have warned the British Government and said the British Government did not inform the Soviet Government of modifications in its own policy. The Ambassador's reply was that he was not talking of changes in general policy in normal times but of a change at the very height of negotiations. Molotov reminded the Ambassador that he himself had reproached the British throughout the negotiations with a lack of sincerity and argued that the height of this insincerity had been reached when the Anglo-French military mission arrived in Moscow without anything concrete to offer and not ready to deal with basic points on which the question of reciprocal assistance depended. He referred in particular to the passage of Russian troops through Polish and Rumanian territory and pointed out that the Soviet delegation had asked this question again and again and had always been put off. Finally he said the Soviet Government had made up its mind that it was being played with and accepted the proposals made to them by the German Government.

The British Ambassador rebutted the accusation that the military mission had arrived emptyhanded but denied that they were competent to deal with any question of the passage of troops through the territory of a third state. Molotov waived the point aside and said that the French Government at least knew that the point at issue was of capital importance; it had been raised on many occasions in the past by the restrictions imposed, in particular at the time of the Czechoslovakia crisis,¹³ and that the French Government and military authorities had never thought fit to give a clear answer.

Molotov apparently reiterated the foregoing statement several times. The British Ambassador then asked him just what the German proposal amounted to and Molotov pointed to the Tass communiqué. The Ambassador observed that there was more than one form of non-aggression treaty and inquired if the one now proposed was designed to allow the Soviet Government to continue the policy which the British Government had always considered to be the Russian policy, that is the protection of victims of aggression; and he asked if it would mean that Russia would stand by and allow Poland to be overrun. Molotov showed his dislike of this questioning and said

¹³ For correspondence on this subject, see *Foreign Relations*, 1938, vol. I, pp. 483 ff.

only that the British must wait and see how things worked out. Sir William Seeds continued his questioning, however, and asked whether all that had been achieved in the way of setting up a system of general defense against aggression was now to be of no account and whether it were possible to continue along that line? Molotov said that everything depended upon the German negotiations and that perhaps after a week or so we might see.

The Ambassador observed that he greatly regretted the report which he would be compelled to send to his Government but above all the aspersions made on British sincerity and on the military missions. He referred to the long series of concessions on the part of the British and French which had been made during the past months to meet the Soviet point of view, ending up with the really great concession of agreeing to send military missions before the negotiations for a political agreement had been concluded. Molotov then said that he was not so much interested in the past as in the all-important display of insincerity, that is in the failure to answer the Soviet question in regard to the passage of troops. The Ambassador refused to admit this point and pointing out that the acknowledged negotiators had not asked for any assistance beyond the Soviet power to give and that in actual fact the Anglo-French suggestions had always been that Russian troops should stand by on the frontier ready for action if necessary; that in fact they had asked for less than Russia had been prepared to give. The Ambassador reminded Molotov of his having spoken of "seeing in a week's time" and said he expected that the answer would most probably be known by then. Molotov said we will see and the interview terminated.

As to the Polish situation, Halifax yesterday conveyed to Beck Mussolini's statement of the night before to the effect that it was absolutely essential for the Poles to get in touch with the Germans at once even if they were not ready to discuss Danzig at the moment, to start a discussion on minorities or on some other subject that would provide scope for talk. Halifax, however, is of the belief that the Poles are not inclined to do this. He says that England will definitely go to war if Poland starts to fight.¹⁴ However, I have a distinct feeling that they do not want to be more Polish than the Poles and that they are praying the Poles will find some way of adjusting their differences with the Germans at once.

¹⁴ The British Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, made a statement on March 31, 1939, in the House of Commons announcing unilateral assurance to Poland. He added that the French Government had authorized him to state that it stood "in the same position in this matter" as the British Government. An Anglo-Polish communiqué of April 6, 1939, made the assurance reciprocal. The permanent agreement of mutual assistance was signed at London on August 25, 1939. British Cmd. 6106, Misc. No. 9 (1939): *Documents Concerning German-Polish Relations and the Outbreak of Hostilities between Great Britain and Germany on September 3, 1939*, doc. Nos. 17, 18, and 19, pp. 36-39.

Halifax is definitely of opinion that Mussolini is working for peace and goes so far as to say he does not believe Mussolini will get in the fight when it starts.

Summing all this up, I asked Halifax what he thought of the situation. He said, "My reason shows me no way out but war, but my instincts still give me hope."

KENNEDY

761.6211/85 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, August 24, 1939—9 a. m.

[Received August 24—5:25 a. m.]

464. Preliminary treaty was signed early this morning in the Kremlin by Molotov and Ribbentrop.¹⁵ Stalin was present at the final conference. The pact consists of seven articles, of which the following is a brief summary :

The two countries agree :

(1) To commit no act of aggression against each other direct or indirect against each other.

(2) To refrain from supporting in any way any country at war with the other.

(3) To consult with each other on questions of mutual interest.

(4) To refrain mutually from associating with any group of powers aimed directly or indirectly against the interests of the other.

(5) To settle any differences which might arise between the two countries by exclusively peaceful means.

(6) The treaty shall last for 10 years, renewable for another 5 ; and,

(7) The treaty shall be ratified within the shortest possible time by both Governments but will enter into force from the moment of signature.

STEINHARDT

761.6211/93 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, August 24, 1939—noon.

[Received August 24—11:15 a. m.]

465. My 464, August 24, 9 a. m. The text of the treaty was published in the Soviet press today and follows the outline given in my telegram under reference, with the addition of a preamble that the

¹⁵ For text of the Treaty of Nonaggression, with the secret additional protocol, between Germany and the Soviet Union signed at Moscow and dated August 23, 1939, see *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941*, p. 76.

present treaty is based on the Soviet-German treaty of April 1926. As the press will undoubtedly carry the full text I will not telegraph it.

I am informed in strict confidence that a full "understanding" was reached last night between the Soviet and German Governments in reference to territorial questions in Eastern Europe whereby Estonia, Latvia, eastern Poland, and Bessarabia are recognized as spheres of Soviet vital interest. Apparently Finland was not mentioned. My informant added that article 4, which prohibits the contracting parties from joining any group of powers directed against the other, in addition to precluding Soviet adherence to any Anglo-French alliance will also preclude any German-Japanese collaboration. I am informed that the negotiations were conducted personally by Stalin who did not disguise from Ribbentrop that he had long been in favor of a Soviet-German *rapprochement*. When the treaty was concluded Stalin drank a toast to Hitler and to "the revival of the traditional German-Russian friendship". As a result of the discussions dealing with territorial questions involving countries lying between Germany and the Soviet Union I am informed that there was a tacit agreement to the effect that the Soviet Union would be given territorial compensation, if it so desired, for both territorial changes which might be introduced by Germany in those regions.

Ribbentrop is flying back to Berlin at 2 p. m. today.

STEINHARDT

761.6211/99 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, August 24, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received 5:40 p. m.]

468. As late as 7 o'clock last night the British Ambassador whom I saw at that hour was not only apparently in complete ignorance of the degree of agreement already reached between the German and Soviet Russian Governments but was also apparently oblivious to the gravity and portent of the impending Soviet-German agreement and the consequences to be anticipated therefrom. He informed me that Molotov had stated to him the day before yesterday, following the announcement of Ribbentrop's visit, that the latter was coming to "negotiate", that no reply could be given in regard to the continuance of the Anglo-French-Soviet conversations until the outcome of the talks with Ribbentrop could be determined. The Ambassador apparently believed Molotov's assurances that a Soviet-German agreement would be limited to a non-aggression pact which would not be incompatible with an Anglo-French-Soviet alliance against aggression. I expressed in-

credulity at this point of view and informed the Ambassador in confidence that I had good reason to believe that agreement had been substantially reached between the German and Soviet Governments on far-reaching political matters prior to the decision to send Ribbentrop to Moscow and that Ribbentrop's presence here was largely theatrical to impress world opinion, particularly British and French. The Ambassador thanked me for expressing my "opinion" to him so frankly and then said that the military missions had been instructed by London and Paris to remain in Moscow and await the development of Ribbentrop visit.

As the Department will observe from the foregoing and my conversation with the French Ambassador¹⁷ yesterday (see my 460, August 23, 3 p. m.¹⁸), the French and British Embassies here have apparently not only been in complete ignorance of the Soviet intentions vis-à-vis Germany but appear to have been entirely taken in by the reassurances conveyed to them by Molotov, and were still incredulous last night.

STEINHARDT

760C.61/778: Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, August 28, 1939—4 p. m.
[Received August 28—2: 30 p. m.]

480. Embassy's telegram No. 349, June 29.¹⁸ I am informed in the strictest confidence by a member of the Polish Embassy here that the Polish Government has instructed its Ambassador in Moscow¹⁹ to act on the assumption that the Soviet Government intends to fulfill the assurances which Molotov, Potemkin and Mikoyan have expressed on various occasions to Polish officials to the effect that in the event of a conflict between Germany and Poland the Soviet Government would furnish economic assistance to Poland. My informant stated that the Polish Government apparently did not intend to lodge a protest with the Soviet Government against the conclusion of the German-Soviet pact of non-aggression since a similar agreement exists between Poland and the Soviet Government²⁰ and he added that such a protest would be lodged only in the event of a breach of faith on the part of the

¹⁷ Paul Émile Naggiar.

¹⁸ Not printed.

¹⁹ Waclaw Grzybowski.

²⁰ Signed on July 25, 1932; for text, see League of Nations Treaty Series, vol. cxxxvi, p. 41. A protocol signed at Moscow on May 5, 1934, extended the validity of the treaty to December 31, 1945; for text, see *ibid.*, vol. clvii, p. 431.

Soviet Government in respect either of the strict execution of the Polish-Soviet commercial agreement²¹ or of the assurances under reference.

My informant who has just returned from an inspection trip to Murmansk considers that this port is comparatively small and is not adequately equipped for handling cargoes on a large scale. He pointed out that although facilities appear to be particularly inadequate in respect of handling incoming cargoes since only three large cranes exist for discharging ships, nevertheless in the event of a Polish-German war his Government intended to request the Soviet authorities on the basis of their previous assurances to permit Poland to import via Murmansk a certain amount of essential materials. He ventured the opinion that the Soviet Government would endeavor to fulfill its commercial agreements with both Germany and Poland and that it was possible that the assurances in respect of additional economic assistance in the event of war would be executed to a rough extent.

STEINHARDT

761.0211/156 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, August 31, 1939—11 a. m.

[Received August 31—10:49 a. m.]

968. My 863, August 22, 8 p. m. In view of the accounts and comments appearing in the German press yesterday regarding the German-Soviet Non-aggression Pact and the implications therein as to a possible extension of that pact to a larger cooperation between the two countries (see my 962, and 956, August 30²²) an inquiry was made at the Soviet Embassy here with a view to soliciting further views as to the possible significance of the foregoing accounts and comments.

In informal conversation a member of the Soviet Embassy stated categorically that the reports that the Non-aggression Pact with Germany was accompanied by a secret agreement for common military action against Poland looking toward the partition of that country were malicious inventions; that it was to the interest of Soviet Russia to maintain Poland as well as the Baltic countries as buffer states and that the purpose of the Non-aggression Pact was for peace and not in support of or complicity in any German imperialistic designs. At

²¹ Signed at Moscow, February 19, 1939. See the communiqué of that date issued by the Polish Telegraphic Agency; the Polish White Book, *Official Documents concerning Polish-German and Polish-Soviet Relations, 1933-1939* (London, Hutchinson and Co., n. d.), doc. No. 162, p. 182.

²² Neither printed.

the same time the Secretary of the Embassy showed considerable resentment against Poland on the basis that it had refused Russian guarantees of territorial integrity and a mutual assistance pact owing to its fear that Soviet troops once on Polish soil would constitute a nucleus for subversive activities against the Polish Government and the social and economic order of the country.

While there is no information available which would indicate that the pact in its present stage is directed against the status of Poland as an independent state, it should be observed that there is no reason to believe that the individual members of the Soviet Embassy here are fully informed as to the actual aims envisaged or that judging from the misleading information alleged to have been supplied by that Embassy to other embassies here during the negotiation of the Soviet-German pact, special credence should be given to the views emanating therefrom. Although it is impossible to evaluate at present the intimations which have lately appeared in the German press as to a larger significance of the pact, the suggestion has been put forth that this renewed emphasis springs more from a desire to impress the public both in Germany and abroad as to the intention of this pact than to any actual achievement in extending its purpose in support of Nazi aims. Future developments may indicate the extent and the limitation of this pact but it should be observed that the orientation and development of that pact does not depend upon Germany alone and there is no reason to believe that in this instance the Kremlin will depart from its habitual practice of limiting and extending its international commitments solely on the basis of its evaluation of the means best adapted to safeguard its own interests.

KIRK

761.6211/157 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, August 31, 1939—11 p. m.

[Received August 31—8:52 p. m.]

493. The Supreme Soviet ratified the German-Soviet treaty at 8:45 this evening. The treaty was presented by Molotov in a long speech, a full summary of which will have to await publication in the press tomorrow.²³ In general Molotov based his discussion of the treaty on

²³ For the essential points of Molotov's speech of August 31, 1939, see memorandum by the Assistant Chief of the Division of European Affairs, September 2, p. 349.

Stalin's speech to the Eighteenth Party Congress²⁴ with the noticeable omission of that part which stated that the Soviet Union would support countries which were victims of aggression. Molotov charged that the British and French had been insincere in their negotiations with the Soviet Union and had been motivated by a desire to provoke a Soviet-German war. He also blamed Poland for its refusal to accept Soviet military aid under any condition. Molotov represented the treaty as an instrument of peace between the two most powerful states of Europe and said that even in the event of hostilities in Europe the treaty would limit the sphere of military activities. As to the commercial agreement with Germany, Molotov stated that the equipment which would be received from Germany under its terms would not only be of advantage to Soviet national economy but also to Soviet national defence. Molotov's speech was interspersed with sarcastic references to England and France and warned against the attempts of enemies to disturb the new relations between Germany and the Soviet Union.

The ratification of the treaty was advanced on the calendar and the present session will continue tomorrow with a further consideration of points 1 and 2 which have not yet been entirely disposed of.

At the afternoon session Voroshilov²⁵ presented the project for a change in the universal military service law which was adopted in principle. This provides for the lowering of age at which recruits may be called for military service, if they have not completed 10 years' schooling, from 19 to 18. The period of active service was raised from 2 to 3 years for non-commissioned officers in the infantry and all ranks in the artillery frontier guards and air forces.

STEINHARDT

761. 6211/158 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, September 1, 1939—1 a. m.

[Received August 31—10: 25 p. m.]

494. Personal for the Under Secretary. In the light of the information contained in the concluding paragraph of my 465, August 24, which, while possibly not complete, is, up to the present, the only information that I have concerning any secret agreement between Soviet

²⁴ For reports on the speech by Stalin on March 10, 1939, from the Chargé in the Soviet Union, see telegram No. 99, March 11, and despatch No. 2213, March 30, *Foreign Relations, The Soviet Union, 1933-1939*, pp. 739 and 747.

²⁵ Kliment Efremovich Voroshilov, People's Commissar for Defense of the Soviet Union.

Russia and Germany, I am inclined to discount speculative rumors circulating in Moscow and in other capitals that any such agreement concluded between Germany and Soviet Russia involves Soviet military operations against Poland. It is my understanding that the agreement, while it recognizes certain areas in Eastern Europe as vital to the interests of the Soviet Union, which Germany would refrain from entering, and accords to the Soviet Union the right of territorial compensation in those areas should it so desire, there is no reason to believe that the agreement contained any obligation upon the Soviet Union to undertake offensive military action in Eastern Europe. The agreement, however, does not appear to preclude the Soviet Union from obtaining its compensation by military occupancy should it so elect.

It is my opinion that the Soviet Union desires to and will pursue an opportunist policy based entirely upon the developments arising out of any conflict in Eastern Europe. For this reason I consider it unlikely that the Soviet Union will take offensive military action during the opening stages of any such conflict but no possibility should be excluded in appraising the course the present leaders of the Soviet Union might pursue at any time.

STEINHARDT

761.6211/170 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, September 2, 1939—7 p. m.
[Received September 2—4: 32 p. m.]

1743. The Polish Ambassador ²⁶ informed me today that the Soviet Ambassador in Warsaw ²⁷ had called on Beck yesterday and had stated that the Soviet Government considered it extraordinary that the Polish Government had not noted the passage in Voroshilov's speech ²⁸ in which he had stated that the agreement between Germany and the Soviet Union would not interfere with commercial exchanges between Poland and the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union was prepared to continue to provide commercial supplies to Poland.

It is difficult to interpret this statement of the Soviet Ambassador to Beck in view of the arrival of a Soviet military mission in Berlin. It may mean that the Soviet Government intends to give doses of support to both sides in the war which has now begun with a view to

²⁶ Juljusz Lukasiewicz.

²⁷ Nikolay I. Sharonov.

²⁸ For a report of Marshal Voroshilov's interview with a correspondent of *Izvestiya*, published on August 27, 1939, see telegram No. 476, August 27, 3 p. m., from the Ambassador in the Soviet Union, p. 311. See also the Polish White Book, doc. Nos. 170, 171, 172, and 173, pp. 187-189.

keeping the war going as long as possible so that suffering may be prolonged to the extreme and that in the end the Soviet armies intact will be able to march over the Continent.

BULLITT

761.6211/194

Memorandum by the Assistant Chief of the Division of European Affairs (Henderson)

[WASHINGTON,] September 2, 1939.

Attached is copy of Molotov's speech which contains the first full translation of Molotov's speech which we have seen.²⁹ Among the interesting features of this speech are the following:

(1) At no place in the speech is the cause of the world revolution or the world proletariat mentioned. In fact, he says, "Is it really difficult to understand that the U. S. S. R. is pursuing and will continue to pursue its own independent policy based on the interests of the people of the U. S. S. R. and only their interests?" Although in another connection he states that the "interests of the U. S. S. R. coincides with the fundamental interests of peoples of other countries," he mentions this circumstance in a most incidental manner. One is beginning to wonder if Stalin is really fulfilling Trotsky's³⁰ prophecies in deserting the world revolutionary movement.

(2) There is no direct or indirect statement to the effect that the Soviet Union will assume an attitude of neutrality during the European conflict. The trend of the argument is that the cause of peace is served because the possibility of a conflict between the Soviet Union and Germany is eliminated. The only passage which might be considered as an indication of the Soviet intention not to become active in Europe is a reference to the existence of "Soviet non-aggression pacts with Poland and certain other countries whose semi-Fascist system is known to all."

(3) When pointing out that the Treaty with Germany is only a non-aggression pact, he adds, "Nevertheless, conditions being what they are, it is difficult to overestimate the international importance of the Soviet-German Pact. That is why we favored the visit of von Ribbentrop, the German Minister for Foreign Affairs, to Moscow."

Is there possibly a veiled intimation here that in view of the international situation, the Pact has greater significance than an ordinary non-aggression pact?

(4) It is to be noted that Great Britain and France rather than Germany are now considered as the instigators of a general European war. He states, "only the instigators of a general European war can be displeased by this state of affairs, those who under the mask of pacifism would like to ignite a general conflagration in Europe."

²⁹ Not printed. The attached mimeographed translation of Molotov's speech had been supplied by Dmitry Stepanovich Chuvakhin, the Chargé d'Affaires of the Soviet Union.

³⁰ Lev (Leon) Davydovich Trotsky, former Bolshevik leader defeated by Stalin in 1928, at this time in exile in Mexico.

(5) Molotov's failure in referring to Stalin's speech of last March to refer to Stalin's point that the Soviet Government intended to assist the victims of the aggressor may or may not have significance.

It is felt that Stalin included this point in order to reassure China of continued assistance. Does Molotov's omission indicate Soviet readiness to change its policy with respect to China? It will be noticed that the speech opens with the aggravation of the state situation in the Far East as a result of Japan's hostile acts against the Soviet Union.

VIII. FINAL EFFORTS TO PRESERVE PEACE IN EUROPE; APPEALS BY PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT TO GERMANY AND ITALY, AUGUST 22-31, 1939

760C.62/911 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, August 22, 1939—4 p. m.

[Received August 22—1:07 p. m.]

1541. For the President and the Acting Secretary. Daladier²¹ said to me this afternoon that he believed that Hitler was planning to attack Poland within the next 8 days most probably this weekend.

In my presence he gave orders to General Gamelin and Admiral Darlan to prepare for immediate war.

He [ordered?] Gamelin to mobilize at once certain special reserves and to bring his troops up to the French frontier. He ordered Darlan to keep the fleet ready for immediate action.

He added to them both that tomorrow morning he might decide to order general mobilization.

Daladier then said to me that he wished to transmit immediately a message to you. He felt that general European war was imminent and that Japan would also enter the war. He did not know whether or not an appeal by you at the present moment might have any deterrent effect but he hoped profoundly that you would issue a declaration stating that war seemed imminent and summoning all the nations of the earth to send delegates immediately to Washington to try to work out a pacific solution of the present situation.

He added that he would accept such a proposal instantly and with deep gratitude on behalf of France. He feared that Germany would reject such a proposal. In any event you would have done your utmost to prevent a horrible catastrophe for the entire human race, and you would have made the moral issue clear.

I hope that you will let me know in advance what action if any you intend to take. Daladier can be trusted not to divulge secrets.

BULLITT

²¹ Édouard Daladier, President of the French Council of Ministers and Minister for National Defense.

740.00/2109 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Italy (Phillips) to the Secretary of State

ROME, August 23, 1939—11 a. m.
[Received August 23—9:46 a. m.]

323. Military Attaché reports that leaves of absence for all air corps personnel were cancelled as of Friday, August 18, and that all air corps ports and stations are on a war operating basis with planes and personnel prepared to promptly take the air at any time day or night. It is further believed that leaves of absence for all army personnel in Sardinia, Sicily, Dodecanese and Libya have been cancelled and that the garrisons of these outlying possessions are on a war basis. It is also probable that territorial anti-aircraft batteries are manned although no searchlight activity has recently been in evidence in the vicinity of Rome. Up to the present there are no indications of a general mobilization of the Italian Army.

Information obtained by the Naval Attaché indicates that the Italian Navy is on a complete war footing. All leaves have been stopped, reserves have been called up, shore defenses have been manned, harbor nets or boom defenses have been rigged at Tripoli, Naples, Trieste, Livorno and probably at Cagliari. On August 19 there were no naval vessels at La Spezia with exception of one cruiser alongside a pier. La Spezia is a peacetime base and should normally be full of ships at present since maneuvers and exercises have been completed. Italian naval forces are now believed to be located at Durazzo, Naples, Gaeta and Taranto.

Both Military and Naval Attachés agreed that the above constitute precautionary defensive measures essential at a time of such acute international tension.

Inform War and Navy Departments.

PHILLIPS

760C.62/1088a : Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Italy (Phillips)

WASHINGTON, August 23, 1939—11 a. m.

77. The President desires you to seek an immediate audience with the King and to deliver to him orally the message from the President which is quoted below. You may leave with His Majesty as an *aide-mémoire* the text of the message. You are further authorized immediately after you have delivered this message to His Majesty to hand a copy of it to the Chief of the Italian Government or to the Minister of Foreign Affairs for their information. The President is addressing this message solely to the King.

The text of the message is as follows:

"Again a crisis in world affairs makes clear the responsibility of heads of nations for the fate of their own people and indeed of humanity itself. It is because of traditional accord between Italy and the United States and the ties of consanguinity between millions of our citizens that I feel that I can address Your Majesty in behalf of the maintenance of world peace.

It is my belief and that of the American people that Your Majesty and Your Majesty's Government can greatly influence the averting of an outbreak of war. Any general war would cause to suffer all nations whether belligerent or neutral, whether victors or vanquished, and would clearly bring devastation to the peoples and perhaps to the governments of some nations most directly concerned.

The friends of the Italian people and among them the American people could only regard with grief the destruction of great achievements which European nations and the Italian nation in particular have attained during the past generation.

We in America having welded a homogeneous nation out of many nationalities, often find it difficult to visualize the animosities which so often have created crises among nations of Europe which are smaller than ours in population and in territory, but we accept the fact that these nations have an absolute right to maintain their national independence if they so desire. If that be sound doctrine then it must apply to the weaker nations as well as to the stronger.

Acceptance of this means peace, because fear of aggression ends. The alternative, which means of necessity efforts by the strong to dominate the weak, will lead not only to war, but to long future years of oppression on the part of victors and to rebellion on the part of the vanquished. So history teaches us.

On April 14th last I suggested²² in essence an understanding that no armed forces should attack or invade the territory of any other independent nation, and that this being assured, discussions be undertaken to seek progressive relief from the burden of armaments and to open avenues of international trade including sources of raw materials necessary to the peaceful economic life of each nation.

I said that in these discussions the United States would gladly take part. And such peaceful conversations would make it wholly possible for governments other than the United States to enter into peaceful discussions of political or territorial problems in which they were directly concerned.

Were it possible for Your Majesty's Government to formulate proposals for a pacific solution of the present crisis along these lines you are assured of the earnest sympathy of the United States.

The Government of Italy and the United States can today advance those ideals of Christianity which of late seem so often to have been obscured.

The unheard voices of countless millions of human beings ask that they shall not be vainly sacrificed again. Franklin D. Roosevelt."

Please telegraph immediately after the message is delivered. The text will then be made public here.

WELLES

²² See note from President Roosevelt to the German Chancellor, April 14, p. 130.

740.00/2110 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, August 23, 1939—11 a. m.

[Received August 23—10:06 a. m.]

1546. General Requin of the French General Staff who will command the main French Army against Germany called on me this morning and said that he was packing his belongings since yesterday the frontier troops had been placed on the alert and tonight the measures of "couverture" would be taken which would mean that the general staff officers would take command of the armies in the field which they would command in time of war.

He expects a German ultimatum to Poland about Friday of this week. Like all other responsible Frenchmen with whom I have talked he feels that however difficult from a military point of view because of the treaty between the Soviet Union and Germany, France must and will fight the moment Poland is attacked.

BULLITT

757D.00/114 : Telegram

The Chargé in Belgium (Wilson) to the Secretary of State

BRUSSELS, August 23, 1939—8 p. m.

[Received August 23—4:25 p. m.]

100. Foreign Office has just given me text of radio address which King Leopold will deliver this evening in the name of all the Oslo Powers.³³ King will refer to increasing international tension and military preparations and assert that conflicting interests of states can be reconciled better before than after a war. He will state that the world's conscience is awakening and announce that Oslo Powers express the solemn wish that the men upon whom depends the course of events will submit their differences and claims to an open negotiation conducted in a spirit of fraternal cooperation. They hope that they may be joined in this appeal by other Chiefs of State. Full text by mail.

WILSON

³³ The King's speech was delivered at the conclusion of a conference in Brussels of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden. The Oslo group was so called from the convention signed at Oslo, December 22, 1930, League of Nations Treaty Series, vol. cxxvi, p. 341. A new convention, signed May 28, 1937, at The Hague, included Finland and Luxembourg with the original group; *ibid.*, vol. clxxx, p. 5. For translation of speech, see British Cmd. 6106, Misc. No. 9 (1939), doc. No. 128, p. 185.

760C.62/949 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, August 23, 1939—8 p. m.
[Received August 23—4:40 p. m.]

1560. The British Chargé d'Affaires in Paris has just called on me and informed me in the utmost confidence that the message from Chamberlain³⁴ which Henderson, British Ambassador in Berlin, delivered to Hitler today was in the following sense:³⁵

Chamberlain expresses the hope that Hitler was under no illusions as to the attitude the British Government would take in case Germany should attack Poland. Great Britain would make war at once in support of Poland. He continued to hope, however, that such a catastrophe as general European war could be averted and if the German Government and the Polish Government should desire to have a direct discussion of the subjects in dispute between them the British Government would be glad to attempt to create the atmosphere necessary to make such discussions possible.

The British Chargé d'Affaires added that he had delivered a copy of this message to Daladier and a copy to Bonnet³⁶ and that both had said that they considered it a good move.

He asked me what I thought of it and I replied that it sounded to me like the preparation for a new Munich but that it was extremely difficult for me to express any opinions since I had not seen the text of the message and that everything depended on the exact words used and the spirit behind them.

The British Minister said that he was certain that the statement with regard to Great Britain's intentions to support Poland was so strong that the message could not be considered as a preparation for a new "appeasement" in the Munich manner. He added that he had not yet received any information from Henderson as to the reception he had received from Hitler.

He asked me what steps if any the President of the United States might be about to take to prevent the outbreak of war and I replied that I had no information on this subject.

On the subject of the German-Russian agreement the British Minister said that Molotov³⁷ had received the British Ambassador in Moscow yesterday and had talked to him in the most insulting manner. Molotov had said that it has been obvious to the Soviet Government that Great Britain had been completely insincere throughout its negotiations with the Soviet Government and had not desired

³⁴ Neville Chamberlain, British Prime Minister.

³⁵ Letter of August 22, 1939, British Cmd. 6106, Misc. No. 9 (1939), doc. No. 56, p. 96.

³⁶ Georges Bonnet, French Minister for Foreign Affairs.

³⁷ V. M. Molotov, People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union.

to reach an agreement. Since this was clear the British Government should have no objection to the Soviet Government concluding a non-aggression pact with Germany.

Molotov had, however, indicated that he hoped the military missions would remain in Moscow and that pressure would be brought to bear on Poland to permit the passage of Soviet troops.

The British Minister said that the British Government agreed with the French Government that it was desirable to leave the military missions in Moscow for the present.

BULLITT

760C.62/942 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, August 23, 1939—8 p. m.
[Received August 23—4:57 p. m.]

1221. Personal for the Secretary. I have just had a talk with the Prime Minister. His 2 weeks' vacation has evidently not done him much good. He said the spectre of the impending catastrophe was over him all the time. He looks very bad and is terribly depressed. I said to him, "How does it look?" and he said, "Very bad but I have done everything that I can think of and it seems as if all my work has come to naught." He showed me his message to Hitler which was sent today through Ambassador Henderson and has been telegraphed to Lindsay³⁸ for communication to you. It has likewise been telegraphed to Paris and Warsaw and a shortened version to Rome. I asked him if he thought that the guarantee of the countries might not be looked at in the same light as the guarantee to Czechoslovakia and he said he was afraid it would be but there was nothing pleasant he could offer. He said there was nothing definite he could do in getting the Poles to make any concessions because to attempt that at this time would probably prove more disastrous than accomplish any good. He says the futility of it all is the thing that is frightful; after all they cannot save the Poles; they can merely carry on a war of revenge that will mean the destruction of the whole of Europe. I asked him if he thought the Pope could do any good and he said no; that they had been working along with him but were convinced he was not able or did not feel he could be of any service in the problem at all.

He reiterated to me that the Far Eastern situation was in a pretty bad mess although he felt the Japanese were stunned by the Ger-

³⁸ Sir Ronald Lindsay, British Ambassador in the United States.

man-Russian agreement and that since he knew the Chinese were fed up too the time might have arrived when a broad plan of peace might be worked out in Japan but again he said the whole question is time; that if Britain becomes involved in a European situation the situation in the Far East will become progressively worse.

I left with the feeling that the situation was dark and much worse than it was a year ago and that the only hope is for some action of the Poles in negotiating with the Germans which will make another delay possible. Although I talked with him for almost an hour the sum and substance of it all was sheer discouragement with the picture as it stands. He is not giving this impression at all outside because for the most part his associates feel that he is very stiff and in low spirits.

If the President is contemplating any action for peace it seems to me the place to work is on Beck ³⁹ in Poland and to make this effective it must happen quickly. I see no other possibility.

KENNEDY

760C.62/951 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Italy (Phillips) to the Secretary of State

ROME, August 23, 1939—10 p. m.
[Received August 23—5:10 p. m.]

325. Immediately upon receipt of the President's message I called upon Count Ciano ⁴⁰ and requested an audience with the King who is now near Turin in northern Italy. Ciano consulted with Mussolini over the telephone and subsequently arranged an audience for 2:00 p. m. tomorrow. Consequently I am leaving this evening on the 11:00 o'clock train for Turin.

PHILLIPS

760C.62/1941 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, August 23, 1939—11 p. m.
[Received August 23—9:45 p. m.]

1561. Bonnet said to me tonight that he wished to say something which he had never said throughout the crisis of September of last year. He believed that there was no longer the slightest hope of preserving peace.

³⁹ Józef Beck, Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs.

⁴⁰ Galeazzo Ciano di Cortellazzo, Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Hitler, he thought, had decided to attack Poland on Friday evening⁴¹ and he thought that nothing could turn Hitler from this course. The only narrow avenue of hope seemed to him the reluctance of Italy to become engaged in war. It might be possible at the last moment to get the Italians to propose some sort of a conference which Hitler would feel obliged to accept because he would be afraid of losing Italian support if he should refuse. He feared, however, that Italy would not make such an appeal. He was convinced that Mussolini was a sick man who had embarked so far on a course of action contrary to the interests of his country that he felt he could not withdraw.

Since the Japanese had been profoundly shocked by the action of the Germans in agreeing to make a pact with the Russians he could not help feeling that if there was some one who could enter into contact with the Emperor of Japan it might be possible to influence the Japanese seriously at the present time.

His information from Moscow indicated that the agreement between Germany and the Soviet Union had not been signed today and in spite of the negative attitude of Molotov to the French and British Ambassadors he was still hoping that there would be another theatrical turn in the situation and that the Russians in the end would refuse to sign the pact.

He did not really believe, however, that any of these avenues to possible peace was real. There were only 2 days left, he believed, before the date that Hitler had fixed for the outbreak of war and he thought that this time was too short for preventive action. Hitler's reply to Henderson today had been decisive.⁴²

His judgment of the situation was the following: Hitler desired to crush Poland and have France and England stand aside but Hitler knew that France and England would fight and had decided that he would risk war with France, England and Poland.

Bonnet added that he had received this evening a telegram from the French Military Attaché in Warsaw stating that Beck had said to Noel, French Ambassador to Poland, late this afternoon that Poland was now prepared to permit the entry on Polish soil of the Soviet armies to combat Germany. I questioned the accuracy of this information and Bonnet said that indeed he did not know whether the report was true or not. He had repeated it to the Polish Ambassador tonight and the Polish Ambassador had replied that he was convinced that the report could not be true. If it should prove to be true, the Russians would be placed in an exceedingly embarrassing position if they had not already signed their agreement with Germany.

⁴¹ August 25.

⁴² British Cmd. 6106, Misc. No. 9 (1939), doc. No. 60, p. 102.

Bonnet said that he hoped that the President of the United States would attempt in some way to preserve peace. He had no suggestion to make because his imagination had stopped working on peace since he considered war certain. It would, however, be of immense benefit if the President should point out to the world that no question involved in the present dispute could possibly justify the sacrifice of 30,000,000 soldiers and the devastation of the whole of Europe.

The British Chargé d'Affaires called on me again tonight and said that Hitler's flouting rejection of the message which Chamberlain had sent him through Henderson had made the remarks the officials had made to me this afternoon (see my telegram No. 1560, August 23, 8 p. m.) an academic question and past history. It seemed clear to him that Hitler had decided to make war and he could not imagine what influence could turn Hitler from this course.

BULLITT

760C.62/1034

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Chief of the Division of European Affairs (Moffat)

[WASHINGTON,] August 24, 1939.

The Belgian Ambassador ⁴³ called this morning to say that he had, under instructions from his Government, suggested that the President might add an appeal for peace to that issued yesterday by King Leopold.

The Ambassador later stated that the situation looked terribly dark to him, and that he was fearful that this time Belgian neutrality would be compromised not by the Germans but by the British and French. They were in such a bad situation that they might try and take short cuts by landing their planes in Belgium and trying to use it as a base for aircraft operations.

PIERREPONT MOFFAT

760C.62/969 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, August 24, 1939—3 p. m.

[Received 4:47 p. m.]

887. My 882, Aug. 24, 11 a. m.⁴⁴ I have just seen the British Ambassador and he gave me the following brief account of his repre-

⁴³ Count Robert van der Straten-Ponthoz.

⁴⁴ Not printed.

sentations to Hitler yesterday: Instructions from London reached the Ambassador during the night of August 22 and after communicating with a member of Hitler's Secretariat and with Weizsaecker ⁴⁵ an appointment was made for yesterday at Berchtesgaden. In the conversation with Weizsaecker regarding the appointment the Ambassador was asked to indicate the nature of the representations which he proposed to make and he also gave assurances as to the secrecy surrounding the representations. The Ambassador left Berlin at 9 in the morning of the 23rd and as stated in my 882, August 24, 11 a. m. had two conversations with Hitler, one of which lasted about 45 minutes.

Henderson confirmed the statement contained in my telegram under reference as to the intensity and violence which Hitler displayed especially on the matter of alleged Polish outrages against Germans which he said had driven Germany to the final limit of patience. The Ambassador then outlined in brief the points in Chamberlain's letter as to the restatement of the British position, the suggested discussion in an improved atmosphere of problems of interest to the two countries, and the matter of recommendation to the Polish Government on the minorities question in Poland. The Ambassador also outlined Hitler's reply to the effect that he took cognizance of the statement of the British position but could not be influenced thereby, that certain subjects of conflict between Poland and Germany must be settled, of which Danzig and the Corridor were mentioned in the last instance, and that continued mobilization measures in England and France would be answered by a declaration of general mobilization in Germany. Henderson also stated that Hitler indicated that he was convinced that England intended to fight Germany eventually and that he preferred to have war now than 5 or 10 years hence. Hitler also said in reply to a suggestion by Henderson that Germany discuss matters with Poland that no good purpose could be served thereby in view of the support which England was giving to Polish *intransigence*.

In conclusion Henderson stated that in his opinion a definite decision will be taken upon Ribbentrop's ⁴⁶ return today, that an ultimatum will be delivered to the Poles accompanied or followed by some action in Danzig and that general mobilization will then be declared in Germany. He added that he understood that the Polish Ambassador had just received instructions to see Weizsaecker but that the State Secretary could not be located this morning and that he hoped Lipski ⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Baron Ernst von Weizsaecker, State Secretary in the German Foreign Office.

⁴⁶ Joachim von Ribbentrop, German Minister for Foreign Affairs.

⁴⁷ Polish Ambassador in Germany.

or even Beck would see Hitler although he might refuse to see them and that in any event it was probably too late for such a *démarche* to have effect.

I should add that owing to the pressure under which Henderson is working his conversation with me was brief and in no way exhaustive.

KIRK

760C.62/990b : Telegram

President Roosevelt to the German Chancellor (Hitler)

WASHINGTON, August 24, 1939.

In the message which I sent you on April 14 last⁴⁸ I stated that it appeared to me that the leaders of great nations had it in their power to liberate their peoples from the disaster that impended, but that unless the effort were immediately made with good will on all sides to find a peaceful and constructive solution of existing controversies, the crisis which the world was confronting must end in catastrophe. Today that catastrophe appears to be very near at hand indeed.

To the message which I sent to you last April I have received no reply, but because of my confident belief that the cause of world peace—which is the cause of humanity itself—rises above all other considerations, I am again addressing myself to you with the hope that the war which impends and the consequent disaster to all peoples everywhere may yet be averted.

I therefore urge with all earnestness—and I am likewise urging the President of the Republic of Poland—that the Governments of Germany and of Poland agree by common accord to refrain from any positive act of hostility for a reasonable and stipulated period, and that they agree likewise by common accord to solve the controversies which have arisen between them by one of the three following methods: first, by direct negotiation; second, by submission of these controversies to an impartial arbitration in which they can both have confidence; or, third, that they agree to the solution of these controversies through the procedure of conciliation, selecting as conciliator or moderator a national of one of the traditionally neutral states of Europe, or a national of one of the American republics which are all of them free from any connection with or participation in European political affairs.

Both Poland and Germany being sovereign governments, it is understood, of course, that upon resort to any one of the alternatives I

⁴⁸ *Ante*, p. 130.

suggest, each nation will agree to accord complete respect to the independence and territorial integrity of the other.

The people of the United States are as one in their opposition to policies of military conquest and domination. They are as one in rejecting the thesis that any ruler, or any people, possess the right to achieve their ends or objectives through the taking of action which will plunge countless millions of people into war and which will bring distress and suffering to every nation of the world, belligerent and neutral, when such ends and objectives, so far as they are just and reasonable, can be satisfied through processes of peaceful negotiation or by resort to judicial arbitration.

I appeal to you in the name of the people of the United States, and I believe in the name of peace-loving men and women everywhere, to agree to the solution of the controversies existing between your Government and that of Poland through the adoption of one of the alternative methods I have proposed. I need hardly reiterate that should the Governments of Germany and of Poland be willing to solve their differences in the peaceful manner suggested, the Government of the United States still stands prepared to contribute its share to the solution of the problems which are endangering world peace in the form set forth in my message of April 14.

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

760C.62/990a : Telegram

President Roosevelt to the President of Poland (Moscicki)

WASHINGTON, August 24, 1939.

The manifest gravity of the existing crisis imposes an urgent obligation on all to examine every possible means which might prevent the outbreak of general war.

With this in mind, I feel justified in suggesting that certain possible avenues of solution be considered.

The controversy between the Government of Poland and the Government of the German Reich might be made the subject of direct discussion between the two governments.

Should this prove impossible or not feasible, a second avenue might be that of submission of the issues to arbitration.

A third method might be conciliation through a disinterested third party, in which case it would seem appropriate that the parties avail themselves of the services of one of the traditionally neutral states, or a disinterested Republic of the Western Hemisphere wholly removed from the area and issues of the present crisis. Should you determine to attempt solution by any of these methods, you are assured of the earnest and complete sympathy of the United States and of its people. During the exploration of these avenues, I appeal to you,

as I have likewise appealed to the Government of the German Reich, to agree to refrain from any positive act of hostility.

Both Poland and Germany being sovereign governments, it is understood, of course, that upon resort to any one of the alternatives I suggest, each nation will agree to accord complete respect to the independence and territorial integrity of the other.

It is, I think, well known to you that speaking on behalf of the United States I have exerted and will continue to exert every influence in behalf of peace. The rank and file of the population of every nation, large and small, want peace. They do not seek military conquest. They recognize that disputes, claims, and counter claims will always arise from time to time between nations, but that all such controversies without exception can be solved by peaceful procedure if the will on both sides exists so to do.

I have addressed a communication in similar sense to the Chancellor of the German Reich.

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

760C.62/1088c : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Italy (Phillips) ⁴⁹

WASHINGTON, August 24, 1939—9 p. m.

78. The President has just sent the following messages to the Chancellor of the German Reich and to the President of Poland. [Here follow the complete texts of the messages under reference, printed *supra*.] These messages will be released to the press at 10 p. m. Washington time.

You should convey these texts without delay to the Foreign Office, stating in writing that you are doing so by instructions of the President, who regards these two messages as supplementary to his message to the King of Italy,⁵⁰ and has the hope that the latter may find them helpful should he decide that he could make a move for peace.

HULL

760C.62/1041a : Telegram

President Roosevelt to the King of the Belgians (Leopold III)

WASHINGTON, August 25, 1939.

I have read with the utmost measure of satisfaction Your Majesty's address of August 23 ⁵¹ and the appeal for the maintenance of peace

⁴⁹ The same, with the omission of the last paragraph, on the same date, to the Embassies in France (No. 647), Germany (No. 376), and Poland (No. 40), and at 11 p. m. to the Embassy in the United Kingdom (No. 691).

⁵⁰ See telegram No. 77, August 23, 11 a. m., to the Ambassador in Italy, p. 351.

⁵¹ See telegram No. 100, August 23, 8 p. m., from the Chargé in Belgium, p. 353.

made therein in the name of the powers of the Oslo group. Your Majesty expressed the hope that other heads of states might join their voices with yours in the same desire for the peace and security of their peoples.

I take this occasion to assure you that the people of the United States and their Government wholeheartedly share the hopes and the aspirations so eloquently expressed by Your Majesty.

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

760C.62/977: Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, August 25, 1939—10 a. m.
[Received August 25—5:55 a. m.]

893. Department's 376, August 24, 9 p. m.⁵² Received 9 a. m. today. No mention of the President's messages appears in the morning papers and in reply to inquiries made by press correspondents here at Foreign Office and Propaganda Ministry the statements were made that nothing was known of the messages at those Ministries.

KIRK

760C.62/987: Telegram

The Ambassador in Italy (Phillips) to the Secretary of State

ROME, August 25, 1939—11 a. m.
[Received August 25—9:40 a. m.]

330. Yesterday after I had read the President's message to the King he asked me to express his cordial thanks to the President and to say that he would of course at once communicate it to his Government. More than that he said he could not say in view of his powers as constitutional sovereign. He assured me that not one person in Italy desired war and he repeated "not one person".

As soon as I had delivered the message the Embassy in Rome handed a copy of it to the Foreign Office inasmuch as it seemed important in view of the fact that the message was being made public in the United States that the Italian Government should be in a position to make it public simultaneously.

Only the late editions of the morning press contain the briefest reference to the message.

PHILLIPS

⁵² See footnote 49, p. 362.

760C.62/1007 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Poland (Biddle) to the Secretary of State

WARSAW, August 25, 1939—3 p. m.

[Received August 25—1:58 p. m.]

205. 1. At 1:50 during a conversation with Beck, official telephone operator informed him all telephone lines from Warsaw to Paris through Germany and from Warsaw to Rome were cut. Beck admitted serious implications thereof and added that Poland was ready for any eventuality.

2. He informed me President Moscicki was profoundly appreciative of President Roosevelt's constructive and humanitarian interest as evidenced by his cable to which President Moscicki would immediately cable response, contents of which he would subsequently impart to me.

BIDDLE

760C.62/999 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, August 25, 1939—4 p. m.

[Received August 25—1:28 p. m.]

1587. The Counselor of the German Embassy, Brauer, in conversation with a member of the staff today, expressed his personal opinion to the effect that "even though it is very late" a conflict could be avoided.

In reply to our question how this happy result might be achieved he said that he thought the President's message to the King of Italy was most useful and might conceivably blaze the trail. He added that unfortunately the Poles had waited too long and if the complicated question relating to minorities and other matters were to be settled by negotiation the Poles would be called on to make far greater "sacrifices" than would have been the case a year ago. He feared that if they continued "to attack us" and receive the support of Great Britain in their unreasonable conduct the results would be disastrous for them. In conclusion, he intimated that our conversation might be the last for some time to come.

BULLITT

760C.62/1010 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, August 25, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received 11:20 p. m.]

1593. For the President and the Secretary. Daladier lunched alone with me today and discussed every aspect of the present situation.

He said that he was profoundly grateful for the message of the President to the King of Italy and also for the President's messages to Moscicki and Hitler. He felt that the President had done more than any other man had done or could have done to avert war.

If Germany should attack Poland there was no question whatsoever about the result. Both France and England would march at once to the assistance of Poland. He had now mobilized 1,900,000 men. He did not wish to introduce general mobilization yet because this measure would stop the normal economic life of the country and would put the country virtually under the rule of the Army.

He was certain, however, that the German Government now realized that France was in earnest. The German Military Attaché had called at the French Ministry of War today to say that if the French should continue to mobilize men on the German frontier the German Government would have to order general mobilization. The reply had been that the French would continue to mobilize.

Daladier said that he was fully aware that there were elements in Germany and Italy strongly opposed to war and that he would order all French radio stations to keep pounding the President's message to Hitler into German ears. He had no indication whatsoever that there was any weakening in Hitler's determination to attack Poland.

Two most satisfactory pieces of news had reached him today. The Spanish Military Attaché in Paris had called on General Gamelin⁵³ to state that General Franco⁵⁴ would like to conclude at once with France a treaty of commerce and amity. He had dictated, himself, a reply which he had ordered sent at once to Spain accepting at once this proposal.

All his information from Marshal Pétain⁵⁵ indicated that the Spaniards were deeply relieved that the conclusion of the German pact with the Soviet Union had relieved Spain of any obligations to take a hostile attitude toward France.

The second piece of good news was that the Turkish Government had informed the French Ambassador officially that it would stand by

⁵³ Gen. Maurice Gustave Gamelin, Vice President of the French Supreme War Council.

⁵⁴ Generalissimo Francisco Franco Bahamonde, Head of the Spanish Government.

⁵⁵ French Ambassador in Spain.

its alliance with France and England⁵⁶ and would fight by their side if necessary. He had ordered General Weygand today to leave at once for Syria with an additional division of French troops which would act with Rumanian in case of war.

With regard to internal politics Daladier said that if he should be obliged to decree general mobilization he would reform his Cabinet immediately. He would reduce the size of the Cabinet from 16 to 12 and would certainly eliminate Mansy⁵⁷ and take Léon Blum and Louis Marin into the Cabinet.

He had not yet decided whether or not to include Flandin⁵⁸ or Piétri⁵⁹ but was inclined to exclude both of them.

Daladier said that he had 150 officers in important points observing the mobilization. Their reports almost brought tears to his eyes. He stated that the stoicism and quiet courage of the men called from their homes was beyond praise.

I desire to add my own observations to this statement. Never has any nation confronted a war of the most terrible sort with greater calm or courage.

Daladier said that he was so incensed by the attitude of the Communist papers in Paris which, subsidized from Moscow, are now saying that France should not fight in support of Poland that he intended to seize the Soviet subsidized *Humanité* tonight. He said that he would rather have his struggle with the Communists now than later. It was obvious the French Communists with certain rare exceptions owed their allegiance to the Soviet Union and not to France and it was better to have enemies in the open than hidden in corners.

BULLITT

761.6211/121 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Poland (Biddle) to the Secretary of State

WARSAW, August 25, 1939—7 p. m.

[Received August 25—4:25 p. m.]

209. For the President and the Secretary.

1. Beck imparted he had never seen an infuriated Jap until his yesterday's conversation with Professor Sakoh⁶⁰ when latter raged

⁵⁶ The British Prime Minister announced in the House of Commons on May 12, 1939, a declaration of Anglo-Turkish mutual assistance to ensure the establishment of security in the Balkans and to cooperate in the event of aggression leading to war in the Mediterranean area; *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Commons, 1938-39, 5th series, vol. 347, p. 952. The 15-year mutual assistance pact concluded between Great Britain, France, and Turkey, was signed at Ankara on October 19, 1939; for text, see League of Nations Treaty Series, vol. cc, p. 167.

⁵⁷ Presumably Anatole de Monzie, French Minister for Public Works.

⁵⁸ Pierre-Etienne Flandin, former President of the French Council of Ministers

⁵⁹ François Piétri, former French Minister for Marine.

⁶⁰ Shuichi Sakoh, Japanese Ambassador in Poland.

against Germany for having double-crossed Japan through signing up with Russia without at least advance notice to Japan in accordance with secret clause contained in Anti-Comintern Pact.⁶¹

2. Jouvenal of *Paris Soir* imparted that in his conversation with Ribbentrop at Koenigsberg (en route to Moscow) Ribbentrop had given him impression he visualized non-aggression agreement with Moscow as an alliance. This gave rise to suspicion amongst competent observers in diplomatic and press circles here that Hitler's plans now envisage tempting Russia to become dominating Asiatic power thus giving Germany free hand to gain domination of Europe. Beck and associates, however, are still skeptical as to extent to which Berlin might rely upon Moscow.

3. Beck moreover imparted Soviet Ambassador Charanov yesterday resorted to minor frontier incident as pretext to point out that Moscow's non-aggression agreement with Berlin would not alter Moscow's relations with Warsaw. (This contradicts today's story emanating from Associated Press office in Berlin to effect Charanov proposed in Molotov's behalf a formula for the solution of Polish-German differences and Molotov's recommendation that Warsaw accept formula.)

4. Beck labels as Nazi inspired propaganda Berlin Associated Press office's aforementioned as well as following reports: (a) of yesterday, that Hitler was yesterday sending ultimatum giving Warsaw choice between Beck's presence in Berchtesgaden and war and (b) of today, that Nazi circles discerned weakening on the part of London and Warsaw and were openly intimating that if those capitals were going to make concessions they had better do so before it was too late.

5. I am inclined to feel that in trying to use all available foreign agencies as instruments of their propaganda in an intensified effort to whip up crisis atmosphere Nazi Government's disappointment over failure of effectiveness of report (a) above resulted in their subsequent inspiration of report (b) above. Moreover, resort to inspiration of rumors of this character indicates to my mind a state of indecision in Hitler's mind.

BIDDLE

⁶¹ Signed at Berlin, November 25, 1936, *Foreign Relations, Japan, 1931-1941*, vol. II, p. 153. For text of the secret agreement, see *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, Series D. vol. I, p. 734, footnote 2a.

760C.62/1036 : Telegram

The President of Poland (Moscicki) to President Roosevelt

WARSAW, August 25, 1939.

[Received August 25—8:01 p. m.]

I highly appreciate the most important and noble message which Your Excellency was good enough to address to me.

I would like to emphasize that the Polish Government always considered direct negotiations between governments as the most appropriate method of solving difficulties which may arise between states. We consider this method all the more fitting when adopted between neighbouring countries. It was with this principle in view that Poland concluded pacts of non-aggression with Germany and the Union of Soviet Republics.

We consider likewise the method of conciliation through a third party as disinterested and impartial as Your Excellency to be a just and equitable method in the solution of controversies arising between nations.

While naturally wishing to avoid even the semblance of availing myself of this occasion to raise the points at issue I nevertheless consider it my duty to point out that in this crisis it is not Poland who is proffering any claims or demanding concessions from any other nation.

It is therefore only natural that Poland agrees to refrain from any positive act of hostility provided the other party also agrees to refrain from any such act direct or indirect.

In conclusion may I express my ardent wish that Your Excellency's appeal for peace may contribute towards general appeasement which the people of the world so sorely need to return once more to the blessed path of progress and civilisation.

IGNACY MOSCICKI

760C.62/1088d : Telegram

President Roosevelt to the German Chancellor (Hitler)

WASHINGTON, August 25, 1939.

I have this hour received from the President of Poland a reply to the messages which I addressed to Your Excellency and to him last night. The text of President Moscicki's reply is as follows:

[Here follows text of the telegram dated August 25, printed *supra*.]

Your Excellency has repeatedly and publicly stated that the ends and the objectives sought by the German Reich were just and reasonable. In his reply to my message the President of Poland has made

it plain that the Polish Government is willing, upon the basis set forth in my messages, to agree to solve the controversy which has arisen between the Republic of Poland and the German Reich by direct negotiation or through the process of conciliation.

Countless human lives can be yet saved and hope may still be restored that the nations of the modern world may even now construct a foundation for a peaceful and a happier relationship if you and the Government of the German Reich will agree to the pacific means of settlement accepted by the Government of Poland.

All the world prays that Germany, too, will accept.

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

760C.62/1013 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, August 25, 1939—midnight.

[Received August 25—8:15 p. m.]

1262. I have just been at 10 Downing Street with Prime Minister, Halifax,⁶² Cadogan,⁶³ and Horace Wilson.⁶⁴ They have discussed with me the Henderson interview.⁶⁵

Hitler seemed calm and earnest. He pointed out that he always wanted a deal with Great Britain but he was not deterred by Great Britain's actions of yesterday. He was indignant with the Poles for their persecutions of his people, firing on airplanes, et cetera, and if they said they did not, it showed they had no control over their subordinates. He was going to have his rights in Poland even if it meant a great war, from which England would suffer much more than Germany. He now had Russia to back him up with supplies and therefore he could go on.

If, however, he could get straightened out in this Polish business he would make a deal with England that would guarantee the British Empire forever. He would limit armaments and then Germany and England could proceed to economic satisfaction. Henderson kept pointing out that England could not make any deal that the Poles did not want, and Hitler said he did not want England to break her word and in the next breath said that Poland had no future anyway because Russia and Germany would settle Poland. This last remark was said to Henderson but was left out of report of meeting which Hitler sent

⁶² Viscount Halifax, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

⁶³ Sir Alexander Cadogan, British Permanent Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

⁶⁴ Chief industrial adviser to the British Government.

⁶⁵ See British Cmd. 6106, Misc. No. 9 (1939), doc. Nos. 57, 58, and 59, pp. 98-102.

to Henderson after the meeting which purported to be the gist of the conversation. Hitler urged Henderson to fly home to persuade Britain to accept his proposition which was:

1. That Poland adjust her differences with Germany at once.
2. England agree and urge this and in return Germany would agree to respect and even fight to preserve the British Empire.
3. Hitler would limit armaments, go back to peaceful pursuits, and become an artist, which is what he wanted to be. (Aside by Kennedy, he is now, but I would not care to say what kind.)
4. If this was not agreed it was going to be a war worse than '14-18.

Writing this out it looks like a ridiculous proposition to make Great Britain quit or cut away from the Poles but to hear the text as read it seems much more reasonable.

Chamberlain and others do not know just whether the proposition is (1) throw sand in their eye while he marches in or (2) whether he really does not want a fight with England or (3) whether it is a proposition on which something can be done. They are going to listen to Henderson in the morning and then probably say:

We certainly will not agree to permit Poland to be carved up by you⁶⁶ and Russia.

Nor are we willing to force Poland to make concessions based on these probably ridiculous charges of cruelty but we are willing to help negotiate a fair deal and perhaps with all other powers work out some economic future for the world.

Incidentally Hitler asked for a settlement from Britain on the colonies but on a time basis and as he said by fair negotiation.

They are not going to give this message to either [Poles] or French until they have thought it out very carefully and have heard Henderson.

During the conversation Wilson asked whether the President had received any answer from Hitler. I said I had not heard of any.

Chamberlain held up Henderson's wire and said "This is the answer".

KENNEDY

760C.62/1039 : Telegram

The Minister in Rumania (Günther) to the Secretary of State

BUCHAREST, August 25, 1939—midnight.

[Received August 26—4:40 a. m.]

153. I have had a longish talk with the King. Briefly he is pessimistic as to outcome of present crisis even though his information

⁶⁶ i. e., Germany.

now indicates that Italy will not fight, at least in beginning. He feels that Hitler, misled by Von Ribbentrop, is still unconvinced that England will fight. The next few days he thinks will be decisive period (it will be remembered, however, that the King was pessimistic also last spring).

The King was not surprised by Germany's non-aggression pact with Russia nor does he feel that it alters the situation particularly. Hitler, he thinks, will make the most of it internally and of the commercial pact but that his principal motive therein for the present was to eliminate one potential enemy. He observed that Western leaders must have been credulous indeed if they really thought that they could succeed in getting Russia to fight for them. He added that if England and France now assented to a compromise on Danzig their prestige in this part of the world would suffer considerably. He was probably thinking that his turn might come next. He did not mention the President's message to Hitler and the President of Poland as the news that such communications had been made has only just filtered through to Bucharest.

The King said that German pressure here was not so bad just now and that they were delivering armament. I learn from a highly credible source, however, that though armament is coming through satisfactorily, ammunition sufficient only for practice is accompanying it.

GUNTHER

760C.62/1022 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, August 26, 1939—noon.
[Received August 26—6:25 a. m.]

1263. Omitted from my number 1262, August 25, midnight, was the important item that Henderson's message stated Hitler said the only one to benefit from a war between Germany and England would be Japan who might very well become the dominating factor in the world.

KENNEDY

760C.62/1029 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, August 26, 1939—noon.
[Received August 26—9:23 a. m.]

1606. For the President and the Secretary. I now have the full explanation of Bonnet's statement to me that Hitler's talk with Cou-

londre was a warning before action and his subsequent telephone call saying that there were signs that Hitler might desire to enter into negotiations. See my rush 1599, August 25, midnight.⁶⁷

I have just had read to me at the Quai d'Orsay the telegrams of Coulondre, French Ambassador in Berlin, on his conversation with Hitler and Henderson's conversation with Hitler.⁶⁸

Hitler said to Coulondre that he had summoned him to say that he had no desire to have war with France. He had no claims against France. Personally he renounced all claims to Alsace-Lorraine.

The French had, however, given carte blanche to the Poles and the Poles were acting in a manner that no self-respecting state could endure. If such actions should continue he on his side would have to act with force.

Hitler's voice then rose and he screamed out a series of imaginary Polish atrocities against the German minority in Poland. After this he said that he would regret war with France; but that he was ready for it. He knew that the French were a brave nation like the Germans and that they would expect to win. He also would expect to win especially since his agreement with the Soviet Union was a positive one. If France chose to make a general European war out of the action which he would be obliged to take if the Poles should continue their present behavior, there would be war.

He then said something vague which indicated that he seemed to have in his head some sort of an idea about an exchange of minority populations between Poland and Germany. He then returned to the alleged Polish atrocities against the German minority and ended his talking with the French Ambassador on a highly belligerent note.

It was immediately after receipt of the French Ambassador's telegram that Bonnet gave me the information that he considered Hitler's statements to Coulondre a warning before action.

A few minutes later Bonnet received a telegram from Coulondre giving the report that his British colleague, Henderson, had made to him with regard to his conversation with Hitler.

Hitler said to the British Ambassador that he did not desire to have war with Great Britain. The cruelties which the Poles were inflicting on Germans in Poland, if continued, would oblige him to take military action against the Poles.

He desired Henderson to convey a message to his Government positively not by telegraph or telephone but only by word of mouth.

⁶⁷ Not printed.

⁶⁸ See the French Yellow Book, Diplomatic Documents (1938-1939), *Papers relative to the events and negotiations which preceded the opening of hostilities between Germany on the one hand, and Poland, Great Britain and France on the other* (New York, Reynal & Hitchcock), doc. Nos. 242 and 245, pp. 302 and 306.

The message was that he, Hitler, was prepared to consider a certain measure of disarmament and he desired to assure Great Britain that although he needed colonies and would continue to demand them, this demand need not be fulfilled for 4 or 5 years and Germany need not require the same colonies which she had lost after the War of 1914.

He said that he was in desperate need of timber and oilstuffs of all sorts.

His demands against Poland still remained the attachment to the Reich of Danzig and the establishment of a strip of territory across the Corridor to Danzig and from Danzig to East Prussia so that East Prussia would be connected directly through German territory with the Reich.

It might also be necessary to agree with the Polish Government to exchange the German minority in Poland against the Polish minority in Germany.

He requested Henderson to leave for London at the earliest possible moment and to return with the reply of the British Government to the statements that he had made.

Henderson expressed the opinion to Coulondre that Hitler would not make war during the 48 hours necessary to receive the reply.

It was after the receipt of this message from Coulondre that Bonnet telephoned to me and said that it appeared that Hitler did not desire a general European war and might be ready for negotiation.

I was informed by Léger⁶⁹ and Rochat⁷⁰ this morning that the French Ambassador in Berlin had informed the Polish Ambassador in Berlin about Hitler's remarks about the exchange of populations and that the Polish Ambassador had informed Beck.

As you know both Léger and Rochat are intensely opposed to a policy of another Munich and absolutely determined that France and England shall support Poland. I asked them both if they did not fear that Henderson's conversation with Hitler was the prelude to British action designed to disintegrate Polish resistance. They both replied that there was not the slightest indication of any such weakening on the part of Great Britain and both assured me that France would oppose any such betrayal of Poland to the end.

BULLITT

⁶⁹ Alexis Léger, Secretary General of the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

⁷⁰ Charles Antoine Rochat, Assistant Director of Political and Commercial Affairs in the French Foreign Office.

760C.62/1055 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Spain (Weddell) to the Secretary of State

SAN SEBASTIAN, August 26, 1939—2 p. m.

[Received 4:35 p. m.]

166. Referring to my telegram number 164, August 25, 9 p. m.,⁷¹ the Belgian Ambassador told me this morning he had seen the Minister for Foreign Affairs at Burgos on August 23 under instructions from his Government to request a public adhesion of the Spanish Government to the recent declaration of the King of Belgium. The Minister for Foreign Affairs after consultation with Franco replied that the Spanish Government is in entire sympathy with the declaration and the press will be instructed to treat it sympathetically, however, that events are moving so swiftly no public declaration will be made. The Ambassador inquired of the Minister for Foreign Affairs whether in the case of hostilities Spain would march with the Axis powers and received an emphatic negative response. He inquired regarding the reaction of the Spanish Government to the German-Soviet pact and while the Minister for Foreign Affairs did not commit himself directly he gave every indication of intense disgust. The Minister for Foreign Affairs expressed equal satisfaction and sympathy with the message of President Roosevelt.

WEDDELL

760C.62/1065 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Poland (Biddle) to the Secretary of State

WARSAW, August 26, 1939—4 p. m.

[Received 7:20 p. m.]

212. For the President and the Secretary.

1. I was invited to "sit up in" from 9:00 to midnight at Polish officialdom's last night's informal but strictly confidential conference called to consider all aspects of final draft of President Moscicki's reply to President Roosevelt's cable.

2. Beck and his associates emphasized that accumulative incidents and other provocative machinations practiced by Germany against Poland to date had already represented sufficient cause for Poland to go to war. However, Poland had regarded grave situation with full measure of comprehension and with full sense of responsibility to her allies and to other friendly countries throughout the world sincerely devoted in effort to prevent war. In response to my inquiry Beck

⁷¹ Not printed.

observed that final signature to Anglo-Polish alliance (including military and naval accords) might conceivably ruffle Ribbentrop in that Ribbentrop had given Ciano confident assurance he would prevent final signature.

3. Vice Prime Minister Kwiatkowsky just showed me his report to the effect that in Danzig at 1 p. m. today Nazis seized Polish owned grain elevators and fuel storage tanks for the purpose of exporting commodities stored therein to Germany. Kwiatkowsky also imparted that for past 2 weeks Danzig customs men had been pocketing large portion of receipts due Poland.

4. While I lack adequate means of verifying directly German accusations of Polish atrocities against German minority I have constant access to reports of British and French Embassies as well as correspondents of *London Daily Mail* and *Manchester Guardian* constantly engaged in verifying aforementioned accusations. Thus far their reports definitely indicate that German accusations are gross exaggeration. For example, Berlin's atrocity campaign accused Poles of having murdered the wife and child of a member of German minority and having tortured the latter after he had shot Polish guard. *Manchester Guardian* correspondents interview with man and family subsequently revealed no foundation for accusation.

5. If Nazi treatment of Polish soldier killed on August 16th on Danzig-Polish frontier could be regarded as example of current day German methods then we may expect any Polish-German hostilities to involve frightful atrocities. (Official autopsy disclosed soldier's stomach had been ripped open and filled up with many extraneous articles of revolting character including a baby's skull.)

BIDDLE

760C.62/1042 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, August 26, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received August 26—3:10 p. m.]

1610. Daladier said to me today that he had already sent a reply to Coulondre, French Ambassador in Berlin, to communicate to Hitler²² based on Hitler's statements to Coulondre reported in my Number 1606, August 26, noon.

He had stated that France had not the slightest desire to go to war but that France had given a promise to Poland to support Poland in case of German attack on Poland and so far as possible this promise would be fulfilled. It was the hope of the French Government that

²² French Yellow Book, doc. No. 253, p. 311.

the dispute between Poland and Germany could be settled by direct negotiation between the Polish and German Governments.

Daladier added that at the same time that he had sent this message for delivery to Hitler he had ordered the mobilization of another 700,000 men. Tomorrow on the French frontier there would be 2,550,000 soldiers.

We discussed at great length Hitler's remarks to Henderson, the British Ambassador to Berlin. Daladier said that he had as yet received no communication from the British Government on this subject; but he would make certain that the British Government should not permit Henderson to lay the basis for a new Munich. He did not believe, however, that the British Government would attempt to do such a thing.

BULLITT

760C.62/1051 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, August 26, 1939—8 p. m.
[Received August 26—6:47 p. m.]

926. Weizsaecker called me to the Foreign Office at 7:30 this evening and said that he had been directed by the Fuehrer to inform me at once as a preliminary measure that the two telegrams which the President had sent to Hitler⁷⁸ had been received and had been submitted by him to the consideration of his Foreign Minister and of his Government. Weizsaecker said that he was making this communication to me as the Fuehrer did not wish there to be any doubt that the messages were in his hands.

Weizsaecker's only other remark was that the situation was extremely strained but he added that he could not regard it as hopeless.

Repeated to Paris.

KIRK

760C.62/1043 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, August 26, 1939—midnight.
[Received August 26—8:04 p. m.]

1613. Bonnet asked me to call on him this evening and said that Coulondre had telegraphed briefly from Berlin that when he had presented to Hitler today Daladier's reply (see my 1610, August 26, 6 p. m.) to the remarks that Hitler had made yesterday to Coulondre

⁷⁸ *Ante*, pp. 360 and 368.

and had stated that Daladier would be most happy if he could play the role of conciliator to bring about direct conversations between Poland and Germany. Hitler had replied that he could not accept this method of procedure.

There is much suspicion in Paris tonight that Chamberlain and Henderson have been engaged today in preparing a careful betrayal of Poland using a variation of the technique that they employed so successfully on Czechoslovakia. I have been unable to find any fact to support this interpretation of the deliberations of the British Government.

Bonnet stated to me this evening that Corbin ⁷⁴ had telephoned to him that the British Government was continuing to maintain an absolutely stiff attitude.

BULLITT

760C.62/1069 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, August 27, 1939—midnight.

[Received August 27—8:50 p. m.]

1620. In the course of our conversation tonight Daladier said that in spite of the feeling of many persons that all the messages that Hitler was sending and his failure to make war while the French Army was being mobilized indicated that Hitler might be afraid to face the issue, he could see nothing in Hitler's latest note which indicated that Hitler was weakening in his determination to make war if necessary to get Danzig.

While I was at the Ministry of War however I talked with Daladier's two closest advisors and both expressed the opinion that Hitler would not dare to make war. Incidentally there is no truth whatever in the rumors that the French Government has made any offers to the Italian Government. It is Daladier's conviction that if the French Government should try to buy off the Italians at the present time the concessions to Italy would be interpreted in Germany merely as a sign that France was afraid of war and would encourage Germany to make war on Poland. From an unimpeachable source I learn that the Nazis in Germany are saying to each other that France is about to give Tunis to Italy and that this indicates that France is afraid to fight which confirms Daladier's opinion.

The improvement in the relations between France and Spain has been so extraordinarily rapid since the agreement between Hitler and

⁷⁴ Charles Corbin, French Ambassador in the United Kingdom.

Stalin that Daladier said to me somewhat jokingly but not altogether that the man who today possibly might draw Mussolini away from his military alliance with Hitler was General Franco.

Daladier and several persons at the Foreign Office said to me today that the improvement in relations between France and Japan since the conclusion of the pact between Germany and the Soviet Union has been so great that the French Government would take active steps at once to try to draw Japan into the French-British orbit and settle the war in China on a basis satisfactory to General Chiang Kai-shek if it were not for the simple physical fact that no one in Paris had time to give to this problem.

BULLITT

760C.62/1139 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Poland (Biddle) to the Secretary of State

WARSAW, August 28, 1939—10 p. m.
[Received August 29—4:20 a. m.]

222. For the President and the Secretary.

1. Further conversation with leading officials reveals that:

(a) Review of Balkan situation prompted their conclusion that conditions in that area were favorable to anti-aggression front. There were (1) increasing signs of improvement in Hungarian-Roumanian relations, (2) definite improvement in Hungarian-Yugoslav relations, and (3) improvement in Bulgaria's attitude under good influence of Yugoslavia which had markedly benefitted by recent internal consolidation.

(b) They had reason to look for Hungary to declare neutrality at the outset of any hostilities.

2. While I am aware these are crucial hours made doubly grave by fact peace depends upon decision of one man I do not exclude possibility that solidity and firmness of anti-aggression front and other forces which would be against him such as Italy's wobbly position and Japan's recalcitrance might keep Hitler in a state of indecision. In such case it is not inconceivable that he might go right to the brink of war without taking fatal leap. Moreover, should Europe pull through next several days without war it is conceivable to my mind that anti-aggression front might develop assertive attitude to the point, perhaps even to demanding disarmament, et cetera, in series of what might virtually amount to ultimatums but disguised in formulae sufficiently discreet to save Hitler's face.

BIDDLE

760C.62/1128: Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, August 28, 1939—midnight.
[Received August 29—1:20 a. m.]

946. I understand that the document which Henderson has just left with Hitler⁷⁵ sets forth two problems for consideration of which one is the settlement of the outstanding problems between Poland and Germany and the other the ultimate relations between Germany and Great Britain which cannot be regulated until some agreement between Germany and Poland has been reached by direct negotiation. The document indicated that Poland's consent to direct negotiation with Germany had been obtained and that Great Britain would use its efforts to facilitate a successful outcome of the negotiations without in any way impairing the bilateral character thereof. The solution arrived at, the document continued, must be predicated upon the maintenance of the integrity and independence of Poland supported by international guarantees in which Great Britain would join. The document furthermore emphasized the necessity that the solutions be arrived at by peaceful means and that otherwise England would stand by its pledges to Poland. As a condition precedent to negotiation the press campaign and the publication of incidents and unverified rumors must cease in order to relieve the tension which was mounting to a climax. Upon the completion of successful direct negotiations between Poland and Germany the matter of the limitation of the armaments referred to by Hitler would be discussed as well as the improvement of trade relations between Germany and Great Britain which would follow the cessation of the armaments race. The note ended with renewed emphasis on the necessity for a peaceful solution of the German-Polish differences which were threatening the world with war.

The foregoing oral outline of the document was given with the express stipulation that it receive no publicity through its communication in this way.

KIRK

760C.62/1144: Telegram

The Minister Resident in Iraq (Knabenshue) to the Secretary of State

BAGHDAD, August 29, 1939—1 p. m.
[Received August 29—9:34 a. m.]

46. The Minister for Foreign Affairs has just told me that "our position is clear, we are an ally of England".

⁷⁵ British Cmd. 6106, Misc. No. 9 (1939), doc. No. 74, p. 126.

The German Minister tells me that in the event of war [he?] is ready to depart at a moment's notice and will turn over interests to Iranian Legation believing that the United States Government would be unwilling to accept charge of German interests.

The British air force have taken measures to protect the pipe line with their local levies and armored car sections together with subsidized tribesmen.

KNABENSHUE

760C.62/1137 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, August 29, 1939—1 p. m.
[Received August 29—10:25 a. m.]

1644. I have just read the official and authentic text of the note which Henderson handed to Hitler last night. This text reached Paris at 10 o'clock this morning.

It shows that the summaries which aroused apprehension in Paris last night that Great Britain might be about to attempt to disintegrate Polish resistance were misleading.

Briefly the British note states that Hitler's communication to Henderson raises two definite problems. The first is the question of the dispute between Germany and Poland and the second, the relations between Great Britain and Germany.

Germany is reminded that the British Government has entered into engagements to protect the independence of Poland and that these engagements will be fulfilled.

The opinion is expressed that the best way to settle the dispute between Poland and Germany is by direct negotiation between those two countries and that any settlement reached should be guaranteed by other powers.

The note states that the Polish Government has informed the British Government that it will be glad to enter into negotiations with the German Government on this basis.

Hitler is reminded that in his declaration of last April he acknowledged Poland's interest in Danzig.

Reference is made to the necessity of both Poland and Germany restraining publication of unfounded rumors of atrocities.

The promise is then made that if a solution should be reached by Germany and Poland through direct negotiations, Great Britain would be glad to discuss at once with Germany economic problems and disarmament.

In my opinion the note is excellent and shows no inclination on the part of Great Britain to play the same role vis-à-vis Poland that Great Britain played vis-à-vis Czechoslovakia.

Bonnet who gave me the note said that he was completely satisfied by it. He felt that Germany certainly would not make war without further negotiations.

Hitler, he understood from Berlin, intended to reply to the British note this afternoon.

Whatever the outcome of these British-German negotiations his information from Italy was that Mussolini was becoming increasingly reluctant to go to war on the side of Germany against France and England. Since the conclusion of the German-Russian agreement Mussolini seemed to be almost without influence on Hitler. The Italians were beginning to suspect that the German-Russian agreement went much further than commonly assumed and that Hitler no longer cared greatly about Mussolini's assistance and planned eventually to swallow Italy.

Under the circumstances an Italian intervention in the form of a proposal of a general conference at the eleventh hour, even after general mobilization on all sides, appeared to be highly [apparent omission].

Bonnet added that Molotov would visit Berlin in the near future and stated that he had absolute proof that the Soviet Government had just sold an enormous quantity of gasoline to the German Government, thus providing Germany with the means it did not have to use to the full for a long period its air fleet and mechanized units.

BULLITT

760C.62/1166 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State*⁷⁶

LONDON, August 29, 1939—midnight.

[Received August 29—7:25 p. m.]

1314. Personal for the Secretary. My 1299, August 29, noon.⁷⁷ Hitler's reply was handed in person to the British Ambassador at 7:15 this evening.⁷⁸ Henderson is forwarding translation of full text as soon as possible. Following is a summary:

In reply to the British proposals, namely direct German-Polish negotiations and an international guarantee of any settlement, the German Government declares: (1) That in spite of skepticism as to prospects of success, it accepts direct negotiations with Poland solely out of a desire to insure lasting friendship with Great Britain and (2) in case of any modification of territories the German Government

⁷⁶ A similar but briefer message was sent to the Department by the Chargé in Germany in telegram No. 952, August 29, 3 p. m., not printed.

⁷⁷ Not printed.

⁷⁸ British Cmd. 6106, Misc. No. 9 (1939), doc. No. 78, p. 135.

cannot undertake to guarantee them nor to participate in guarantees without consulting the Government of Soviet Russia.

The note observes that German proposals have never had as their object any diminution of the vital interests of Poland and declares that the German Government accepts the mediation of Great Britain with the view to securing the visit to Berlin of a Polish plenipotentiary. The note adds that the German Government counts on the arrival at Berlin of this plenipotentiary tomorrow, Wednesday, August 30th.

Ambassador Henderson remarked that this last stipulation sounded like an ultimatum. After a heated exchange of remarks Hitler and Ribbentrop assured him it was intended only to stress the urgency of the matter, at a moment when two fully mobilized armies were facing each other.

The Ambassador said that he would like to transmit to his Government the assurance, in the event that such a Polish plenipotentiary did go to Berlin, that he would be received and the discussions with him would be conducted on a basis of full equality. To this Hitler replied "Of course".

The German demands are declared to be revision of the Versailles Treaty,⁷⁹ that is, the return of Danzig and the Corridor to Germany and the security of the German national minorities in the rest of Poland.

The note concludes by stating that the German Government is ready immediately to elaborate proposals for an acceptable solution and to inform the British Government if possible before the arrival of the Polish plenipotentiary.

A responsible official of the Foreign Office stated that it is unlikely any action will be taken on this note before tomorrow, when the full text will be here. They will, however, probably inform the Poles at once of the substance of the German reply.

KENNEDY

760C.62/1258 : Telegram

The King of Italy (Vittorio Emanuele) to President Roosevelt

[Translation]

August 30, 1939.

I am grateful to you for your interest. I have immediately transmitted your message⁸⁰ to my Government. As is known to all, there has been done and there is being done by us whatever is possible to bring about a peace with justice.

VITTORIO EMANUELE

⁷⁹ Signed June 28, 1919, *Foreign Relations*, The Paris Peace Conference, 1919, vol. XIII; see article 28, pp. 132-133, and articles 100-108, pp. 241-262.

⁸⁰ See telegram No. 77, August 23, 11 a. m., to the Ambassador in Italy, p. 351.

760C.62/1178 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, August 30, 1939—11 a. m.

[Received August 30—9 a. m.]

1660. For the President and the Secretary. I have just read at the Foreign Office the account which Henderson gave Coulondre of his conversation last night with Hitler.

Hitler in a condition of violent excitement stated that Poland because of the actions of the "dirty English" had taken an intolerable position. He must have at once delivered to him Danzig, the Corridor and the Polish provinces of Pomerania and Silesia. Furthermore, he had already prepared an economic accord between Germany and Poland which he had ready for signature by Poland. He would wait 24 hours but if a responsible Polish statesman did not come to Berlin to sign an agreement on this basis within 24 hours he would crush Poland.

The British Ambassador replied that this statement sounded like an ultimatum. He would like to have assurance before transmitting any message to his Government that Hitler did not intend to make war without further notification.

Hitler replied that he could not give any promise to refrain from war before consulting his associate power, the Soviet Union.

The British Ambassador then said that a delay of 24 hours was much too short. Hitler replied that it would take only 80 minutes for a responsible Polish official to take a plane in Warsaw and reach Berlin.

The British Ambassador asked how such an official would be received and Hitler made it clear that he would be received with the same official courtesy as Schuschnigg⁸¹ and Hacha.⁸²

Leger then asked to see me urgently. While I was with him he had in my presence a 15-minute conversation with Daladier on their direct telephone. Their estimate of the situation is as follows.

Hitler is attempting to repeat step by step the maneuver which won him Austria and Czechoslovakia without war.

They take it as certain that Poland will not weaken and that no Pole will follow the footsteps of Schuschnigg and Hacha to Munich.

They believe that Hitler will send a definite ultimatum today and that at the last minute Mussolini will intervene and propose a general conference for the settlement not only of the Polish-Danzig dispute but of all other questions of national demands including his own.

⁸¹ Kurt Schuschnigg, former Austrian Chancellor.

⁸² Emil Hacha, former President of Czechoslovakia.

The position of Daladier and Leger remains the same as that expressed in the British note. They will not be drawn into a general conference on the Polish-German dispute in view of the conditions for peace with Poland which Hitler gave last night to the British Ambassador in London since acceptance of a conference would imply a willingness to consent to the enslavement of Poland in Germany.

They will insist that the Polish dispute should be settled by direct negotiation between Germany and Poland and that the larger questions should be reserved for a conference when this dispute shall have been settled.

Leger, after talking with Daladier, asked me to communicate to the President most urgently that the French Government hoped that the President would not call any general conference but would insist if he should make a further statement or effort that the Polish-German dispute should be settled by direct negotiation between Poland and Germany.

Both Daladier and Leger agreed that the only possible alternative might be an appeal by the Pope, the King of Belgium, or the Queen of the Netherlands to Germany and Poland under the terms of the Hague Convention of 1927 [1907]⁸³ for special mediation to which Germany was still a signatory. By this convention each party to a dispute obliges itself to choose a mediator and these mediators meet and attempt to produce a settlement acceptable to both sides. Their decision is not binding on either power.

Leger asked me to suggest to the President instantly that he might propose to either the Pope, the King of Belgium, or the Queen of the Netherlands that one of them should issue at once an appeal to Germany and Poland to accept the special mediation provided for in the Hague Convention of 1927 [1907]. He felt that since Hitler had refused to answer the President's two messages any further appeal by the President would be left without answer.

BULLITT

760C.62/1199 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, August 30, 1939—2 p. m.
[Received August 30—11:22 a. m.]

958. My 955, August 29, 9 p. m.⁸⁴ I understand that the interview with Hitler yesterday evening created a distinctly unfavorable impression on Henderson. Not only did Hitler express himself with the

⁸³ Signed October 18, 1907, *Foreign Relations*, 1907, pt. II, p. 1181.

⁸⁴ Not printed.

vehemence which was lacking in the interview prior to Henderson's departure for London but the essential terms of Hitler's statement were regarded as offering small basis for a profitable continuation of discussions especially in regard to the German stipulation as to Danzig, the Corridor and the Polish minorities and the requirement as to the appointment of a Polish negotiator. As regards this latter point however I am informed that the German memorandum⁸⁵ stated that the Government "counted on" the arrival of a negotiator during the day of August 30th but did not convey this requirement in the form of an ultimatum and that Hitler confirmed to Henderson that no ultimatum on this point was intended.

Both the French and British Ambassadors today manifest distinct pessimism as to the immediate situation and from information obtained from members of the Polish Embassy conditions are regarded as sufficiently grave to warrant the immediate departure of several of the personnel of the Embassy although the Ambassador himself and certain secretaries are remaining. Speculation in general is turning on the point as to whether Hitler has entered upon an actual phase of negotiation in the hope of satisfying his aims sufficiently without having to resort to war or whether he is working for time pending the adjustment of new factors which may have arisen as regards the military situation or the completion of diplomatic moves especially in the direction of Moscow and Tokyo. However unclear may be the opinion as to the tactics now in process there seems to be agreement that while on the one hand Hitler will be astute to detect any sign of weakening on the part of governments opposing his aims and if impressed by any such sign will endeavor to profit thereby in his present dealings; on the other hand if circumstances finally confront him with what appears to him to be definite obstructions in the way which he feels he must go he cannot choose but proceed in the attempt to override those obstructions regardless of methods and consequences.

I am informed that the official information from London which reached the British Embassy during the night was to the effect that attempts were being made to produce a Polish negotiator but that the time mentioned seemed short. From foreign sources I learn that the pessimism prevailing in London is in contrast to the moderate relaxation in tension which some have lately discerned as being manifested in lower German Government circles in Berlin.

(Impossible to repeat foregoing to Paris or London.)

KIRK

⁸⁵ British Cmd. 6106, Misc. No. 9 (1939), doc. No. 78, p. 135.

760C.62/1178 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Bullitt)

WASHINGTON, August 30, 1939—4 p. m.

686. Your 1660, August 30, 11 a. m. I have submitted the suggestions communicated in the last paragraph of your telegram to the President, and he desires me to let you know that inasmuch as Hitler in his last note to the British Government accepts the idea of direct negotiations between Poland and Germany, the possibility of mediation along the lines indicated would not seem to him to be practicable at least at this moment. He feels that the issue at this time is whether the direct negotiations now accepted by both Poland and Germany can be carried out and particularly whether they can be carried out on the basis of strict equality between the two sides.

HULL

760C.62/1187 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, August 30, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received August 30—1:20 p. m.]

1321. For the Secretary and Under Secretary. My 1315, August 30, noon.⁸⁶ I just saw Halifax and before that Butler, Parliamentary Under-Secretary. He showed me the Cabinet draft of the answer to Hitler. In its present form it is, I should say, a little too firm with Hitler and I have an idea that Halifax will tone it down before it is finally sent. I think that Chamberlain, Halifax, Cadogan and Butler realize that there is a great deal of negotiation still to be done and that too firm a hand, which might preclude Hitler from finding any basis on which he can quit with honor, might be very disastrous. The Cabinet, on the other hand, as a whole feel that they have Hitler on the run and want to make it as tough as possible.

This afternoon Chamberlain secretly sent what to all intents is a personal letter to Hitler,⁸⁷ but which actually comes from the head of one state to the head of another, telling him that he appreciates the desire of Hitler to maintain cordial and friendly relations with Great Britain and that Great Britain desires the same, but he urges him not to demand an immediate response from Poland. As you know, in the message from Hitler last night he demanded that a Polish repre-

⁸⁶ Not printed.⁸⁷ British Cmd. 6106, Misc. No. 9 (1939), doc. No. 89, p. 142.

sentative be there today. In addition Chamberlain suggests that summoning a special Polish representative to Berlin might not be the method most conducive to friendly discussions and that the declaration which Hitler is drawing up of his demands might better be submitted to Poland through its Ambassador in Berlin.

It may be of interest to note that a new kind of contact has been arranged. Goering⁸⁸ who is back in the picture with Hitler has delegated two of his intimate friends to fly back and forth between Berlin and London to get the personal English touch from the topside men in the British Government, immediately flying back to give it personally to Goering and Hitler. That is the answer to the so-called mystery planes that the press have been trying to find out about. Butler claims that this is aiding the relationship very much, because it is keeping almost a personal contact.

The Halifax-Butler opinion really places the beginning of a strong anti-war group in Germany to the immediate result of the Russian-German pact. Mussolini has telephoned again and is really making almost panicky efforts to persuade the British that he is working for the cause of peace. He has almost isolated himself from the pro-German group in Italy.

There are two great dangers, as Halifax views it now: one is that the attitude of Britain will become too overbearing to Hitler by such methods as holding him up to ridicule in the British press or saying that they have put him in his place, et cetera, et cetera, thus leaving no hope in his own mind that after this is over he has a real possibility of making economic peace with Great Britain; the other danger is that the Poles becoming overconfident as a result of Hitler's seeming backing down will become too drastic and figure that they have Hitler on the run and refuse to negotiate in a way to save a world war. Butler says that the Italians and the French are now attempting to get over reproaching the Poles. These are the two difficulties that Chamberlain is trying to work out now in order not to find himself in a position where he might get peace on fair terms and find himself in the middle of a war. The Polish situation gives them great concern.

Butler said that they have already discussed with the Cabinet the necessity for immediately taking up the question of colonies if they can settle this Polish problem, in order that these September crises will not continue to occur. He says it is a bitter pill for them, but the pill is about three-quarters way down their stomach.

KENNEDY

⁸⁸ Hermann Goering, Reich Minister for Aviation.

760C.62/1212 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Poland (Biddle) to the Secretary of State

WARSAW, August 30, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received 7:30 p. m.]

234. For the President and the Secretary.

1. Beck has just earnestly emphasized that while last night's postponement of general mobilization went deeply against the grain, especially in view of Germany's continued large scale occupation of Slovakia, he and his associates, after careful consideration, decided to accept London's plea in order to give added proof that either or both London and Paris could count upon Poland as an ally under any circumstances.

2. Beck and his associates labeled Hitler's demands (transmitted to London) attempted gangster extortion to which they would say 40 times "no," for to accept them would hasten the ultimate destruction of Poland.

3. Beck and associates as well as general public notably calm and resolute.

BIDDLE

760C.62/1201 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, August 30, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received August 30—2:15 p. m.]

1669. I have just read the full written text of the German reply to the British proposals which was handed to Henderson by Hitler in Berlin last night.

This document repeats all the demands which Hitler blurted out (reported in my 1660 of August 30, 11 a. m.) except the demand with regard to Silesia but veils them in such extremely clever diplomatic language that the public or anyone ignorant of the duplicities of diplomacy might consider it a comparatively reasonable document.

Under the circumstances the French Foreign Office is extremely glad that Hitler threw a verbal limelight on the demands which his diplomats had carefully veiled in their note.

The note begins by stating that the German Government is glad that the British Government agrees on the desirability of good relations between Great Britain and Germany. It states that the present dispute with Poland could have been solved at a time when there were good relations between Poland and Germany if the Poles had been willing to accept the offer which Chancellor Hitler made to Poland last April.

It goes on to say that Poland replied to this entirely reasonable proposal by mobilization of military forces and a persecution of the German population in Poland and a political harassment and economic blockade of Danzig designed to drive Danzig to political despair and economic destruction. These activities of the Poles had become so terrible during the past weeks that the question of ending them was no longer one of months or weeks but of hours.

The revision of the Treaty of Versailles must be continued and Danzig and the Corridor must be returned to the Reich. The question of the protection of German minorities and economic interests in Poland must be solved.

The Reich had no intention of extinguishing the independence of Poland; but the question of guaranteeing those portions of the Polish state which should remain after Germany's claims had been satisfied could not be answered by the Reich before consultation with and the agreement of Germany's associate, the Soviet Union.

The German Government had no confidence that direct conversations between Germany and Poland would lead to any result; but to accomplish its acquired love of peace and in order to put an end to reports of the British Government that there should be direct conversations the German Government would be glad to receive a plenipotentiary negotiator in Berlin, if one should arrive from Warsaw today Wednesday the 30th.

I have really rarely read a clearer piece of casuistry than this note which in fact makes all the demands that Hitler made verbally; but produces a surface appearance of sweet reasonableness.

The French and British Governments are now in consultation as to the reply which should be made to this note. The French Government has received from a number of sources information that Germany may start war with Poland tonight.

The French Government has also received information from a number of sources that if war should begin in the immediate future Italy would not at first enter the war but would try to remain neutral until Poland had been crushed by Germany and until the German forces concentrated against Poland could be returned to the French frontier for an attack on France. At that moment Italy and Germany together would attack France.

The single astounding feature of the note is the phrase about the Soviet Union which seems to indicate that Germany has promised to give the Soviet Union eastern Poland and may mean that the Soviet Union will attack Poland.

760C.62/1206: Telegram

The Chargé in Belgium (Wilson) to the Secretary of State

BRUSSELS, August 30, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received August 30—2: 58 p. m.]

108. After consultation between King Leopold and Queen Wilhelmina the Foreign Ministers of Belgium and the Netherlands received Monday evening⁸⁹ at The Hague and in Brussels the diplomatic representatives of Great Britain, France, Italy, Poland and Germany and informed them orally that the Governments of Belgium and the Netherlands tendered their good offices in order to assist in bringing about a solution of the present international controversy. No specific suggestions were made as to how these good offices might be utilized.

Foreign Office states that favorable replies have been received from France and Poland and that a similar answer may be obtained very shortly from Great Britain. Germany and Italy have not yet indicated their views.

I understand that Netherlands and the Belgian Governments will take no further action unless so requested by the five governments.

WILSON

760C.62/1196: Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, August 30, 1939—7 p. m.

[Received August 30—3: 50 p. m.]

1324. Personal for the Secretary. My 1321, August 30, 5 p. m. The text of the British reply has been telegraphed to Ambassador Henderson at Berlin with instructions not to present it until he receives the word "go". This it is expected will be sent later today. The reason for this delay is consultation with the French from whom, however, no objections to the British draft are anticipated. The text of the note has likewise been cabled to the British Ambassador at Washington for transmission to you⁹⁰ and has been cabled to the British Ambassador at Warsaw.

A second telegram will be sent to the Ambassador at Warsaw⁹¹ referring to the British reply to Germany which the Ambassador is instructed to communicate to Colonel Beck. In doing so he is to

⁸⁹ August 28.⁹⁰ Copy transmitted by the British Ambassador to the Secretary of State, August 31, 1939. For text of note, see British Cmd. 6106, Misc. No. 9 (1939), doc. No. 89, p. 142.⁹¹ *Ibid.*, doc. No. 90, p. 144.

point out that while the first part of the German Government's reply consisted of an indefinite and misleading presentation of the German case, the really important part consists of Germany's acceptance of the proposal for direct discussion, of the suggestion regarding the proposed international guarantee, and Germany's assertion that she intended to respect Polish vital interests. The instruction to Warsaw further states that it is unnecessary at this stage to take exception to much that is included in the German reply of which the British Government would be as critical as it has no doubt the Polish Government is. They draw attention to the fact that the Germans had included in their reply the demand that a Polish plenipotentiary arrive in Berlin today and it is pointed out to Colonel Beck that he would see the British Government's attitude to this clearly stated in the reply to Hitler. The German Government is now drafting its proposals and when these are received (for the German Government has promised to give them to the British) it will then be easier to decide how and when consultation might best be effected and negotiations carried on.

Colonel Beck will see from the British reply that proposals have been made for a military standstill during the discussions and the British Government earnestly hope that the Polish Government will have no objection. Ambassador Kennard is requested to secure urgently a statement of the Polish views and in view of the Polish Government's authorization to the British Government to say that Poland would be prepared to enter into direct discussions with Germany, the British Government hopes that, provided the method and general arrangements for the discussions can be satisfactorily agreed upon, the Polish Government will be prepared without delay to indicate its own readiness. It is most important to bear in mind the internal situation in Germany and world opinion. In view of the fact that the German Government has professed itself ready to negotiate, it should not be given any opportunity to place the blame for declining direct negotiations on Poland. Ambassador Kennard is told to emphasize to Colonel Beck that the British Government has made quite clear to Herr Hitler its irrevocable determination to implement its obligations without reserve and that there is no misunderstanding on that score in Berlin. The position of the Polish Government is very different from what it was last March since now it is supported both by a direct British guarantee and by the British undertaking to participate in any guarantee of a settlement which might be reached. All the conversations will be carried on against this background. Another consideration present in the minds of the British is that according to information it has received from Berlin there is reason to suppose that the German Government's demands do not represent Hitler's last undertaking. On the other hand, [Poland's] refusal to negotiate

would merely serve to fortify the forces in Germany which are working for war and enable Hitler to place the onus of a breakdown on Poland.

KENNEDY

760C.62/1208 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, August 30, 1939—8 p. m.

[Received August 30—4:42 p. m.]

1325. Personal for the Secretary. My 1324, August 30, 7 p. m. I have just seen the Prime Minister. The whole discussion was taken up with the subject matter contained in my No. 1321, August 30, 5 p. m. He is not kidding himself that this thing is settled by any manner of means and sees great difficulties ahead. Frankly he is more worried about getting the Poles to be reasonable than the Germans. He feels there is a great body of public opinion in England headed probably by Eden⁹² and Churchill⁹³ who will suggest to the Poles that they give up nothing and that they have Hitler on the run. This, of course, will mean war but in the meantime he is urging Henderson to keep telling Hitler that after all the Danzig situation is a small item and that what really needs to be done is to work out the whole European economic political problem, which Chamberlain, now with England solidly behind him, is willing to do with Hitler if Hitler will cooperate. He is hoping that the Poles will give the matter serious consideration and attempt to work something out. During that period, while the British cannot urge the Poles to make concessions, they can at least point out the value of a settlement to the future of Poland. Of course, he always remembers Czechoslovakia in this picture and that gives him great misgivings. He is not at all enthusiastic about the prospects, but he is hopeful.

KENNEDY

760C.62/1210 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, August 31, 1939—3 a. m.

[Received August 31—12:22 a. m.]

964. My 958, August 30, 2 p. m. Henderson saw Ribbentrop at midnight and delivered to him the British reply to Hitler's statement.

⁹² Anthony Eden, former British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

⁹³ Winston Churchill, Member of Parliament and former member of several British Cabinets.

I understand that this reply repeated the gratification of the British Government that the German Government agreed to negotiate but suggested that in view of the fact that the time stipulated did not suffice for a Polish negotiator to reach Berlin the bases for the proposed negotiation be presented to the Polish Ambassador in Berlin for submission to his Government. I understand further that Henderson asked Ribbentrop to give him a statement of the proposed bases for negotiation and that the latter after at first refusing to do so on the excuse that it was after midnight of the day during which the Polish negotiator should have presented himself, finally read a statement but in so hurried a manner that the British Ambassador was unable to grasp the contents and Ribbentrop refused to furnish the Ambassador with a copy thereof. Henderson urged upon Ribbentrop to give the proposals to the Polish Ambassador but Ribbentrop stated that he would not send for the Ambassador although he intimated that he would receive Lipski if he asked for an interview. Henderson left the interview with the impression that a deadlock had been reached and that the gravest consequences might be expected.

KIRK

760C.62/1210 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, August 31, 1939—4 a. m.

[Received August 31—2 a. m.]

965. Continuing my 964, August 31. Shortly after Henderson's return from this interview he received from a secret emissary in whom the British had confidence an oral statement of what was said to be the proposals which Ribbentrop had read to the British Ambassador but which he had not understood. These proposals I understand are briefly and approximately as follows:

1. The Free City of Danzig to be returned immediately to Germany.
2. A southern boundary of the Corridor to be drawn from Marienburg through Graudenz, Bromberg to a town to the northeast of Mareneidemuhl.
3. In that area of the Corridor a plebiscite is to be held on the basis of the population on January 1, 1918 with an absolute majority deciding.
4. Pending the plebiscite that area is to be administered by an international commission consisting of representatives of England, France, Italy and Russia and in the meanwhile the Polish police and military are to be withdrawn in favor of an international force.
5. During the regime of the international commission free communication is to be established between Germany and Danzig and Poland and Gdynia.

6. After the plebiscite an exchange of population is to take place if found necessary.
7. Gdynia is to be confirmed as Polish.
8. Danzig is to be purely a commercial city and not militarized.

Henderson I understand is greatly encouraged by the knowledge of these proposals; he has telegraphed to London a statement thereof and is urging that immediate steps be taken to persuade the Polish Government to appoint a representative for the purpose of negotiating on those bases. He has also insisted with the Polish Ambassador here to seek an interview with Ribbentrop. As soon as possible in the morning Henderson will ask Ribbentrop for a copy of these proposed bases without revealing the fact that he has been given knowledge thereof. Repeated nowhere.

KIRK

760C.62/1221 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Poland (Biddle) to the Secretary of State

WARSAW, August 31, 1939—10 a. m.
[Received 11:08 a. m.]

238. For the President and Secretary.

1. Beck satisfied with London's last night's communication to Hitler gist of which is somewhat along following lines: Britain stipulates that Poland must be free to conduct direct negotiations with Germany and unhampered by intimidation. Moreover a just, reasonable solution of Polish-German differences was prerequisite to initiation of discussions for a general European settlement. In other words it was no longer merely a Polish-German dispute, any bilateral solution must subsequently be secured by international guarantees for such a solution would have to be of durable character and not a patchwork arrangement which might break down in the spring.

BIDDLE

760C.62/1232 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, August 31, 1939—1 p. m.
[Received August 31—1 p. m.]

970. During the last few days there has been noticeable an increasing tendency to detect a growing discord between the people and the

apparent trend of the Nazi Government toward war. The pact with Soviet Russia which at first was welcomed as a triumph on the part of Germany is now being regarded by the people in the light of the former anti-Soviet attitude in Nazi Germany and is causing concern as a stimulus to the increase in communistic sentiment in Germany which the people have hitherto been taught to consider as anathema to the tenets of the regime. Furthermore the introduction of the rationing system with its warning of wartime measures and commodity shortage has come as a shock to the populace which has been taught to believe that the realization of Hitler's aims for a greater Germany could be effected without an actual war. In short the people have within the last few days been confronted not only with an event which upon analysis they have been unable to digest as a logical development of what they regarded to be the established policy of the Nazi regime but also with a striking indication of the imminence of war which they did not want and which they had come to believe as avoidable. These factors have tended to develop a challenging attitude mounting almost to discontent not only among the people but also in the ranks of the party and even it is said among the hierarchy of the regime.

The foregoing tendencies may indeed be detected but their significance as a deterrent factor immediately operative in the present crisis is practically negligible. In fact any reference thereto especially outside Germany or any emphasis thereon constitutes an added danger at this moment in that it may on the one hand hasten drastic action on the part of the extremists in the regime in an attempt to check the development of these tendencies by means of the precipitation of a larger patriotic issue and on the other hand in that it might encourage those who are working for peace to relax their efforts to prevent war on the false assumption that the deteriorating influences at work have actually succeeded in undermining the discipline of the regime and are threatening it with an imminent collapse. This assumption however is generally regarded as premature and dangerously misleading and any importance which might be ascribed to those undermining influences which may be operating within the country should lie in the probability that a postponement of a war might be conducive to their further development rather than in the possibility that they might prevent the regime from entering into a conflict or might in the event of war insure a speedy termination thereof through internal collapse.

760C.62/1273

The German Chargé (Thomsen) to the Secretary of State

[Translation]

WASHINGTON, August 31, 1939.

[Received September 1.⁹⁴]

MR. SECRETARY OF STATE: By order of my Government, I wish to use your kind intermediary for the purpose of stating to the President of the United States that his messages of August 25 [24] and 26 [25] addressed to the German Fuehrer and Reich Chancellor⁹⁵ have been greatly appreciated by the latter.

The German Fuehrer and Reich Chancellor has also, on his side, left nothing untried for the purpose of settling the dispute between Germany and Poland in a friendly manner. Even at the last hour he accepted an offer from the Government of Great Britain to mediate in this dispute. Owing to the attitude of the Polish Government, however, all these endeavors have remained without result.

Accept [etc.]

THOMSEN

760C.62/1230 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, August 31, 1939—4 p. m.

[Received August 31—12: 35 p. m.]

1678. Léger has informed me that the Polish Government at 1:00 o'clock today agreed in principle to enter into direct negotiations with Germany. All details as to place of meeting and subjects to be discussed are still undecided.

Daladier has just said to me that he is still not without hope of preserving peace since there are indications that Hitler at the last minute will not dare to risk war.

I have now read the full text of the British nine-point note to Hitler referred to in my No. 1676 of August 31, 2 p. m.,⁹⁶ and while it shows a tendency to go into larger questions than the mere matter of arranging direct negotiations between Poland and Germany it will in my opinion do no damage provided this tendency is not permitted to develop further.

Everyone at the French Foreign Office is expecting in the immediate future some sort of a proposal by Mussolini designed to produce a general conference to deal with the question of Danzig and a vast number of other questions. Needless to say the Poles will not accept

⁹⁴ Marginal notation: "Copy to the President at 1:35 p. m. J[ohn] F. S[tone]".

⁹⁵ *Ante*, pp. 360 and 368.

⁹⁶ Not printed.

the decision of a general conference in respect of Hitler's demands against Poland, and the French at the present moment are also opposed to a general conference.

BULLITT

760C.62/1229 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

[Extract]

LONDON, August 31, 1939—7 p. m.
[Received August 31—2:35 p. m.]

1337. . . .

Shortly after the British note was delivered to Ribbentrop a copy was given to Colonel Beck by Ambassador Kennard who at the same time made the representations outlined in my telegram Number 1324, August 30, 7 p. m. These representations the Foreign Office says were given some slight modification from the outline in my telegram but the instruction as actually sent to Ambassador Kennard has since been repeated to Lord Lothian⁹⁷ for communication to you. Beck told the British Ambassador that he would take up the note and the British proposals at once with his Government and promised a reply by noon, tomorrow, September 1. He expressed the gratitude of his Government to the British Government for not having accepted in its reply to Germany any propositions as bases of possible direct negotiation which would be prejudicial to the position of Poland, and for their having made clear the determination of the British to stand by their commitments to Poland. Ambassador Kennard took the occasion to emphasize the necessity for avoiding "incidents" with which Beck agreed. He said that he was doing everything possible to eliminate provocation from the Polish side. Subsequent to the receipt of Ambassador Kennard's report of this interview he was cabled by the Foreign Office to concert with his French colleague with a view to impressing upon Colonel Beck the urgent necessity for Poland, either directly through her own Ambassador at Berlin or through the British Government, to apprise Berlin of the receipt of the British proposals and to express her willingness at once to enter into direct negotiations.

Responsible Foreign Office opinion on the situation is that this moment is the very climax of the crisis and the decision may be either way. Until the actual German proposals are communicated they cannot say whether or not they form a real basis for agreement, but the mere fact that the Germans have actually formulated proposals is

⁹⁷ British Ambassador in the United States.

regarded as a slightly favorable sign. The impression given by the Foreign Office is that they are a little more hopeful than they were yesterday, but the general public seems more depressed.

KENNEDY

760C.62/1241 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, August 31, 1939—midnight.

[Received August 31—9:22 p. m.]

1689. At about 3:45 this afternoon François-Poncet, French Ambassador in Rome, telephoned to Bonnet to say that he had just had a conversation with Ciano and that Ciano had proposed on behalf of the Italian Government that a conference composed of representatives of Italy, Germany, France, and England should meet immediately to settle the Polish-German dispute and general outstanding problems connected with the liquidation of the Treaty of Versailles.

Daladier at once called a Cabinet meeting which met at 6:00 o'clock. At this meeting the Cabinet decided that it was impossible to accept such a conference since in reality it would be merely a conference of butchers to dismember Poland in the absence of Poland. It would be a new Munich and would be followed by the same results as Munich.

A member of the Cabinet has informed me that Bonnet was rather in favor of accepting the proposal; that Reynaud⁹⁸ opposed it most strongly and that Daladier was equally strong in his opposition. It was decided finally to send a rejection in a polite form stating that since both Poland and Germany had agreed to direct negotiations there was no reason to call such a conference at this time.

This afternoon also the Pope called before him the Ambassadors of Italy, England, France, Germany, and Poland and made an appeal to them to have their Governments confer with a view to the preservation of peace. The text of this appeal has not yet reached Paris.

At 6:00 o'clock the Polish Ambassador in Berlin Lipsky went to the Wilhelmstrasse and stated that the Polish Government accepted in principle direct negotiations with Germany for the settlement of the German-Polish dispute. The representative of the German Government immediately attempted to state to Lipsky a series of conditions and concessions which Germany demanded before entering into direct negotiations with Poland. The Polish Ambassador replied that he was instructed merely to state what he had stated. He added that he would not listen to any statement of conditions before negotiation and that he would not report any such statements to his Government.

⁹⁸ Paul Reynaud, French Minister for Justice.

At 8 o'clock the German Government issued by radio and by statement of the official German information service an official statement containing 16 demands against Poland⁹⁹ the text of which I have just learned from the President over the telephone has already reached you through press channels.

I have discussed the trend of events tonight with Bonnet, Paul Reynaud, and the Polish Ambassador. The consensus of opinion is that Germany has exposed her intentions so clearly in this note that there can no longer be any doubt in the world as to her aggressive intentions. There is relief [*belief?*] that Hitler stands nakedly in the open attempting to repeat the coup by which he disintegrated and swallowed Czechoslovakia. There is not the slightest disposition in either Poland or France or, so far as I can learn, England to submit to these demands.

The general opinion is that if Poland should be disintegrated by Germany similar demands against Rumania would follow within a few weeks, to be followed in turn by similar demands against Yugoslavia, Hungary, and other states and finally by similar demands against France and England and in the end Italy.

It is to be noted that Hitler did not state any time limit for the fulfillment of his demands so that there is still an extremely faint possibility that he may back down at the last minute; but such a possibility can be perceived only by the imagination rather than the eye. It is expected therefore that Hitler will attack Poland in the near future. France and England will fulfill their obligations and fight to assist Poland.

Since Germany has replied to the official statement by the Polish Ambassador of Poland's readiness to negotiate directly with Germany by this public announcement of unacceptable demands I do not believe that any appeal will stop Hitler from attacking if he has the courage to face general European war. I feel, however, that a statement by the President might make the moral issue clearer and might increase Hitler's reluctance to begin the conflict.

BULLITT

740.0011 European War, 1939/28 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, September 1, 1939—3 p. m.
[Received September 1—2 : 56 p. m.]

987. The events of yesterday have produced complete confusion among foreign representatives here and up to the present no clear explanation is available which covers the various developments.

⁹⁹ British Cmd. 6106, Misc. No. 9 (1939), doc. No. 98, p. 149.

As reported in my 974, August 31, 7 p. m.,¹ Henderson informed the Polish Ambassador yesterday morning that unless the Polish Government should immediately approach the German Government in regard to direct negotiations between the two Governments Germany would take military action and in this connection the hour of noon of yesterday was mentioned as the time limit for such contact. The French Ambassador after being notified of the foregoing by the British Ambassador went to Lipski and persuaded him to telephone to Warsaw to obtain authorization to approach the German Government in regard to eventual conversation. Coulondre also telephoned to Paris and shortly after 12 o'clock was notified by his Government that the Polish Government would agree in principle to conversations with the German Government and at 1 o'clock the Polish Ambassador was instructed by his Government to make a statement at the Foreign Office here of which a translation is being transmitted in my 989, September 1, 5 p. m.² indicating favorable consideration of the suggestion for direct conversations. Lipski then requested an interview at the Foreign Office and at 3 o'clock conversed with Weizsaecker in the sense described in my 974, August 31, 7 p. m. At 7:45 the Polish Ambassador was received by Ribbentrop and delivered to him the statement referred to above but the French Ambassador did not confirm the statement in my 979, September 1, 9 a. m.¹ to the effect that Lipski had refused to receive the German proposals as according to his information these proposals were not communicated to the Polish Ambassador. Between 9 and 10 p. m. the documents reported in my 975, August 31, 10 p. m.¹ and subsequent telegrams were made public stating that the Polish Government had rejected the proposals for direct negotiations.

Up to the present I have seen only my French colleague and he is apparently at a loss to understand the discrepancy between the statement of the attitude of the Polish Government as indicated in the above-mentioned documents and that set forth in the statement made by Lipski to Ribbentrop. Furthermore the developments of the last few hours are regarded by Coulondre as especially confusing owing to the impression manifested in responsible circles during the last day or two of a certain optimism as to the possibility of a solution of the present conflict. He is inclined to see the hand of Ribbentrop in these developments.

KIRK

¹ Not printed.

² Not printed; for text of statement, see British Cmd. 6106, Misc. No. 9 (1939), doc. No. 102 p. 155.

740.0011 European War, 1939/29 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, September 1, 1939—5 p. m.
[Received September 1—2:30 p. m.]

991. My 987, September 1, 3 p. m. I have just seen the British Ambassador. He says that, if the Polish Government had agreed to direct negotiations and had appointed a plenipotentiary, precipitate action by Germany might have been prevented or at least delayed. The statement made by the Polish Ambassador to Ribbentrop last night (see my 974, August 31, 7 p. m.³) was not in Henderson's opinion sufficiently comprehensive but it was clear that following its delivery the allegation subsequently published by the German Government to the effect that the Polish Government had refused direct negotiations was erroneous and Henderson suspected that Ribbentrop had maneuvered this play.

Henderson said that he had suggested to his Government a conference between Rydz-Smigly⁴ and Goering but feared that such a move would be too late and had just informed his Government that he believed that the only hope lay in the clear manifestation of an inflexible attitude on the part of Great Britain.

Drafted 4 p. m.

KIRK

³ Not printed.

⁴ Marshal Edward Smigly-Rydz, Inspector-General of the Polish Army.

BEGINNING OF EUROPEAN PHASE OF WORLD WAR II
I. INVASION OF POLAND BY GERMANY AND ENTRY OF THE BRITISH
AND FRENCH INTO THE WAR, SEPTEMBER 1-16, 1939

740.0011 European War, 1939/144 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, September 1, 1939—7 a. m.
[Received September 1—4: 28 a. m.]

977. A proclamation by Hitler has just been issued declaring that the Polish state has rejected a peaceful solution of the problem of neighborly relations with Germany and after enumerating offenses committed by Poland against German rights and territory states that force must be met by force and that the battle will be fought in defense of German territory and honor.¹

It is also announced that the *Anschluss* of Danzig to the Reich has been declared and has been communicated by Forster to Hitler.²

The Embassy has been notified by the Foreign Office that a meeting of the Reichstag will take place at 10 o'clock this morning.

KIRK

740.0011 European War, 1939/4 : Telegram

The Consul at Danzig (Kuykendall) to the Secretary of State

DANZIG, September 1, 1939—8 a. m.
[Received 9: 30 a. m.]

I have been notified officially by the Senate at 7:20 this morning that state of war between Germany and Poland exists since 4:45 this morning.³ I was officially invited to remain as representative of neutral power and I was assured that every protection will be accorded

¹ See British Cmd. 6106, Misc. No. 9 (1939) : *Documents Concerning German-Polish Relations and the Outbreak of Hostilities between Great Britain and Germany on September 3, 1939*, doc. No. 107, p. 166.

² For text of proclamation by the Nazi Gauleiter at Danzig, Albert Forster, see *ibid.*, doc. No. 108, p. 166.

³ In reply to telegraphic inquiry from the Department, the Consul at Danzig reported in telegrams of September 2, 4 p. m., and September 4, 3 p. m., that the notification was oral and that use of the words "state of war" was later disclaimed (740.0011 European War, 1939/141, 135).

to me and American colony. Also was told of Forster's proclamation of today's date that Danzig is a part of the Reich and all Danzig is ended except constitution remains in force.

KUYKENDALL

760C.62/1260 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Italy (Phillips) to the Secretary of State

ROME, September 1, 1939—11 a. m.

[Received September 1—7:25 a. m.]

355. I am informed that yesterday the Italian Government made another effort to avoid disaster. During the morning Ciano⁴ proposed to the British Ambassador the calling of a conference of various European powers including Poland to consider all the clauses of the Treaty of Versailles⁵ which are the cause of existing European friction. This suggestion was transmitted to London and through London to Paris. I learn from the British Embassy that no official reply has yet been given. Daladier⁶ is understood to have told Phipps⁷ that he personally is strongly opposed to such a conference.

PHILLIPS

740.0011 European War, 1939/1 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, September 1, 1939—1 p. m.

[Received September 1—8:40 a. m.]

1698. Bonnet⁸ has just stated to me that orders for French general mobilization will be given today. The Chamber of Deputies will meet tomorrow afternoon at 3 o'clock to declare war. Bonnet added that the British House of Commons will meet this afternoon at 6 o'clock for the same purpose.

Bonnet said, "It is war and all that we can do now is to be prudent and not bring in against us more enemies than necessary." He said that for his part he considered it wildly insane for any Frenchman to talk about attacking Italy because of the fear that after German armies should have overwhelmed Poland and should have been re-

⁴ Count Galeazzo Ciano di Cortellazzo, Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

⁵ Signed June 28, 1919, *Foreign Relations*, The Paris Peace Conference, 1919, vol. XIII, p. 55.

⁶ Édouard Daladier, President of the French Council of Ministers and Minister for National Defense.

⁷ Sir Eric Phipps, British Ambassador in France.

⁸ Georges Bonnet, French Minister for Foreign Affairs.

turned to the French frontier to attack France, Italy would join with Germany in attacking France.

He said that he had stated flatly to Daladier that he would resign at once if he should not be permitted to do everything humanly possible to maintain the position of neutrality which Italy had assumed.

He stated that he had the unanimous approval of the Council of Ministers for this policy.

As to war with Germany, Bonnet said that France had no choice: a ruthless and unprovoked attack had been launched by Germany on France's ally Poland; France must honor her obligations.

The Government has just announced the decision taken at this morning's Council of Ministers ordering general mobilization of all of France's land, sea and air forces and declaring a state of siege throughout France and Algeria.

BULLITT

740.0011 European War, 1939/40 : Telegram

The Minister in Yugoslavia (Lane) to the Secretary of State

BELGRADE, September 1, 1939—2 p. m.

[Received 3:05 p. m.]

232. I have just seen the Minister for Foreign Affairs⁹ who reports that except for the confirmation of the outbreak of hostilities between Germany and Poland he has no information from Paris, London or Rome.

He removed his diplomatic mask today for the first time and admitted that Germany had deliberately provoked war, that the German-Soviet pact¹⁰ would serve merely to increase the hatred against Germany in Europe and that in his opinion Italy would not enter the conflict. He said that the greatest desire of Yugoslavia at the present time is to keep Italy neutral as this in turn would enable Yugoslavia to maintain its neutrality.

I asked him about the shipment of 100 German airplanes across Yugoslav territory destined for Bulgaria. He denied that any had been sent and said that as the contract provided for the delivery within 6 weeks it was physically impossible to comply with the terms thereof. The Bulgarian Military Attaché confirms nonreceipt of airplanes by Bulgaria.

I also saw this morning the Minister of Commerce¹¹ who confirmed what I am told by all members of the Government that Serb-Croat

⁹ Aleksander Cincar-Markovich.

¹⁰ Signed August 23, 1939; for text, see Department of State, *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941* (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1948), p. 76. For correspondence, see pp. 312 ff.

¹¹ Ivan Andres.

accord has really succeeded in unifying the country and that it is unified now against a German aggression. I was especially impressed by the change of attitude in Cincar-Markovitch who for the first time did not pretend to be an advocate of the German cause.

Repeated to Paris.

LANE

740.0011 European War, 1939/9: Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, September 1, 1939—4 p. m.
[Received September 1—10:27 a. m.]

1349. The Cabinet has approved draft of a note which will be delivered to Germany this afternoon to the following effect: His Majesty's Government has received information that Germany has attacked Poland and unless it receives assurance from the German Government that hostile action against Poland has ceased, the obligations of Great Britain will come immediately into play.

The actual text of this note is being prepared in consultation with the French and I will cable you as soon as I receive word that it has been sent to Henderson.¹² Following delivery of this note, a second note is contemplated in which the ultimatum of a time limit will be laid down. The actual timing for this note has not been decided.

According to the Foreign Office Daladier has advised the British Government that it will be impossible for the French Chamber to be convoked until 3 o'clock tomorrow afternoon and that France cannot make a declaration of war until the Chamber meets. At the present moment, therefore, it appears unlikely that Great Britain will be able to make a declaration of war until tomorrow. They are anxious here closely to parallel French action, both in timing and form, and are desirous of avoiding giving any impression that Great Britain is dragging France into war. They wish rather to impress on the French public and on public opinion generally that Great Britain is backing her ally France and that the issue is not solely a question of British obligations to Poland.

Parliament is called for 6 this evening and statements will be made both by the Prime Minister¹³ and by the Foreign Secretary¹⁴ in the House of Lords.

KENNEDY

¹² Sir Neville Henderson, British Ambassador in Germany.

¹³ Neville Chamberlain.

¹⁴ Viscount Halifax.

740.0011 European War, 1939/15 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, September 1, 1939—5 p. m.
[Received September 1—11:55 a. m.]

1358. My 1349, September 1, 1 [4] p. m. Draft note to Germany has received final approval of Prime Minister and of the French and is now being despatched to Berlin.¹⁵

The Foreign Office states it should be in the hands of the German Government by 7:30 at the latest. The note, in addition to requesting assurances from the German Government that hostile action against Poland has ceased, demands that German military forces be withdrawn from Polish territory and that failing to receive a favorable reply His Majesty's Government will fully and immediately implement their obligations to Poland.

A second note containing a time ultimatum is now in preparation and it was stated at the Foreign Office will be despatched later today. The actual terms of this second note have not been finally settled.

KENNEDY

740.0011 European War, 1939/16 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, September 1, 1939—8 p. m.
[Received September 1—2 p. m.]

1365. My 1358, September 1, 5 p. m., last paragraph. The terms of the second note to Germany will depend, of course, on the nature of the German reply to the note already despatched and the Government has under consideration several alternatives. They naturally have in mind that Germany may make no reply at all, which is not improbable.

KENNEDY

740.0011 European War, 1939/37 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Italy (Phillips) to the Secretary of State

ROME, September 1, 1939—8 p. m.
[Received September 1—4:20 p. m.]

361. My No. 355, September 1, 11 a. m. The French Ambassador saw Ciano this morning at 11:30 and gave a favorable reply on behalf

¹⁵ See British Cmd. 6106, Misc. No. 9 (1939), doc. No. 110, p. 168.

of his Government to the proposal to call a conference of various European powers including Poland to consider the causes of existing European friction. The French Embassy is not hopeful that any result will be achieved through this action but considers that even the slightest opportunity to avert a complete catastrophe should not be missed. The Embassy staff is apparently ready to leave Italy at a moment's notice should Italy be finally drawn into the [war?].

PHILLIPS

740.0011 European War, 1939/31 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, September 1, 1939—8 p. m.

[Received September 1—4:53 p. m.]

999. I called on the Polish Ambassador this afternoon. He said that he believed that there had been no real intention on the part of the German Government and particularly of Ribbentrop¹⁶ to enter into direct negotiations with Poland with a view to reaching a settlement and stated that he had not even been furnished with the text of the German proposals for a basis for negotiations. Hitler, the Ambassador said, had decided to strike at the independence and territorial integrity of Poland and his speech in the Reichstag this morning¹⁷ could only be regarded as a declaration of war. The Ambassador added that he believed that Italy would remain neutral and that Soviet Russia would not involve itself extensively in a war.

KIRK

740.0011 European War, 1939/35 : Telegram

The Chargé in Hungary (Travers) to the Secretary of State

BUDAPEST, September 1, 1939—11 p. m.

[Received September 1—7:45 p. m.]

173. Conditions in Hungary calm and no great military movements visible. The Chief of the Political Section of the Foreign Office reiterated tonight to me that Hungary's hands are still free and that Hungary will never fight Poland. He envisages Hungary maintaining neutrality for some time to come and said it is probable that a strict censorship will soon be imposed in order to assist in maintaining that neutrality.

TRAVERS

¹⁶ Joachim von Ribbentrop, German Minister for Foreign Affairs.

¹⁷ British Cmd. 6106, Misc. No. 9 (1939), doc. No. 106, p. 161.

740.0011 European War, 1939/23 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, September 1, 1939—midnight.

[Received September 1—7:12 p. m.]

1368. My 1358, September 1, 5 p. m. Henderson delivered the note to Ribbentrop at 9:40. Ribbentrop said that he would transmit it to the head of the state and Henderson answered that he knew this must be so, but that he would gladly hold himself continually in readiness to see Herr Hitler or the Minister for Foreign Affairs at any hour. Ribbentrop remarked it was not Germany but Poland who had made aggression and that if Great Britain had been equally as assiduous with Poland as she had been with Germany, the difficulties would have been settled long ago. Henderson reports that an identic oral reply was given to the French Ambassador on delivery of the French note.¹⁸

Foreign Office reports from official sources bear out the view expressed by the War Office (my number 1366, September 1, 11 p. m.¹⁹) that reports of bombing of Polish towns have been exaggerated.

Lord Halifax was in consultation with the Prime Minister at 11:30 o'clock and decision as to despatch of the second note referred to in my telegram 1365, September 1, 8 p. m. is still suspended. There is no indication whether Hitler will reply to the note delivered this evening to Ribbentrop and if so when.

KENNEDY

761.6211/165 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, September 2, 1939—11 a. m.

[Received 9:50 p. m.]

1720. The permanent officials of the French Foreign Office are of the opinion this morning that the announcement in Berlin yesterday that a Soviet military mission will reach Berlin today²⁰ is probably the beginning of a last and dangerous diplomatic maneuver to achieve the enslavement of Poland without serious war.

Their analysis of the situation is the following.

The French Foreign Office expects that today in Berlin a military alliance between Germany and the Soviet Union will be announced.

¹⁸ See the French Yellow Book, Diplomatic Documents (1938-1939), *Papers relative to the events and negotiations which preceded the opening of hostilities between Germany on the one hand, and Poland, Great Britain and France on the other* (New York, Reynal & Hitchcock), doc. No. 344, p. 376

¹⁹ Not printed; it reported German mobilization, bombings and troop movements, and Polish and British mobilization (740.0011 European War, 1939/22).

²⁰ See pp. 477 ff.

Hitler's attack against Poland was serious in exactly the regions that he most desires to annex, Danzig, the Corridor and Polish Silesia. At other points the attack was not pushed with the intensity that the Poles anticipated (this is confirmed to me by the Polish Ambassador).

The French Foreign Office is of the opinion that Hitler will seize these regions, will announce a military alliance with the Soviet Union, that Mussolini will then propose a conference for the settlement of the war between Germany and Poland and the general liquidation of the Treaty of Versailles.

The communication exchanged with the Italian Government by the French Government yesterday was a polite note of thanks for the Duce's efforts to preserve peace, an expression of regret that the entry of German forces into Poland had made the Duce's efforts fruitless and an expression of French readiness to hear any further proposals that Mussolini might have to offer.

You will have noted that no time limit was mentioned by either the British Ambassador or the French Ambassador when they made their *démarche* in Berlin yesterday and asked for the withdrawal of German troops from Poland or the return of their passports.

Ribbentrop replied that he would have to consult the Fuehrer and it is believed that Germany will attempt to delay a definite reply until the announcement of the alliance with the Soviet Union, a further proposal by Mussolini, and the occupation by Germany of the portions of Poland Hitler wants most.

It is obvious to every one in France that if such a proposal should be made by Mussolini the French and British Governments ought to reply that they would be prepared to enter a conference only after the complete evacuation of the Polish territory seized by Germany.

It is also obvious that an end could be put to this maneuver by the immediate demand of the French and British Ambassadors in Berlin for a reply within an hour to the *démarche* of yesterday, to be followed by attack on Germany.

It is also obvious that if Poland should be let down at this moment by France and England, when she is engaged in defending her soil there would be no further resistance by any state in central or eastern Europe to German aggression; and Germany after organizing all these states would attack France and England with the greatest chance of success.

It is further obvious the abandonment of Poland would in that case be a mortal blow at the morale of the peoples of France and England which is today extremely high and honorable.

Under the circumstances it will no doubt seem strange to you that the French and British Governments have not taken more rapid action to come to the support of their Polish ally. The excuse given

in Paris is that the Chamber of Deputies could not meet for physical reasons until 3 this afternoon and that an ultimatum to Germany to be presented by the French and British Ambassadors in Berlin could not be delivered until after the meeting of the Chamber of Deputies.

The fact is that certain prominent French statesmen whom I refrain from mentioning as I have refrained from mentioning names in giving you the views of the permanent officials of the Foreign Office, are so afraid of facing war at the present moment that they would be willing to arrive at a compromise which would give Hitler the substance of his 16 demands of August 31.²¹ A number of prominent members of the French Chamber of Deputies and Senate who work in close contact with these Government officials are also inclined at heart to abandon Poland.

Daladier and the military leaders on the other hand are fully determined to fulfill to the full the obligations of France to Poland and the entire population of France is facing war with a resolute courage that is beyond praise.

Chamberlain's speech yesterday will make any betrayal of the Poles by the British extraordinarily difficult.

The decision of the French Government in spite of the point of view of some of its members will in the end prove to be firm and honorable both because of the point of honor involved and because of the complete realization that if Poland should be abandoned it would be the turn of France next. Those who wish to give in have no policy except that of submitting to enslavement and I cannot believe that they will be able to conceal this issue from the people of France, and by weasel actions draw their country into a position which in the end necessarily would be fatal. The alternative may in the end prove to be fatal but at least it offers a fighting chance.

BULLITT

740.0011 European War, 1939/53 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Italy (Phillips) to the Secretary of State

ROME, September 2, 1939—noon.

[Received September 2—9:50 a. m.]

362. My telegram No. 355, September 1, 11 a. m. The British Ambassador²² yesterday delivered his Government's reply to Ciano's proposal for a conference which was to the effect that his suggestion was much appreciated by the British Government but that in view of

²¹ For text of the 16 demands, see British Cmd. 6106, Misc. No. 9 (1939), doc. No. 98, p. 149.

²² Sir Percy Loraine.

Germany's action against Poland there seems to be nothing to be gained by holding such a conference.

I learn that on Thursday evening Ciano told Loraine in great earnestness that Italy did not want to go to war with Great Britain and France. He made a similar declaration although in less emphatic terms to the French Ambassador yesterday afternoon.

It is my personal conviction that the Italian Government will try very hard to keep out of war as long as possible, even in the event of British and French intervention against Germany and it seems not unlikely that Mussolini is looking to France and Great Britain to help him find a way out.

The British Embassy here seems very hopeful that Italy will remain neutral.

Repeated to Paris, London.

PHILLIPS

740.0011 European War, 1939/51: Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, September 2, 1939—2 p. m.

[Received 11:10 p. m.]

1726. Reference my rush 1720, September 2, 11 a. m. This morning at 10 o'clock the Polish Ambassador called on Bonnet and stated to him that Germany had attacked Poland yesterday, that the Polish Army was engaged in resisting the aggression and that the French alliance with Poland²³ obliged France to give immediate and automatic military assistance to Poland. He then asked Bonnet when this assistance would be given and specifically when the French Ambassador in Berlin would be instructed to demand of the German Government in ultimatum form an answer to his *démarche* of yesterday.

Bonnet replied that there could be no question of putting the matter in ultimatum form until after the meeting of the Chamber of Deputies this afternoon and that he thought that then the German Government would be given 48 hours in which to reply.

The Polish Ambassador answered that the French engagement to support Poland with military force was automatic, that this should not be a question of a further delay of 48 hours with all its consequences but should be a matter of a half hour. Bonnet replied that he was in consultation with the British Government and that he could do nothing until after the meeting of the Chamber of Deputies this afternoon.

²³ Treaty of Locarno, signed October 16, 1925, League of Nations Treaty Series, vol. LIV, p. 353.

The Polish Ambassador then immediately wrote a note to Daladier which he took personally to Daladier's office at 12:15 and handed personally to Daladier.

I have read the note. It cites the conversation that the Polish Ambassador had with Bonnet this morning and then goes on to say that Polish troops are engaged in defending the soil of Poland, that France's obligation to support Poland is unneutral [*automatic?*] and expresses the complete confidence of the Polish Government that the French Government will honor this obligation at once.

Daladier read the note and replied that he had no information whatsoever, that Bonnet was engaged in delaying the presentation of an ultimatum to Germany. He had merely been informed last night that the question was under discussion with the British and would be decided immediately.

The Polish Ambassador informed him that last night the British Government had informed the French Government that it believed the British and French Ambassadors in Berlin should demand an immediate reply to their *démarches* and that Bonnet had promised an answer to the British but had not yet given one. The Polish Ambassador stated further that from the Polish Ambassador in London he had received the information that the British Government was intensely disturbed by the delays of the French Government.

Daladier replied that "It is clear that in spite of all reverence for warnings that box (meaning the Quai d'Orsay) has not yet learned its duty". He then said to the Polish Ambassador that he would send for Bonnet at once and would take the direction of foreign affairs into his own hands.

The Polish Ambassador then went on to say that he had already communicated to the Polish Government what Bonnet had said to him this morning. He trusted that Daladier would not leave the Polish Government any longer in doubt as to the real intentions of France. Daladier replied that he thought an end should be made of delays, and slippery conversations and that action should be taken immediately.

The Polish Ambassador was completely satisfied by these words but not altogether reassured by the manner in which they were pronounced. My own opinion is that Daladier will take action.

It has been impossible for either the Polish Embassy in Paris, the French Government or this Mission to establish contact with Warsaw today.

740.0011 European War, 1939/63 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, September 2, 1939—8 p. m.
[Received September 2—6: 45 p. m.]

1744. After the vote of the war credits by the Chamber of Deputies this afternoon the Polish Ambassador called on Bonnet and asked if now that constitutional requirements were satisfied the French Government intended to order the French Ambassador in Berlin to demand an immediate reply to his *démarche* of yesterday.

Bonnet replied that such a question would have to be taken up at a Cabinet meeting, that there might be a Cabinet meeting tonight or there might be one tomorrow; that after the Cabinet meeting an ultimatum of 48 hours probably would be sent to Germany.

The Polish Ambassador thereupon lost his temper and told Bonnet exactly what he thought of him and insisted on an immediate ultimatum to Germany pointing out that every hour that France delayed attacking Germany meant further unimpeded attacks of the German air force on Polish civilian populations and the deaths of thousands of Polish men, women and children.²⁴

The Polish Ambassador in Paris has been unable to see Daladier again and the Polish Ambassador in London has been unable to see Chamberlain. It is the belief of both Ambassadors that Daladier and Chamberlain still hope that a new Italian proposal may halt the German attack against Poland and that Poland may in the end have to fight alone since Poland will not stop fighting so long as the foot of a German soldier is on Polish soil.

I consider this an exaggerated and rather hysterical view of the present situation. It seems to me that both Daladier and Chamberlain are anxious not to declare war until another Italian proposal shall have been made but I do not believe that public opinion in either country would permit them to agree to discuss it until German armies had left Polish soil and I think their own views are those of public opinion.

Daladier already has called a Cabinet meeting which is now in session. The French naturally are anxious to complete their general mobilization before attacking Germany and they are also anxious to evacuate all women and children from Paris and other cities since they have no confidence in Hitler's promise not to bombard civilian populations.

BULLITT

²⁴ See pp. 541 ff.

740.0011 European War, 1939/69½ : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, September 2, 1939—10 p. m.
[Received September 2—7:03 p. m.]

1746. I have just been informed that at the Council of Ministers this evening it was decided to propose to the British Government that the British and French Ambassadors in Berlin should be instructed tonight to call at the German Foreign Office tomorrow morning and state that they could not wait longer than 7 o'clock tomorrow evening for a reply to their *démarches* of yesterday.

If the British Government should agree to the proposal of the French Government we may therefore expect Germany to be at war with France and England tomorrow, Sunday night.

BULLITT

740.0011 European War, 1939/61 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, September 3, 1939—9 a. m.
[Received September 3—4:28 a. m.]

1024. The British Ambassador has just delivered to the Chef de Cabinet of Ribbentrop a note dated September 3 addressed to the Minister for Foreign Affairs²⁵ in the following sense.

In the communication from the British Ambassador to the German Minister for Foreign Affairs on September 1, the German Government was informed that unless the German Government was prepared to give the British Government satisfactory assurances that the German Government had suspended all aggressive action against Poland and were prepared promptly to withdraw their forces from Polish territory the British Government would without hesitation fulfill their obligations to Poland. The note continues that although this communication was made more than 24 hours ago no reply has been received but German attacks upon Poland have been continued and intensified. Unless, therefore, not later than 11 a. m. British summer time today, September 3, satisfactory assurances to the above effect have been given by the German Government and have reached the British Government in London a state of war will exist between the two countries as from that hour.

I understand that the French Ambassador will deliver a similar communication at noon today although in the French note there may be a time limit set of 6 or 9 hours.

KIRK

²⁵ British Cmd. 6106, Misc. No. 9 (1939), doc. No. 118, p. 175.

740.0011 European War, 1939/64 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, September 3, 1939—10 a. m.

[Received September 3—5:10 a. m.]

1748. The British Government has just announced that a state of war will exist between Great Britain and Germany at 11 o'clock this morning. It had been agreed that the French and British Governments should act together in presenting ultimatum in Berlin before noon today to take effect this evening. The French Government believes that the British Government took action this morning because of the attitude of the House of Commons yesterday. The French Ambassador in Berlin will present an ultimatum to the German Foreign Office before noon today and France as well as Great Britain will be at war with Germany before the close of the day. I reported this information to the White House by telephone before writing this message.

BULLITT

740.0011 European War, 1939/88 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, September 3, 1939—noon.

[Received 2:42 p. m.]

1031. My 1024, September 3, 9 a. m. The French Ambassador has just left for the Foreign Office to present a note to Ribbentrop²⁶ stating that inasmuch as the German Government has not replied to the French note of September 1 the French Government will take steps as of 5 o'clock this afternoon to fulfill its agreement with Poland. Fuller statement of note follows.

KIRK

740.0011 European War, 1939/95 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, September 3, 1939—noon.

[Received 3:57 p. m.]

1030. My 1029, September 3, noon.²⁷ Ribbentrop delivered to Henderson a lengthy note refusing the British demands.²⁸ The note

²⁶ The French Yellow Book, doc. No. 367, p. 400.

²⁷ Not printed; it reported that Ribbentrop had sent for the British Ambassador at 11:14 a. m. (740.0011 European War, 1939/94).

²⁸ British Cmd. 6106, Misc. No. 9 (1939), doc. No. 119, p. 175.

which has not yet been translated places the blame entirely on British shoulders and contains a lengthy justification of the German position.

KIRK

740.0011 European War, 1939/84 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Italy (Phillips) to the Secretary of State

ROME, September 3, 1939—4 p. m.

[Received September 3—11 : 34 a. m.]

365. Loraine has given me a detailed account of the various steps which have been taken here by the Italian Government and by him during the last few days in an effort to prevent the present tragedy and after securing the consent of his Government he will give me a copy of a memorandum on the subject.²⁹ In this connection he mentioned a further proposal which Mussolini made through Ciano to him and to the French Ambassador at noon yesterday which called for an armistice between the German and Polish armies to be followed by a conference of all the powers concerned. The Italian proposals were presented simultaneously to the German Government in Berlin and this accounted for the delay of the British Government in carrying out its pledges to Poland.

PHILLIPS

740.0011 European War, 1939/91 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Italy (Phillips) to the Secretary of State

ROME, September 3, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received September 3—4 : 51 p. m.]

366. My telegram No. 362, September 2, noon. While both British and French Ambassadors have received Ciano's assurances that the Italian Government does not wish to go to war with either of their countries, the situation here is nevertheless very delicate. As indicative of Ciano's anxiety to prevent any such danger, he has begged the French Ambassador to do his utmost to keep the French press from attacks on Italy and from saying anything which might annoy the authorities here. Loraine feels that Ciano himself has undergone a change in his former pro-German attitude and it may well be that the tragic development[s] of the last few days have shocked and disturbed him as they have the whole of Italy. Perhaps we should not expect any official change in the Italian position, as already announced, until the respective positions among the belligerents is more clearly defined. But I have the impression that Italian public opinion, so

²⁹ Not found in Department files.

hostile to war, is having a deciding influence on the Government's present and future attitude and this perhaps for the first time in years.

It is too early to guess from this angle the steps which the British and French may take to preserve Italy's neutrality. The question of blockade is uppermost in Loraine's thoughts and he has confessed to me that in his opinion any move of the Allied Powers, such as a blockade in the Mediterranean which would result in the stopping and examination of Italian vessels, might swing Italian sentiment in the wrong direction. He argues that Italy and other Mediterranean countries have few supplies to give Germany and that few countries outside would be willing to do so, except on a cash basis, impossible for Italy. Nothing should be done, says Loraine, to antagonize Italy but on the contrary, everything should be done to take advantage of the present attitude of the public and of Ciano's apparent revulsion of feeling against Germany in the hope that gradually Italy may be drawn into closer relations with the Allied Governments.

PHILLIPS

740.0011 European War, 1939/161

The Spanish Chargé (De Silva) to the Secretary of State

MEMORANDUM

[Translation]

His Excellency the Chief of the Spanish Government has made public the following appeal.³⁰

With the authority which is given me by the fact of having suffered during three years the burden of a war for the liberation of our country I address myself to the Governments in whose hands lies the responsibility for releasing a catastrophe without precedent in history, in order that they may avoid for their peoples the sufferings and tragedies which befell the Spanish people notwithstanding the voluntary limitation upon the use of methods of destruction, horrors which would be multiplied a hundredfold in a new war. It is a great responsibility to extend the conflict to seas and places distant from the actual scene of the war without an imperious reason to justify it. Its extension without benefit to the belligerents would produce intense and insuperable disturbance of the economy of the world, incalculable losses in its riches, paralyzation of its commerce, with grave repercussions in the standard of life of the humbler classes. The more the conflict is extended the more the germ of future wars is sown. In these circumstances I appeal to the common sense and the responsibility of the rulers of the nations in order to direct the efforts of all toward the localization of the present conflict.

WASHINGTON, September 4, 1939.

³⁰ Text of radio appeal by General Francisco Franco Bahamonde.

740.0011 European War, 1939/53 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, September 4, 1939—5 p. m.
 [Received September 4—2:23 p. m.]

1772. I have just talked with Leger³¹ about the general political situation.

It is his opinion that Italy will remain neutral provided France and England show that they are absolutely determined to carry on this war without flinching until Hitler and Hitlerism have been destroyed.

He believes that if, on the contrary, there is any inclination in either France or England to make peace at the expense of Poland, Italy will at once demand a pound of flesh under the threat of war.

Leger believes that the Soviet Union will not attack Poland if Poland continues to be able to put up a stiff resistance to Germany but if Polish resistance to Germany should collapse, the Soviet Union, in his opinion, would seize eastern Poland as far as the River Bug, as well as the Baltic States.

BULLITT

740.0011 European War, 1939/161

The Secretary of State to the Spanish Chargé (De Silva)

WASHINGTON, September 5, 1939.

MY DEAR MR. CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES: I have received and have read with deep interest the moving appeal which has been addressed by the Chief of the Spanish Government to governments of other nations calling upon them to use all their efforts to prevent the extension of the present unfortunate conflict in Europe.

The Government of the United States is in accord with the sentiments expressed in the message of the Chief of the Spanish Government, and fully shares the conviction that extension of the present conflict is bound to result in untold suffering for the innocent populations of the countries which may become involved, as well as for the people of other nations. My Government is profoundly convinced that resort to force or the threat of force in an attempt to settle disputes between nations or to impose a solution on a basis of aggression can never be morally or materially justified. For this reason the Government of the United States welcomes the initiative of the Chief of the Spanish State and for its part stands prepared to use all of its influence in the future as it has in the past for the restoration and the maintenance of peace between nations.

I am [etc.]

CORDELL HULL

³¹ Alexis Léger, Secretary General of the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

740.0011 European War, 1939/166 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, September 6, 1939—3 p. m.
[Received September 6—10:40 a. m.]

514. I am reliably informed that in a recent interview between the Polish Ambassador and Molotov³² the latter expressed surprise that England and France had actually declared war on Germany.

I also understand that although the Polish Ambassador endeavored to obtain from Molotov a clarification of the Soviet attitude towards the Polish-German conflict Molotov was non-committal and evasive.

STEINHARDT

740.0011 European War, 1939/204 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, September 7, 1939—2 p. m.
[Received September 7—1:13 p. m.]

1824. Leger said to me this morning that the Soviet Embassy in Paris had packed all its archives and made all preparations to leave Paris immediately in anticipation of an attack by the Red Army on Poland.

Furthermore, in spite of the fact that the Soviet Government a few days ago had offered to send supplies to the Polish Government yesterday when the Polish Government had asked for supplies, the Soviet Government had refused definitely to send them. Furthermore, the Soviet Government was mobilizing troops at strategic points for an invasion of Poland.

Leger stated that he considered it of the utmost importance to prevent the Soviet Union from attacking Poland.

If this attack should take place Polish resistance to Germany would collapse at once. Germany would be in a position to propose peace to France and England with the Soviet Government as ally; Poland destroyed; and Italy as a potential ally.

It was absolutely certain that even under these circumstances France and England would continue to fight but it was extremely difficult to convince any foreign nation that this was so.

A further consequence of the Soviet Union attacking Poland, which would mean war also with France and England, would be that Japan would no longer fear action of the Soviet Union in Far East and would feel free to take immediate action against France and England in the Far East.

³² Vyacheslav M. Molotov, Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the Soviet Union.

Leger went on to say that he hoped the Government of the United States could convey in some way to the Soviet Government its absolute knowledge that France and England intended to go on fighting whether or not Poland should be overrun in the near future and that France and England would consider an attack by the Soviet Union on Poland an act of war against France and England.

I venture to suggest that you might think it worth while to say some word on this subject to the Soviet Chargé d'Affaires in Washington.

Incidentally if the Soviet Union at this moment should attack Poland the Government of the United States might no longer be interested in maintaining relations with a government so entirely dishonorable.

BULLITT

740.0011 European War, 1939/210 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Italy (Phillips) to the Secretary of State

ROME, September 8, 1939—11 a. m.

[Received September 8—8:40 a. m.]

384. There is a widespread belief, expressions of which have been coming to us from many quarters, that a secret understanding was entered into between Germany and Italy coincident with the signing of the military alliance³³ and that this understanding was to the effect that neither of the two parties was obligated to go to war in support of the other if the latter engaged in war within a period of 3 years.

Our efforts to verify the existence of any such understanding have thus far been unsuccessful. However, we learned yesterday from the British Embassy that it had obtained confirmatory information from sources which it considered reliable.

PHILLIPS

740.0011 European War, 1939/239 : Telegram

The Minister in Yugoslavia (Lane) to the Secretary of State

BELGRADE, September 9, 1939—noon.

[Received 4:05 p. m.]

259. The following developments are in our opinion noteworthy in showing that Yugoslavia definitely does not expect to be on the German side and that Germany likewise considers Yugoslavia to be virtually on the other side.

1. A reliable official source confirmed today that the Yugoslav authorities have been holding up wheat and corn shipments to Germany

³³ Signed at Berlin May 22, 1939, Martens, *Recueil de Traités*, vol. 133, p. 323.

because of German failure to make deliveries of Skoda armament according to contract. The informant stated that he fears the Germans would consider further Yugoslav refusal to make delivery "as an unfriendly act" intimating that the matter "would be settled this afternoon".

2. The Standard Oil Company of New Jersey has been informed that it will be granted concession for petroleum exploration.

3. Although Germany is furnishing arms, ammunition and airplanes to Bulgaria nothing is being furnished to Yugoslavia.

4. The press this morning requests the public not to disseminate alarming rumors. No mention is made of specific rumors already circulated but it is believed that reference is made to rumor that general mobilization has begun and that there is danger of attack from Italy. Mobilization continues at fairly rapid rate and has now reached estimated strength of 500,000. Mobilization of active divisions of first, third and fourth armies is nearing completion, the first and the fourth armies have installed covering forces along the entire northern frontier from Rumania to the Adriatic.

5. Preliminary work on organization of additional reserve divisions is now in progress.

6. The Chief of Yugoslav Military Intelligence Division in an interview with our Military Attaché this morning stated that he felt there was increasing possibility of Poland being completely routed within 5 or 6 days and that following the defeat of Poland Yugoslavia might very readily be directly threatened, if not attacked. He could not understand why more effective action had not been taken by France and England to relieve the pressure on Poland and feared that any contemplated action would arrive too late. Furthermore he indicated quite clearly that Yugoslavia was taking every means possible to defend itself against a sudden attack.

7. The outward quiet and a noteworthy lack of information regarding the general situation belies a deep-seated nervousness on the part of the civilian population.

LANE

740.0011 European War, 1939/258 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

[Extracts]

LONDON, September 11, 1939—2 p. m.
[Received September 11—12: 32 p. m.]

1578. Personal for the President and Secretary. I spent an hour with the King and Queen alone yesterday and three quarters of an

hour with Sir Samuel Hoare³⁴ this morning in my office. From my conversation with the King it became very apparent to me that the one problem he is worried desperately about is that within a comparatively short time, possibly 3 or 4 weeks, Hitler will have cleaned up Poland and will then definitely make a proposition to Great Britain and France to call this war off and come to some agreement. I will discuss this problem later in this [telegram?] as a result of my conversation with Sir Samuel Hoare.

Sir Samuel Hoare, as I said, called this morning and we had a long talk. He definitely believes that the most serious thing facing the world today will be the proposition he feels will unquestionably come within a month or 6 weeks from Germany to England to give up the struggle. He sizes the situation up in this way: Neither the French nor the Germans can make any appreciable headway against each other. He said that the French advance now is almost like the Lancers—three steps forward and three steps back; that it is extremely unlikely, except at the cost of an incredible massacre, that either side could break through either line. The navy, of course, can patrol the seas but the results of this will not be felt acutely for some time to come. In the meantime then, there is nothing left but air war. He said that at the minute Germany outnumbers in bombers the British two to one, although he feels the British outnumber the Germans in fighters; that it will be a struggle in the air to see whose morale will break first. The British have despatched practically all their bombers to France but are still keeping them under English command. The problem Hoare feels, will arise from a condition something like this: After the French have had a number of casualties they will demand that the British bombers bomb the Ruhr and other places. The minute that starts, women and children are bound to be killed even though British airmen would be under the strictest orders not to do anything of the kind; immediately that would call for reprisals and in spite of all England's defenses, Germany is in a position to make these reprisals most serious.

The General Staff feel definitely that the only method of countering German attacks is to keep sending their bombers in to attack the Germans and since their number is very limited it is a question whether they will last very long. In the meantime, the Germans will attack the various factories here and even though direct hits are not made, they will so interfere with production by constant air raid attacks that it is extremely unlikely that a number of bombers can be turned out to fill in the terrific losses. This will be the case if they obey

³⁴ British Lord Privy Seal.

France's suggestion of sending the bombers in. If, believing as they do that the bombers must be saved until they arrive at greater capacity and until they get a greater number, the French become restless and say "why fight any longer to save Great Britain?"

Now, Hoare knows that for any party here to consider any kind of an appointment with Germany would, of necessity at the minute result in having the party thrown out of power and I rather got the impression from Hoare this morning that it is not at all inconceivable that this party may make that an issue. It was not what he said; it was the inference I drew. Lord Trenchard,³⁵ whom they all regard here very highly, feels that if they send English bombers into German territory, the German morale would break quickly and go to pieces much faster than the British. Of course that is a gamble that may have to be taken, but I am of the opinion that the War Cabinet at the moment do not feel justified in taking that risk.

Hoare was responsible for the statement given out on Saturday night that the British regard this as a 3-year war, in order to keep their morale stiffened up and not let any disquieting criticism of the Government's policy get started too strongly. I could judge from talking with the King on Saturday that this matter is one that is giving the Government an unholy worry. They realize that a continuation of a war or the maintenance of a Government on a war basis means complete economic, financial and social collapse and nothing will be saved after the war is over. On the other hand, calling the war off would give Hitler such increased prestige that it is a question of how far that would carry him. The King and Hoare recognize the very grave danger that the French may feel the British are not making contribution comparable to theirs and may start to get sick of the war even though their courage and determination at the moment is very strong. He told me in passing that he understood Bonnet was going to be thrown out in France.

I thought this information would be very valuable to you in making up your minds as to your course of action. It seems to me that this situation may crystalize to a point where the President can be the savior of the world. The British Government as such certainly cannot accept any agreement with Hitler, but there may be a point when the President himself may work out the plans for world peace. Now this opportunity may never arise, but, as a fairly practical fellow all my life, I believe that it is entirely conceivable that the President can get himself in a spot where he can save the world and I have not thought so up to this minute.

If the war continues and air raids between the two countries continue, it is, of course, conceivable that at that time Italy or Russia

³⁵ Hugh Trenchard, Marshal of the British Royal Air Force.

or other countries may see fit to get in and then the situation might become hopeless.

I am passing this on because I think that beyond all other questions of importance in the world, this is one that the President should be thinking about to work out in his own mind what might be done at the psychological moment not to increase Hitler's prestige but possibly to bring the whole world on a peace basis.

KENNEDY

740.0011 European War, 1939/258 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom
(Kennedy)*

WASHINGTON, September 11, 1939—4 p. m.

905. Personal for the Ambassador. Your 1578, September 11, 2 p. m. The President desires me to inform you, for your strictly confidential information and so that you may be guided thereby without divulging this message to any one, that this Government, so long as present European conditions continue, sees no opportunity nor occasion for any peace move to be initiated by the President of the United States. The people of the United States would not support any move for peace initiated by this Government that would consolidate or make possible a survival of a regime of force and of aggression.

HULL

740.0011 European War, 1939/284 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, September 13, 1939—3 p. m.

[Received September 13—1:35 p. m.]

1942. For the President and the Secretary: Daladier lunched with me alone today. His conversation with Chamberlain yesterday dealt with the problems of conducting the war in Europe. The Far East was not mentioned.

Daladier suggested to Chamberlain British aviation should be used to bomb military objectives in Germany including the Rhine bridges. Chamberlain flatly refused to consider the use of British bombardment planes against Germany at the present time stating that he did not wish to provoke German bombardments of Great Britain and especially of British aeroplane factories which at the moment were turning out a great many machines. He was also apprehensive of

the effect of any British bombardment of military objectives in Germany on public opinion in the United States.

Daladier argued that this attitude on the part of Great Britain left the German air force free to bombard Poland at will. Chamberlain expressed the opinion that Poland was lost in any case.

Daladier did not agree with this opinion and told Chamberlain that he would send further French aeroplanes and tanks via Rumania in support of Poland. He has already given orders for these to be shipped at once.

Daladier was satisfied in the highest degree by the success of the French attacks in the Saar district.

Chamberlain assured Daladier that the German submarine warfare against British vessels was extraordinarily ineffective compared to the German submarine warfare at the outset of the war in 1914.

The question of Italy was discussed and the conclusion was reached that it was impossible to be certain of Italy's intentions since, in spite of the hostility to war of at least nine-tenths of the Italian people, Mussolini remained among the tenth who desired to enter war on the side of Germany. No offers in the nature of bribes will be made to Italy and on the other hand no threats will be made against Italy. In other words, a wait and see policy will be adopted in respect of Italy.

Daladier said that he felt the position of Italy would be determined largely by the action of the Congress of the United States in respect of the Neutrality Act.³⁶ If the embargo against shipment of arms and munitions should be lifted quickly Italy would continue to remain neutral and finally would fight on the side of France and England. If, on the other hand, the change in the Neutrality Act should be greatly delayed or refused by the Congress, Italy might come into the war on the side of Germany.

[Here follows information regarding proposed changes in the French Cabinet.]

I trust that you approve of my not reporting in advance such events as the flight of Prime Minister Chamberlain to France. I recall the sinking of the *Hampshire* with Field Marshal Kitchener³⁷ and believe that we cannot be too careful about giving advance information of such voyages.

BULLITT

³⁶ H. J. Res. 306, approved November 4, 1939; 54 Stat. 4. For correspondence, see pp. 656 ff.

³⁷ Lord Kitchener, British Secretary of State for War, was lost while going on a secret mission to Russia when H. M. S. *Hampshire* was torpedoed off the Orkney Islands on June 5, 1916.

740.0011 European War, 1939/312 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, September 15, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received September 15—2 p. m.]

1666. Personal for the Secretary. I just had lunch with Hore-Belisha³⁸ alone at his house. He is a very blue individual. First of all, as he is by far the youngest man in the Cabinet, he thinks that the older men in the Cabinet spend all their time worrying about the wording of communiqués instead of getting the country marshaled for a great war. He is also blue about the outlook. He said the news from Poland today is that the Poles are completely defeated; that within 2 or 3 days they will be trying to get over the borders of Rumania, Hungary and Russia, principally Rumania. He said they think that Hitler will then say that he cannot have the Polish Army in Rumania and that he will push on to Rumania and be there before anybody wakes up to the fact. Belisha says Hitler's plan then will be to ask Bulgaria what she proposes to do and Bulgaria will very likely go in on the side of the Germans. Hitler having arrived at this position, Belisha thinks that his next move is to make a proposition to Turkey and offer Turkey vast holdings in Syria and Iraq, et cetera, and he believes that the Turks will accept.

He said when the British originally talked with the Turks they anticipated Italy's being hostile and for that reason Turkey imagined that she could get herself a pretty good deal, but now, with the British trying to be friendly with Italy, the Turks have become rather difficult.

So the situation looks very serious. In fact, Belisha said it would not at all surprise him if they finally come to arms with the Germans in Palestine. As to the western front, he said he does not concede France the slightest chance of breaking through the Siegfried line. He thinks that Germany, if it gets on its way, with force of numbers will definitely go through Belgium and turn the Maginot line. He is thoroughly convinced that, with the number of men Germany can call upon, France and England are in no shape to cope with her.

What disturbs him more than anything else of course is whether or not Britain can buy from the United States, because he says if they don't get the right to purchase from us it is all over as far as Great Britain is concerned; but then, if they have the right he does not know how long they would be able to pay for what they need. He sees no possibility of being able to pay very long. The great immediate danger is that if the United States takes a position against any change in the Neutrality Act Italy, Russia and Turkey will make up their

³⁸ Leslie Hore-Belisha, British Secretary of State for War.

minds that England cannot win and will hurry to get on the German bandwagon.

He feels that England still does not take this thing seriously enough and that there should be mobilization of all men possible in England and women should go into industry and industry should be definitely taken over by the Government. He said the war is being carried on on a make-believe basis.

I asked him about the air force and he said Gamelin³⁹ said he did not want to use the allied air forces in Poland. I asked him also if he was surprised at the speed with which Poland had collapsed and he said that Gamelin had told the British staff he thought the Poles could hold out 3 months. The Germans had given the British to understand that Poland could hold out 3 days. Since they have held out about 12 days the Germans were nearer right.

There is not much incentive to hand us any propaganda as to whether they are strong or weak, because they have not the slightest idea what the reaction will be. If they tell us Britain is weak we may decide we do not want any part of it and the best thing to do is to keep out; if they tell us Britain is strong we may say that they do not need our help and therefore we can stay out very nicely, so Hore-Belisha's slant which I have given you here is probably the picture just as they see it. They have great confidence that they will stick, but I don't think they are any too optimistic about the results.

KENNEDY

740.0011 European War, 1939/332 : Telegram

The Minister in Rumania (Gunther) to the Secretary of State

BUCHAREST, September 16, 1939—9 a. m.

[Received 1:45 p. m.]

198. Following from Biddle: ⁴⁰

"Series Z3. September 14, 6 p. m. My confidential conversation with Beck⁴¹ yesterday morning reveals following: (a) Germans had destroyed almost all Polish war industry; (b) situation now extremely difficult, nevertheless Beck joined Marshal Smigly-Rydz⁴² in emphasizing that Polish Army would defend even the last foot of Polish soil; (c) impression rapidly gaining ground among military and other official circles that Great Britain and France are staging more of a demonstration than a serious attack; (d) Beck's current reports indicate that official circles in London and Paris state that

³⁹ Gen. Maurice Gamelin, Commander in Chief of the French Army.

⁴⁰ Anthony J. Drexel Biddle, Jr., American Ambassador to Poland. For correspondence concerning the evacuation from Poland of the American Mission, see vol. II, section entitled "Evacuation of the American Embassy Staff . . ." under Poland.

⁴¹ Józef Beck, Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs.

⁴² Marshal Edward Smigly-Rydz, Inspector General of the Polish Army.

British and French planes hesitate to bomb German railways, other communications, power plants and war industry centers because of potential effect on American public opinion (another ranking army officer interjected that if the French and British hesitated to bombard along these lines why did they not send airplanes for Polish pilots to carry out the disagreeable task. For the latter it would be a case of justified retaliation). Beck concluded by emphasizing that this was a dramatic moment for Poland—perhaps a matter even of Poland's life or death.

I discern that both the Foreign Minister and the Marshal feel that if the French and British do not embark immediately upon a major shock attack it may spell the end of Poland."

GUNTHER

II. INTERVENTION OF THE SOVIET UNION IN POLAND, SEPTEMBER 17, 1939, AND SPECULATION AS TO FURTHER SPREAD OF THE WAR

740.0011 European War 1939/333 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, September 17, 1939—7 a. m.

[Received September 17—2:15 a. m.]

550. I am reliably but unofficially informed that under the guise of "restoring order and protecting" the Ukrainians and White Russian minorities Soviet troops entered Eastern Poland along entire frontier operating from Polotsk in White Russia to Kanenets-Podolsk in the Ukraine this morning at dawn.

Please repeat to War Department.

Repeated to Riga.

STEINHARDT

740.0011 European War 1939/346 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, September 17, 1939—9 a. m.

[Received 11:42 a. m.]

551. My 550, September 17, 7 p. m. [a. m.]. I received at 8:45 Moscow time this morning the following note signed by Molotov enclosing a copy of a note dated today addressed to the Polish Ambassador here:

Mr. Ambassador: In transmitting to you the enclosed note dated September 17, 1939 of the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics addressed to the Polish Ambassador in Moscow, I have the honor under instructions from my Government to declare to you that the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics will pursue a policy of neutral-

ity in the relations between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America.

Accept it, et cetera, Peoples Commissar for Foreign Affairs, signed Molotov.

The following is a full translation of the copy of the note to the Polish Ambassador.

"Mr. Ambassador: The Polish-German [War] ⁴³ has revealed the internal instability of Polish State. During 10 days of military operations Poland has lost all its industrial regions and cultural centers. Warsaw as the capital of Poland no longer exists. The Polish Government has scattered and gives no signs of life. This means that the Polish State and its Government factually have ceased to exist. By this fact in itself treaties concluded between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and Poland have lost their validity. Left to shift for itself and left without leadership Poland has become a convenient field for all kinds of eventualities and unforeseen contingencies which may constitute a threat to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Therefore having been heretofore neutral a [*the?*] Soviet Government can no longer adopt a neutral attitude to these facts. The Soviet Government can also not be indifferent to the fact that the consanguine Ukrainians and White Russians living on the territory of Poland who have been left to the whim of fate should be left defenseless. In view of this situation the Soviet Government has issued instructions to the High Command Red Army to give the order to its forces to cross the Polish frontier and take under their protection the life and property of the population of Western Ukraine and Western White Russia.

At the same time the Soviet Government intends to take all measures in order to extricate the Polish people from the ill-fated war into which they have been led by their unwise leaders and to give them the possibility of living a peaceful life.

Accept, et cetera⁴³.

STEINHARDT

740.0011 European War 1939/341 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, September 17, 1939—11 a. m.

[Received September 17—8: 15 a. m.]

2014. The Polish Ambassador in Paris has just informed me that last night Molotov summoned the Polish Ambassador in Moscow and handed him a note stating that since the Polish Government was no longer able to protect the population bordering on the Soviet Union, Soviet troops would enter Poland for the protection of those populations. The Polish Ambassador refused to receive this note whereupon Molotov stated to him that he would address a communication today to

⁴³ See pp. 402 ff.

the entire Diplomatic Corps in Moscow saying that the Soviet action was merely for the protection of the population on the Polish side of the Russian border and that the Soviet Union expected to remain neutral in the war now in progress. The Polish Ambassador in Paris added that he had received from the Polish Minister in Riga official information that the Soviet Army had already invaded the extreme northeastern portion of Poland, that the Polish troops there stationed had resisted and that fighting was in progress between the Polish Army and the Soviet Army.

BULLITT

740.0011 European War 1939/362 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, September 17, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received September 17—4:35 p. m.]

2019. The Polish Ambassador has just informed me that he has received from Beck⁴⁴ the text of an official note to be presented to the French Government⁴⁵ in which it is stated that Soviet troops had crossed the Polish frontier at a number of points and that this action of the Soviet Union constitutes a case of flagrant aggression. A similar note has already been sent to the Rumanian Government and will be presented at once to the British Government.

I asked the Polish Ambassador what action if any Rumania, which has an alliance which pledges Rumania to give immediate military assistance to Poland in case of Soviet attack, intended to take. The Polish Ambassador replied that the only likely action of the Rumanians would be to tremble. There was not much encouragement to Rumania to resist anyone after the shocking manner in which France and England had failed to assist Poland.

BULLITT

740.0011 European War 1939/366 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, September 17, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received September 17—5:30 p. m.]

1688. Responsible Foreign Office officials discussing their personal views of the Russian attack on Poland say that they have been expect-

⁴⁴ Józef Beck, Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs.

⁴⁵ Presented September 18, 1939, 10:30 p. m.; The Polish White Book, *Official Documents Concerning Polish-German and Polish-Soviet Relations, 1933-1939* (London, Hutchinson and Co., n. d.), doc. No. 177, p. 190.

ing it at any moment, particularly since it has become apparent that the Poles have badly miscalculated the length of time they would be able to hold the Germans. The Russian intervention is regarded as sinister through having enlarged the field of military operations, but open to more than one interpretation of motive. Russia may well have taken alarm at the rapidity of the German advance and by her own action today warned Germany to keep out of Rumania. Whatever secret agreement may have been annexed to the German-Russian pact⁴⁶ with a view to partition of Poland and possibly a military alliance, it is considered unlikely that Russia could view a German advance in the Balkans with anything but serious concern. It is felt that one almost certain thing about the Russian invasion of Poland will be that country's complete collapse within the next 2 or 3 days instead of within a week or possibly two.

According to the view of these officials three possible courses of action are now open to Germany: (1) to decide, now that Poland is practically destroyed, as a military factor, to conduct the war according to recognized international standards, respecting as scrupulously as possible the rights of the small neutral states that are physically at her mercy and utilizing to the fullest the advantages of trade with them to strengthen her own economic structure, already fortified through the collapse of Poland, by a degree of access to Russian supplies; or (2) to continue the military drive straight through to occupation of Rumania and still remain on the defensive in the west. This course would give Germany the manifest advantage of command of Rumania's material resources, but might cause serious conflict with Russia. It would gravely affect the policy of Turkey and Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, perhaps to the detriment of Great Britain and France; or (3) leave Rumania alone, turn with a huge concentration, all German forces to the west, invade Holland and Belgium and strike at Great Britain and France as hard as possible. It is not thought that the Germans will adopt alternative (1) above; the Foreign Office officials state that they know course (3) has been considered.

While the foregoing is purely speculative as there is no pretense of knowledge as to the exact meaning of the Russian attack on Poland nor as to what the next move of Germany will be, it represents an informed Foreign Office view as to probable early developments—and without prejudice to the possibility that Hitler may make either directly or through intermediaries, some specious offer of peace, based on the *fait accompli* in Poland.

⁴⁶ Signed August 23, 1939; *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941*, p. 76. For correspondence, see pp. 312 ff.

It was suggested that the Polish Ambassador at Moscow, as late as yesterday maintained to Sir William Seeds⁴⁷ the view that Russia had no intention of attacking Poland.

KENNEDY

740.0011 European War 1939/399 : Telegram

The Minister in Rumania (Gunther) to the Secretary of State

BUCHAREST, September 17, 1939—9 p. m.
[Received September 18—7:30 p. m.]

205. Following from Biddle.⁴⁸

"7, September 17, 11 a. m. With touching earnestness of a soldier statesman fighting desperately to hold together the remnants of his army and nation against tremendous odds Beck implored me to ask you whether (if the occasion arose whereby you might care to reiterate your statement regarding likelihood of our neutrality legislation's permitting raw material shipments to Britain and France) you might see your way clear to include Poland in such a statement. Beck said he realized impracticability of American raw material shipments to Poland and even if not one ton reached here your mention of Poland in above sense would prove of inestimable moral value towards (a) inspiring Britain to more than hitherto and now essential drive as means of relieving pressure on Polish front (Beck discernibly feels British are still pulling their punch), moreover his reports indicate London now giving excuse for refraining from large scale bombing of communications and industrial areas that same might have unfavorable effect on our public opinion and in particular upon our neutrality legislation. In my opinion this thesis if maintained would prove fatal to Polish Army which sorely needs encouragement and breathing spell for reconsolidation; (b) diminishing barbaric character of German onslaught and precluding further German hope for separating Poland from her allies. Biddle."

GUNTHER

740.0011 European War 1939/353 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, September 17, 1939—9 p. m.
[Received September 17—6:45 p. m.]

557. I have been informed in strict confidence that the French and British Embassies here are advising their respective Governments not to declare war against or break off diplomatic relations with the Soviet

⁴⁷ British Ambassador in the Soviet Union.

⁴⁸ Anthony J. Drexel Biddle, Jr., American Ambassador to Poland, then in Rumania.

Union by reason of the aggression against Poland on the ground that such action could only benefit Germany without helping Poland. They feel that the more effective measures against the Soviet Union which would be made possible by a state of war would be more than offset by the danger of precipitating complete military and economic cooperation between Germany and Russia. They believe that substantially the same measures as would be effective against the Soviet Union could be taken without breaking off diplomatic relations. They are furthermore of the opinion that a state of war between Britain and France and the Soviet Union would make it extremely difficult for Turkey to fulfill its agreements with the former should the occasion arise.

STEINHARDT

740.0011 European War 1939/359 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, September 17, 1939—9 p. m.

[Received 9:42 p. m.]

1291. My 1282, September 17, 11 a. m.⁴⁹ Although Soviet representatives here have intimated that measures against the Poles might be undertaken (see my 1243, September 14, 5 p. m.⁴⁹), they have consistently claimed that there have been no direct communications recently between Germany and Russia with respect to the fate of Poland. They now profess however that the Soviet Government does not feel that a common frontier with Germany would constitute as real a danger as a weak Polish buffer state which might prove to be a nucleus of intrigue against Russia on the part of both Germany and the democracies.

The same officials reflect the opinion hitherto expressed in German circles as to the speedy termination of the Polish campaign followed by an offer of peace to France through Italian channels⁵⁰ which will be accepted by France and to which England will find itself coinciding with necessity of subscribing owing to the isolated position to which it will be forced and the failure to effect a successful blockade of Germany. They support the argument by pointing to the relative inactivity of the British and French on the west which they allege to be an indication that those two countries do not intend to fight.

It must be admitted that the opinions lately emanating from Soviet representatives here have not been of a consistency that would offer

⁴⁹ Not printed.

⁵⁰ For peace movements and proposals following the occupation of Poland, see pp. 499 ff.

definite assurance either as to their sincerity or the extent of their knowledge of the actual policy of their Government. Throughout their conversations, however, they have never omitted to emphasize the importance, as an element of Soviet policy, of the security of the Union and of the defense of its territory and those who entertain the belief that the Soviet Government would refrain from engaging in an offensive military action involving the Union in a major conflict are inclined to explain the present movement of the Red Army into Poland as a precautionary measure which was considered advisable in the face of the German advance and which was destined to produce a favorable reaction among the Russian people. Soviet representatives here have at no time indicated that the recent change in German-Soviet relations obviated the necessity of vigilance on the part of the Union towards Germany and they have not reinforced the portent of the altered relations by envisaging an inclusion of Japan in the German-Soviet combination dating from the non-aggression pact as was at one time mooted in certain German circles (see my 888, August 24, 4 p. m.⁵¹).

From a brief conversation at the War Ministry today the Assistant Military Attaché to this Embassy was given the impression that the Germans did not expect the Russian move into Poland to be effected at this particular moment but the officials at that Ministry confined their statements to an assertion that insofar as they were aware no military pact exists between Germany and Russia.

KIRK

740.0011 European War 1939/372 : Telegram

The Minister in Lithuania (Norem) to the Secretary of State

KAUNAS, September 17, 1939—9 p. m.

[Received September 18—7:12 a. m.]

40. In reply to the Department's telegram of September 16, 3 p. m.,⁵² I have the honor to report that the Lithuanian Government's viewpoint remains unchanged despite the move on the part of Russia. A total mobilization of men under 35 years in certain areas was effected today bringing the total number of men to about 130,000. This force will certainly not be used in expeditionary fashion but will enable the authorities to take care of larger bodies of retreating Poles should

⁵¹ Not printed.

⁵² Not printed. The Department inquired regarding a report that there were large Lithuanian troop concentrations on the frontier and that the Germans were urging Lithuania to move against Poland. The Legation was instructed also to report other available information regarding the fears and hopes of Lithuania and the changing situation in that area. (740.0011 European War 1939/371a)

they attempt a crossing into neutral territory. I spoke to Mr. Bizauskas⁵³ from 8 to 9 this evening to verify information we had. He admitted that the Government had feared some suggestions would be made by Germany but were very thankful that no *démarche* was made. Mr. Bizauskas was very sincere when he spoke of what eventually might follow the action of Germany and Russia. He stated that he believed it to be agreed that Lithuania and a reconstituted Poland would form a buffer between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and Germany. Lithuania would be enlarged with the addition of the Vilna territory. There would be established a short German-Russian corridor between Lithuania and Poland bounded roughly by the line Lyck to a point south of Grodno and Ortelsburg, Kolno, Wolkowysk. He believes that Russia will retake Estonia and Latvia.⁵⁴ He believed also that Germany was somewhat surprised by the sudden Russian move and that these two powers were not entirely in agreement on policies. The treaty between Lithuania and the Soviet Union⁵⁵ is still in effect but Lithuania will not prejudice her juridical claims to any territory nor incur the risk of being drawn into the war. Prime Minister Cernius spoke to the nation this evening practically reiterating the above statements. He reassured the nation that neutrality will be strictly observed but that conditions abroad demand extraordinary measures of military precaution. Though reported consistently over the London radio, there is no evidence of evacuation from Kaunas. The attitude is one of resolute calm and I anticipate no trouble for Lithuania.

NOREM

740.0011 European War 1939/369 : Telegram

The Minister in Yugoslavia (Lane) to the Secretary of State

BELGRADE, September 17, 1939—11 p. m.

[Received September 18—2:40 a. m.]

273. 1. The source whose correct prophecies were transmitted in my 255, September 6, and who was identified in the last paragraph of my 210, August 22 [23],⁵⁶ now informs us that there is no intention on the part of Germany to invade Rumania or Yugoslavia provided those states give to Germany what is required, that is oil and agricul-

⁵³ Kazys Bizauskas, Lithuanian Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs.

⁵⁴ For correspondence concerning pressure by the Soviet Union upon the Baltic States, see *Foreign Relations, The Soviet Union, 1933-1939*, pp. 934 ff.

⁵⁵ Protocol renewing treaty of non-aggression of September 28, 1926, signed April 4, 1934, League of Nations Treaty Series, vol. CLXXXVI, p. 267.

⁵⁶ Neither printed; the "source" mentioned was the German Military Attaché in Yugoslavia.

tural products respectively. Informant expressed complete confidence that both Governments would accede to German requests.

2. The French Legation expresses the opinion that the Yugoslav Government will resist German demands. Other equally well informed sources express doubt on this point.

3. In connection with the foregoing paragraphs one must bear in mind two essential points:

(a) As our Military Attaché's reports clearly show this country is not in a position to make any resistance against a powerful enemy. In addition to the lack of equipment the disorganization in Government circles is scandalous (the case covered by the Department's telegram No. 43, September 16,⁵⁸ is illustrative, especially as the matter had been discussed with the Prince Regent, Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister of War).

(b) Regardless of the national political unity reported in my 243, September 4,⁵⁸ the present coalition Serb-Croatian Government will because of divergent interests undoubtedly be greatly handicapped in formulating a definite and consistent foreign policy, in functioning efficiently and in agreeing on a logical military policy in the event of foreign attack. Military Attaché points out that in resisting a highly mechanized force the logical main defensive position should be along the Sava and the hilly terrain south thereof. This would mean defending Serbia and merely offering delaying action in Slovenia and Croatia. Thus Croatian territory would be ceded without a struggle. It is likely that the new coalition government may attempt to influence the military to make a stand nearer the frontier which would seriously prejudice the military position of the country as a whole.

LANE

740.0011 European War 1939/395 : Telegram

The Minister in Yugoslavia (Lane) to the Secretary of State

BELGRADE, September 18, 1939—8 a. m.

[Received 9:20 p. m.]

277. The Minister for Foreign Affairs⁵⁹ stated to me this evening that the invasion of Poland by Soviet troops in no way alters Yugoslavia's position. Although admitting that the Soviet word is of doubtful value he considers that the Soviet guarantee respecting Rumanian territory is helpful. He said he is more than ever convinced that Italy will remain neutral and that Hungary will follow Italy's lead. He said that the Yugoslav Government is awaiting with much interest the result of the visit to Moscow of the Turkish Foreign Minis-

⁵⁸ Not printed.

⁵⁹ Aleksander Cincar-Markovich.

ter ⁶⁰ particularly in view of Turkey's arrangements with France and Great Britain.

The Minister of War ⁶¹ informed me today that Rumania will undoubtedly accede to German demands for oil and agricultural products.

LANE

740.0011 European War 1939/576

Memorandum by the Adviser on Political Relations (Dunn)

[WASHINGTON,] September 18, 1939.

The Polish Ambassador telephoned this morning to request that the Secretary be informed that the British and French Governments have protested through their Embassies in Moscow "the flagrant aggression" by the Soviet Government against Poland.

The Ambassador stated that in a telegram just received from his Minister for Foreign Affairs, Colonel Beck had expressed the hope that the United States might also make a similar protest at Moscow.

JAMES CLEMENT DUNN

740.0011 European War 1939/383 : Telegram

The Minister in Rumania (Gunther) to the Secretary of State

BUCHAREST, September 18, 1939—1 p. m.

[Received 7:35 p. m.]

212. Gafencu ⁶² received yesterday assurances from Molotov that the Russian advance into Poland should not be considered menacing to Rumania. One does not know however how little faith to place in these assurances. It all depends upon what deal has already been made between Russia and Germany.

GUNTHER

740.0011 European War 1939/375 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, September 18, 1939—2 p. m.

[Received September 18—9:20 a. m.]

1692. My 1688, September 17, 6 p. m. In a brief conversation this morning with Cadogan ⁶³ regarding the Russian invasion of Poland he said that no question arose of Great Britain's declaring war on Russia

⁶⁰ Sukru Saracoglu.

⁶¹ Gen. Milutin Neditch.

⁶² Grigore Gafencu, Rumanian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

⁶³ Sir Alexander Cadogan, British Permanent Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

or through the terms of the Anglo-Polish pact ⁶⁴ considering herself automatically at war with Russia. In fact the Poles had not even asked that Great Britain take such action. The Polish Ambassador requested this morning however that Great Britain deliver a formal protest to the Russian Government against the action taken and this he said would probably be done although the exact line to be taken has not yet been determined. Exception will be taken generally to the Russian action and probably to the Russian pretext that the Polish Government no longer exists.

Russian military action has greatly complicated the whole problem, particularly with respect to countries of southern and southeastern Europe. Cadogan feels that it is impossible to make any assessment of probable results of the policy of Balkan countries which would not be pure conjecture. The same is true in Bulgaria. The Turks so far have indicated that they are unperturbed and unmoved by the Russian action; that their policy vis-à-vis Great Britain and France remains the same and they have expressed their willingness to push negotiations now going on for a permanent pact between Great Britain, France and Turkey to a conclusion. These negotiations it is understood have not been held up on any matter of principle but through necessity for reaching agreement on details, mainly of an economic character.

KENNEDY

740.0011 European War 1939/386 : Telegram

The Minister in Greece (MacVeagh) to the Secretary of State

ATHENS, September 18, 1939—4 p. m.
[Received September 18—2:33 p. m.]

175. The German Ambassador in Moscow has told the Greek Minister there that Russia's invasion of Poland is not in accord with any agreement with Germany and that Russia intends to occupy Estonia in direct opposition to German policy. This information has been received with some skepticism by the Greek Foreign Office which is concerned over the possible effect upon Turkey of the new development.

MACVEAGH

740.0011 European War 1939/384 : Telegram

The Minister in Latvia (Wiley) to the Secretary of State

RIGA, September 18, 1939—5 p. m.
[Received September 18—2:32 p. m.]

158. Foreign Office official states in strictest confidence that Germans not aware of Soviet plans to march into Poland. If the Ger-

⁶⁴ Signed August 25, 1939; British Cmd. 6106, Misc. No. 9 (1939), doc. No. 19, p. 37.

mans had been cognizant of plans they would not have sent in reconnaissance plane (which Red Army shot down). Nor would German planes have attacked advancing Soviet forces as Foreign Office authoritatively informed is the case.

On the other hand Baltic German employee of Legation with family connections in Reich who has just returned from vacation in Germany states it has been common talk there since latter part of August that Soviet forces would invade Poland on September 15. On September 16th disappointment was expressed, succeeded by jubilation on 17th (see sentence my 116, September 7, 1 p. m.⁶⁵).

In telephone conversation with Vilna at 4 p. m. Legation was informed neither Soviet nor German forces were as yet in that city.

WILEY

740.001 European War 1939/398: Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, September 18, 1939—9 p. m.

[Received 10:05 p. m.]

1708. Personal for the President and Secretary of State. I have just been down to see the Prime Minister. He has a very bad cold. I naturally asked him what he made of the Russian situation. He said of course it was bad but that he was not prepared yet to believe that it meant a straight military alliance with Germany. He said that Russia had assured both England and France that they were maintaining neutrality in regard to both of these countries, but Chamberlain said, "Of course I would not believe anything the Russians told me and the only satisfaction I have is that they will lie to the Germans as well as to us." He said, "I do not think they believe their advantage in this whole picture necessitates their getting into a war on either side; they will take whatever they can get without any inconvenience to themselves, but as far as joining up is concerned, I am still unconvinced."

Chamberlain said that Hitler's program as he sees it has three alternatives: (1) to keep going right into Rumania where he will be offered very little if any resistance. He has hopes that if Hitler decided to go into Rumania it might kick up quite a fuss in the Balkans and that Italy might find that an excuse for lining up on England's side. I asked him if he did not believe that the psychological trend was definitely against England at this time and that countries on the sidelines who would want to play with the victor might decide to come along with Germany, and if that were the case, how about Italy? He said that he

⁶⁵ Not printed.

was thoroughly convinced the people of Italy did not want to go to war and they would almost have to be driven to fight in a war on the side of Germany; (2) that Hitler will immediately proceed against the western front and it would not surprise Chamberlain at all if Hitler first attempted to smash through Belgium and Holland and then start to march into France; (3) after he has cleaned up Poland to make a peace offer, Chamberlain says he has been trying to think what shape this offer would take and he is convinced it would be something like this: Hitler would say, "I do not want to fight with England and France; I have no further territorial aims; all I want is what I have taken now—Danzig, the Corridor and Eastern Silesia, giving me my old frontiers back; I am perfectly willing to sit in with England and settle our difficulties; therefore why have a war that will mean destruction to all of us?" Chamberlain says he believes Hitler is much more unlikely now to make this proposition than he was last week, because of course he senses the psychological strengthening his cause has received through Russia's military action against Poland. Chamberlain said he has tried to think of every other possible suggestion that could be included in a peace proposal and has come to the conclusion that nothing else could be added. Therefore he said that since it would be a complete violation of all the terms for which England went to war he would completely refuse to accept these suggestions and do it quickly.

The conversation then turned to the change in the Neutrality Act.^{65a} He said of course he understands the difficulties in changing the act now because it is so definitely tied up with the mistaken notion that the mere changing of this act means getting America into the war. He reiterated most clearly for my benefit that he has never had the slightest suspicion that America contemplated coming to their rescue with men and that he was in complete sympathy with America's position in this respect but he did feel that Britain should receive the benefit of at least being able to buy goods, pay for them and carry them away. He thinks that the passage of a bill which would permit England to buy and carry goods would be the greatest psychological lift that England could have at this time and failure to pass it would be "sheer disaster" for England and France.

I am thoroughly convinced that Chamberlain is well aware of the terrific catastrophes ahead for Great Britain. I think he is probably doing some wishful thinking on the aspects of the good breaks that might come his way such as Balkan allies or Italy and I am also convinced that he feels that, with all Hitler has taken on with the acquisition of new territory, if the problem could only go back on an economic basis, Hitler would be thrown out by his own people because he could not take care of them with the resources he has at hand. I

^{65a} H. J. Res. 306, approved November 4, 1939; 54 Stat. 4. For correspondence, see pp. 656 ff.

also judge that while Chamberlain does not expect the German people to break he is hoping that within a reasonable time, when the blockade works better, the German people will react against the Hitler regime.

I told Chamberlain I had heard in various places that the French were quite dissatisfied with England's conduct of its air fleet to date and Chamberlain said, "Whoever told you that told you a hundred percent untruth because I am giving you now not hearsay but a direct question that I put to Gamelin:⁶⁶ I said to him, 'Are you satisfied with what the British air force is doing' and he said, 'Completely'; 'I would not want them to do otherwise at this time.' That being the case there can be no complaint about Britain's part in the conflict so far, because they are not supposed to have an army ready to take on the battle and their navy and merchant fleet are doing all that they can."

After listening to it all, I came away with this one impression based on my experience: when I was in the picture business whenever a new picture was being shown for the first time in the projection room a few of the top side executives would go in to look at it before it was shown to anybody on the premises and when we came out the crowd would be gathered around to see what we thought of it and in my 4 years I have never seen any executive come out that did not say the picture was "great", and in all that time I have never seen the group that waited outside for the judgment ever wrong in deciding that the tone of the executives "great" meant it was really lousy; so while the word was always the same the real impression was gathered very accurately. I draw a parallel from my picture experience to this conversation today. While Chamberlain did not say everything was great, he certainly did not want to give me the impression that everything was lousy, but nevertheless that is what I think it is.

KENNEDY

740.0011 European War 1939/420: Telegram

The Minister in Rumania (Gunther) to the Secretary of State

BUCHAREST, September 19, 1939—3 p. m.

[Received 7:56 p. m.]

221. Please transmit following to the President.

The Prime Minister this morning discussed with me possibility of Russo-German-Japanese plans for eventual division of the better part of the world between them though stressing obvious eventual conflicting interests among the three. He emphasized that Great Britain and France alone and unaided were in no position to offer decisive resist-

⁶⁶ Gen. Maurice Gamelin, Commander in Chief of the French Army.

ance. He then said that America could play a decisive role by the wholesale furnishing of arms and munitions and that it should not overlook this part of the world especially Yugoslavia and Rumania the latter being in a strategic position to offer effective resistance if properly armed. He hoped that the Neutrality Act would be amended and that a way will be found eventually to furnish Rumania with a large number of anti-aircraft guns adding that Irimescu⁶⁷ was acquainted with the details. The Prime Minister I think can be counted on to stand firm and steadfast in the face of threats to Rumanian independence.

GUNTHER

740.0011 European War 1939/423 : Telegram

The Minister in Yugoslavia (Lane) to the Secretary of State

BELGRADE, September 19, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received 11:15 p. m.]

279. While it is generally admitted in Government and diplomatic circles here that Russia invaded Poland with the understanding and approval of Germany it is felt that the Soviet move was, I am satisfied, intended against further German advance in the east.

It is considered furthermore that the Soviet advance effectively gives notice of Russia's reentry into European affairs. Regardless of the well known attitude of the Royal family towards the Soviet Government a reorientation of Yugoslav policy towards the Soviet Union is expected.

If the Soviets are in fact acting now as the ally of Germany it will be difficult, if not impossible, to evoke any enthusiasm on the part of the Serbs to fight against one or the other of the combined forces. The Serbian people do not share the views of the Royal family. On the other hand they recall with gratitude Russia's support of Serbia during the past war and contemptuously compare this support to the lack of support given by France and Great Britain to Poland at the present time.

LANE

740.0011 European War 1939/442 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, September 19, 1939—7 p. m.

[Received September 19—9:08 a. m.]

1329. Information received from the War Ministry by the Military Attaché confirms the fact that German and Russian troops have made

⁶⁷ Radu Irimescu, Rumanian Minister in the United States.

contact at Brest and that the Russians have occupied Vilna. In further conversation at the War Ministry it was intimated that, after negotiations, a territorial settlement with Russia would be made which would be determined partly on political grounds and that German troops would probably be withdrawn west of the Vistula. It was further intimated that a small Polish state might eventually be created. In addition it was indicated that Vilna had been offered to Lithuania but that Lithuania had not acted promptly on this offer as it preferred to await a final peace settlement in order to put forward its claim.

In the Ministry of Marine the Naval Attaché was shown a map on which the future German-Russian boundary was indicated as follows: The line of the Narew river to junction of the Narew and the Vistula—to Warsaw, Warsaw to go to Russia—line of Vistula to Lemberg, Lemberg to go to Germany—Lemberg due South. It was intimated at the office of the Ministry of Marine also that a small Polish state with Warsaw as its capital might possibly be created.

Inform War and Navy.

KIRK

740.0011 European War 1939/465 : Telegram

The Chargé in Bulgaria (Millard) to the Secretary of State

SOFIA, September 20, 1939—1 p. m.

[Received 10 : 05 p. m.]

61. I called on the Prime Minister⁶⁸ yesterday evening. He implied that difficult as it was to justify the invasion of Poland, Russia could not risk letting Germany come too far east and mentioned the Ukraine question. He thought that a new Poland of 7 to 10 million would be created which, with a possibly enlarged Lithuania, would completely separate Germany and Russia neither of whom wanted a common frontier. He had heard from London that Germany had assured Russia there was no objection to the absorption of Bessarabia which he is convinced Rumania would not resist and he felt that Estonia and Latvia might also be absorbed. Asked whether Germany was willing to give up the Polish Ukraine, the Prime Minister said Germany was willing to make "any concession" in order not to have to fight on two fronts.

When "peace is assured" on Germany's eastern border the Prime Minister thought Hitler would make a speech offering a conference to settle all questions left over from the last world war including possibly disarmament. The Prime Minister felt convinced that Great

⁶⁸ George Klosselvanoff.

Britain and France would refuse this offer. Then Hitler would loose a terrible attack on the Maginot Line. Two thousand bombers were now ready.

In reply to several questions, Prime Minister insisted that there had been no offer to settle the southern Dobrudja question. He reiterated that Bulgaria would patiently and peacefully await a conference in which this question could be considered.

Asked if General Weygand's⁶⁹ movements had any significance for Bulgaria, he said the General had been working on a plan for a campaign based on Salonika as in the last war with efforts to involve other Balkan countries. This was now out of the question. The danger of British-Russian cooperation having been removed, his country was in no immediate danger.

In answer to my inquiry, he said that Turkey is anxious concerning its Foreign Minister's forthcoming visit to Moscow on which Russia is insisting and the outcome of which is unpredictable.

He said that he was still convinced Italy would remain neutral.

Throughout the conversation the Prime Minister seemed genuinely unworried regarding Bulgaria's position and continued to reflect the satisfaction he has shown since the failure of the British and French negotiations in Moscow.⁷⁰

The press without approving or disapproving Russia's invasion of Poland thinks this is the beginning of an active Russian policy in Europe and pointing out that Russia is returning to revisionism which also gives her common outlook with Germany.

MILLARD

811.04418/555: Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

[Extract]

PARIS, September 20, 1939—4 p. m.

[Received 5:46 p. m.]

2075. For the President and Secretary.

The general situation appears to be as follows: The French Government made, as you know, intense appeals to the Belgian Government to permit the French forces to cross Belgian territory to attack Germany as soon as Germany attacked Poland. It was the conviction of the French Government and the General Staff that a French attack by way of Belgium could have drawn sufficient German troops away

⁶⁹ Gen. Maxime Weygand, in command of French forces in Syria.

⁷⁰ See pp. 312 ff.

from Poland to have made it impossible for Germany to overrun Poland. The Belgian Government refused.

Further urgent appeals to the Belgian Government have been made by the French Government for permission for French troops to cross Belgium in case of a German attack on the Netherlands. The French Government has been informed that the Queen of the Netherlands also has appealed personally to the King of the Belgians in this sense. The King of the Belgians has refused flatly to consider any such proposal.

It is believed here that Germany may now take any one of three courses of action.

(1) An attack may be made on Rumania in conjunction with the Soviet Union. It is believed that the cringing subservience of Rumania to Germany, exhibited by the Rumanian Government's acquiescence in the German demand that the officials of the Polish Government should be interned, may make the Germans conclude that they can have all the resources of Rumania at their disposal without war.

Furthermore, it is considered unlikely that the Russians, in spite of their desire to acquire Bessarabia, would acquiesce in the German occupation of the Rumanian portion of the Black Sea coast. It is therefore thought that while an attack on Rumania is possible it is not by any means certain.

(2) It is believed that Germany may attack and seize the Netherlands in order to obtain a perfect base from which to bomb London and British merchant shipping. It is thought that if such an attack should be made on Holland the portion of Belgium lying to the east of the Albert Canal would be seized.

(3) It is also believed to be possible that Germany will attempt a direct attack on France launching all her bombardment planes on the communications of the French Army and then attempting a sweep through Belgium or a direct assault on the Maginot Line.

The French are confident that they can withstand any direct attack on France.

Since the French certainly will not violate Belgian neutrality the only opening for attack against Germany remains the Siegfried Line. To break that line will require vastly more heavy guns, munitions, and airplanes than the French and British now have. It is therefore the general opinion that no successful attack against Germany can be envisaged until the spring of 1942 and that successful attack at that time will be dependent on airplanes, cannons, and munitions from the United States.

740.0011 European War 1939/468 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, September 21, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received September 21—1:47 p. m.]

2094. It is the opinion of the French Government that the cutting of communications between Poland and Rumania by the Soviet Government is designed to prevent a German attack on Rumania since the Soviet Government fears to have Germany on the Black Sea and would prefer to swallow the Rumanian Black Sea coast itself.

The impression is strong here that the Germans may make an almost immediate attack on the Netherlands. The Netherlands Minister has just been in contact with his Government on this subject and assures me that his Government has no fear whatsoever of immediate German attack.

The conversations between the French, British and Turks are progressing surprisingly satisfactorily from the French and British point of view.

BULLITT

740.0011 European War 1939/473 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, September 21, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received September 21—5:06 p. m.]

585. My telegram No. 557, September 17, 9 p. m. I am informed by a member of the French Embassy that the French Government has decided not to break off relations with the Soviet Government by reason of the Soviet invasion of Poland and that up to the present time the French Embassy here has made no formal protest to the Soviet Government on the matter. I understand that the decision of the British Government will be similar to that of the French. The French Chargé d'Affaires yesterday saw Potemkin⁷¹ and requested an oral explanation of the arbitrary action against Poland.

STEINHARDT

740.0011 European War 1939/483 : Telegram

The Minister in Yugoslavia (Lane) to the Secretary of State

BELGRADE, September 21, 1939—10 p. m.

[Received September 21—9:20 p. m.]

282. The following is the substance of Prince Paul's⁷² remarks to me this evening:

⁷¹ Vladimir P. Potemkin, Soviet First Assistant Commissar for Foreign Affairs.

⁷² First Regent of Yugoslavia, for King Peter II.

1. He has as yet no information as to whether Germany was behind the assassination of the Rumanian Prime Minister.⁷³

2. He indicated that it is perhaps preferable to have Russia rather than Germany on the Rumanian frontier. He evidenced agreement with my view that the Soviet invasion of Poland was to stop rather than to help Germany. He likewise assented to my view that the present Soviet policy is to keep Germany out of the Balkans and to keep England out of the Dardanelles. He added "it is also to keep Germany out of the Black Sea." The Prince said that if Germany and Russia were actually in agreement and were to win the war it would be the end of Europe.

3. I referred to reports from Rome that Ciano's⁷⁴ attitude had shown a great change since his meeting with Hitler at Salzburg⁷⁵ and that no mention of the Axis in the press had been allowed by the Italian Government since the outbreak of hostilities. The Prince made the following comment: "That is very curious because Ciano has been speaking in an entirely different way to our Minister in Rome. He always praises Germany."

4. He expressed deep interest regarding the situation in the United States and said that if Germany were to win the war the American continent would then be threatened.

5. He confirmed information which we had previously received from the Bulgarian Military Attaché and from the Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs that Bulgaria has increased her territorial demands of Rumania and is becoming a dangerous problem for the peace of the Balkans.

I shall comment by telegram tomorrow regarding the foregoing in the light of other developments.

LANE

740.0011 European War 1939/485 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Italy (Phillips) to the Secretary of State

ROME, September 22, 1939—11 a. m.
[Received September 22—8:55 a. m.]

419. The newly appointed Italian Ambassador to London, Bastianini, expressed to me yesterday his certainty that the Russian move into Poland had been prearranged with the German Government. For the present at least he believes that the Baltic States will remain unaffected but the immediate danger now concerns Rumania which will be the first to feel the shock of the oncoming Russians into the

⁷³ A. Calinescu, assassinated September 21, 1939.

⁷⁴ Count Galeazzo Ciano di Cortellazzo, Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

⁷⁵ August 11-13, 1939; see pp. 208-232 *passim*.

Balkans. He is apprehensive that the Russians will endeavor to reach Yugoslavia and that this communistic peril is of greater danger to Italy than the British-German struggle. In reply to my inquiry as to what in his opinion Germany would do in such circumstances Bastianini indicated the possibility of a German-Russian contest for eastern Europe.

If Bastianini's attitude represents that of Mussolini, which I assume it does, it is not difficult to understand the new orientation of Italian policy which at the moment is expressed by strict neutrality.

PHILLIPS

740.0011 European War 1939/501 : Telegram

The Minister in Yugoslavia (Lane) to the Secretary of State

BELGRADE, September 22, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received 7:35 p. m.]

285. Referring to my telegram No. 282 of September 21, 10 p. m.

1. It is in our opinion very significant that the Prince Regent, whose antipathy towards the Soviet regime is so well known, should now take the position that it is to the interest of Yugoslavia that the Soviet rather than the German troops are on the Rumanian border.

2. There are rumors current that Yugoslavia has decided not to make any further purchases of airplanes or war material. The Prince, however, stated to me that Yugoslavia must obtain airplanes and arms immediately and candidly admitted the reason for his desire to increase trade with the United States (see my 283 of September 21, 11 p. m.⁷⁶) was to provide Yugoslavia with foreign exchange with which to finance arms purchases. He indicated that the amount required is many times more than \$2,000,000 (approximately the amount which would be deposited to the credit of the Yugoslav Government at New York in the event that the concession to the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey were satisfactorily consummated).

3. The local morale has greatly improved since it has been known that the Soviets are on the Rumanian border. The Yugoslavs now feel that the danger of German invasion is lessened. The Bulgarian Minister states that the same feeling obtains in his country because of Pan-Slav sentiment.

LANE

⁷⁶ Printed in vol. II, section entitled "Proposals for the Regulation of Commercial Relations Between the United States and Yugoslavia," under Yugoslavia.

740.0011 European War 1939/498 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, September 22, 1939—7 p. m.

[Received September 22—5 : 35 p. m.]

2123. The information published by the DNB⁷⁷ of Berlin to the effect that the Russian frontier in Poland would follow the rivers Pisa, Narew, Vistula and San—which will leave on the Russian side of the boundary both the oil fields of Galicia and the rich wheat fields and [of?] Volhynia—has reinforced the impression of the French Foreign Office that the Soviet Government is not acting so much as an ally of Germany as preparing the way for an eventual Bolshevization of Germany as well as the Balkans and all the rest of Europe. It is believed that the Soviet policy will be to keep the war in Europe going until general collapse.

It is considered increasingly unlikely that the Soviet Union will permit a German seizure of Rumania. Furthermore, information reaching Paris indicates that Germany will have at her disposal all the resources of Rumania without occupying the country. For example, in the 3 weeks since the outbreak of the war 10 times the amount of oil was shipped from Rumania to Germany as is shipped ordinarily in a month.

Until the latest moment last night the French and British were in hopes that the Turkish Government would sign the agreement which has been under negotiation. However, the Turks finally stated that they could not sign the agreement until after the return of the Foreign Minister from Moscow.⁷⁸ The Turks asserted, however, that they intended to sign the agreement.

The French Foreign Office has no new information as to the attitude of Italy; but the Polish Ambassador has just informed me that when the Polish Ambassador in Rome saw Ciano 3 days ago Ciano spoke with the most cynical contempt about France and England saying that in the end they would both be wiped out by the dictatorships. Since Ciano as recently as a week ago had spoken with great respect about France and England to the Polish Ambassador the conversation cited above seemed to indicate an alteration in policy.

BULLITT

⁷⁷ Deutsches Nachrichten Büro, German semi-official news agency.

⁷⁸ See telegram No. 765, October 17, 7 p. m., from the Ambassador in the Soviet Union, p. 484.

740.0011 European War 1939/510 : Telegram

The Minister in Rumania (Gunther) to the Secretary of State

BUCHAREST, September 23, 1939—8 p. m.

[Received 10:47 p. m.]

257. Reference paragraphs 1 and 2 my telegram No. 243, September 21, 7 p. m. from Biddle.⁷⁹ Considerable anxiety in Government circles as to the future intentions of Russia. Surprise and some consternation apparent as to extent of Polish territory occupied with German acquiescence. It is felt that the Russians now have the upper hand and can make things as uncomfortable as they wish for Hitler who avowedly does not want to have to fight on two fronts (see *Mein Kampf*). Had the Russo-German pact been planned by the British and French with Russian connivance it could hardly have worked. But Hungary's Ruthenian frontier and Rumania's Bukowina both with Ukrainian minorities now seem hardly safe for long with Russia on each frontier. The results of Saracoglu's visit to Moscow are awaited here with breathless interest. Please transmit following to the President: It is also felt that a big peace offensive will shortly be opened and that this will find support in some French circles. It is not apparent here just how England could now back down unless preceded by unforeseen internal developments in Germany. Even should peace come it would hardly relieve Rumania from the potential danger of Russia in its new geographical position of advantage. Obviously, if peace were to come, England and France could probably in a year or more, in turn, establish that supremacy in the air which has been the key to the present war and time would be given for economic and internal developments in Germany.

GUNTHER

740.0011 European War 1939/516 : Telegram

The Minister in Yugoslavia (Lane) to the Secretary of State

BELGRADE, September 23, 1939—8 p. m.

[Received 10:55 p. m.]

288. One official German source states that Russia is being permitted to occupy two-thirds of Poland for the following reasons:

1. It permits economy of force in German divisions needed to occupy Poland.

2. It renders British claims of a war aim to restore Poland more difficult of fulfillment. By occupying substantially only that part of Poland which has a German population Hitler can argue that his action was not motivated by conquest but by racial attachment to the

⁷⁹ Not printed.

Reich. To restore the other two-thirds of Poland England must deal with Russia. England and France are thus forced in a position where they must consider seriously a declaration of war against Russia. Germany desires to have them declare war on Russia.

3. It whets Russia's appetite for conquest and makes more probable her participation as an active military ally of Germany. Up to the present time Russia has committed herself with reservations; the Germans want combined action of Russian air and submarine forces.

Repeat[ed] to Paris.

LANE

740.0011 European War 1939/514 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, September 24, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received 8:40 p. m.]

2152. Ambassador Biddle has asked me to transmit the following which is a summary of "factors which contributed to Poland's defeat.["] Memorandum strictly confidential.

(a) Suddenness of attack.

Fighting started between 4 and 5 a. m. at numerous points along western frontier from south to Danzig. Warsaw in general was awakened by air raid at 7 o'clock the morning of Friday, September 1.

(b) Immediate demolition of airplane and motor-manufacturing plants and pilot training schools. Within 4 days after commencement of hostilities nothing left in terms of Polish planes other than those already in use. The means no longer existed for production of planes or training of pilots.

(c) Destruction or failure of means of communication. In this connection there was a lack of ample field short wave radio apparati and adequate number of motorcycle despatch riders and messengers and to my mind undue reliance was placed on mechanical method such as telo-wiring (which experience showed is not practical for field work wherein lines are subject to aerial bombardments. This means that the telo-wiring lines are too dependent upon wire maintenance to be practical in face of severe bombing). There was no central command after the first few days of hostilities.

(d) Constant bombardment of railway communication retarded and in numerous cases impeded movements of troops and supplies.

(e) Failure to prepare an effective defensive position (Marshal Smigly-Rydz⁸⁰ pointed out to General Ironside⁸¹ during latter's War-

⁸⁰ Marshal Edward Smigly-Rydz, Inspector General of the Polish Army.

⁸¹ Sir Edmund Ironside, British General who inspected Polish military centers in July 1939.

saw visit previous to hostilities) that the Polish high command had in mind the Polish armies' withdrawal under cover of delayed action to a line approximately running from Grudziadz in north through Bydgosz, Tarun, Lodz and Krakow in south to Slovak border. General Ironside had expressed his approval of such a move if and when circumstances made it necessary.

(f) Dry weather rendered all of Poland a sort of dry hard plain, facilitating passage of tanks in all directions. Moreover the visibility was clear and planes could fly anywhere.

(g) German air superiority prevented secret concentration of Polish troops for counter attack. Polish Army showed tendency in most cases to become engaged in pitched battles (the Polish troops allowed themselves to become engaged by the enemy at various points instead of effecting a delay action either to cover the establishment of main defense lines or maneuvering position).

(h) Failure of French-British front to afford relief through diversion activities especially in the air.

(i) Delay of France and Great Britain in declaring war. While reasons therefor are understandable (special circumstances in each case) nevertheless the bare fact was that Poles were rushed off their feet.

(j) Impossibility of agricultural state fighting highly industrialized state. In fact many Polish soldiers never saw a German soldier, only tanks and planes. (However in many cases when Polish infantry or cavalry contacted the infantry or cavalry of the enemy the Poles demonstrated their superiority.)

(k) The large minority in the loosely knit Polish state proved easy prey for German espionage (such as the spreading of destructive rumors and alarming news).

(l) Poles were afforded no time to revise their military leadership in certain cases where required to adapt their tactics to meet German strategy and to rest their troops.

(l) [*sic*] During the latter phases the aerial bombardments demoralized the civilian population, prevented the Government from functioning properly, effectively, and harassed G.H.Q.

(m) Long lines of refugees frequently cut across troops on march, took possession of army supplies and requisitioned rail transport thus contributing to some extent towards demoralizing the Polish troops who thereby learned that their homes were being demolished and their families wounded and killed.

(n) Notwithstanding the foregoing there was still a possibility of reconstructing a short front line as the air attacks lessened. Then the Soviet delivered the "coup de grace".

(o) In conclusion only an industrial country organized along totalitarian lines and as ruthless as the enemy could face the recent German

attack unless (a) geographical or (b) climatic conditions or (c) previously prepared defensive position might enable it to hold out long enough (d) for some industrialized ally to knock out the enemy's factories, communications and airdromes.

(p) In the case of Poland (a) (b) (c) (d) were all lacking.

BULLITT

740.0011 European War 1939/545: Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, September 25, 1939—7 p. m.

[Received 8:25 p. m.]

1800. Personal for the Secretary. I saw Halifax.⁸² He says he feels better than he has for quite a few weeks past for two reasons.

First, the preliminary reports he has received from the Turks and others on the Russian situation indicate that Mr. Hitler perhaps did not get as good a bargain as he thought he was getting in making his nonaggression pact with the Russians; that it is very apparent too that the Germans are receiving a very nice doublecross for themselves. He expects to have further information when the Turkish group from Moscow return and he will let me know at once. The second encouraging factor is that General Ironside told him this morning that all the reports from the representatives arriving back here from Poland indicate that the primary cause of the collapse of Poland was that the communication system broke down completely due to inefficiency, but that when the Poles had a chance to meet the Germans on any equitable basis at all the Poles unquestionably won the decision. All the staff officers who were in the last war said there is no comparison between the morale of the present German fighting forces and the morale of the Germans in 14 to 18. The present morale is definitely bad. I asked him if this were another case of wishful thinking and he said definitely not; that it was a cold-blooded report from Ironside.

I asked him if he did not think the British were in a difficult place to continue promising to restore Poland to its rightful owners at a later date, now that Stalin had come into the picture and he said definitely they realized it was a very serious problem; in fact he had spent 2 hours alone with the Prime Minister on Saturday night discussing just this problem. I would be very much surprised if Britain's war aims for the future were not put on a high idealistic plane with very general and less particular specifications as to what is going to be done for Poland.

⁸² Viscount Halifax, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

I said to him, "Suppose Hitler said to you, 'All right, I want to be an artist and I will withdraw and Goering⁸³ and the decent people will run Germany; what will you, Mr. British, say now to the Poles?'" Halifax said he realized they would be in a very difficult position if anything like that should happen.

My own impression is that they have no intention of fighting in the first place and that they regard the situation as changing so very fast that they do not know where the next move will be. He has high hopes that the German people will gradually become disgusted with the whole situation and that at some point, he does not know whether it will be shortly or a long time off, the German Army will take command. That the British would be perfectly willing to see this happen and I think they feel that they could do business with the army. They have worked themselves up without much difficulty into believing this is a war to eliminate Hitler, but every time they get set to take a firm position, as in the Polish affairs, the picture is so kaleidoscopic that they have to take another point of view.

I asked Halifax, "Supposing the Germans arrive at a bad state of affairs what makes you believe that any group of people can handle them from now on and, since they have Mr. Stalin as their next door neighbor, might not the country go Bolshevik and a Communist Europe result?" His only answer to that was that he had spent 2 hours talking to the Prime Minister about this but that the picture is changing so rapidly it is not safe to make any predictions on what might happen. This is not a very satisfactory answer, but I do not know what else he could say.

As far as the Italians are concerned, he does not believe that they will come in on the side of England; certainly not from present indications, but something may happen in the future that might change this. He said they have been very helpful on most everything put up to them. The Germans had asked them about changing the flag of a great many of the German ships to that of Italy and the British told the Italians they could not stand for that and the Italians refused to go through for the Germans on it.

He said Churchill⁸⁴ reported to the War Cabinet this morning that to his best knowledge and belief instead of the Germans having 50 to 60 submarines they had 70, of which the British had destroyed 7 in the first 3 weeks of the war. This encourages them very much indeed. He said, however, that the Germans have now started to build smaller submarines which, of course, will not have the cruising radius but will be able to do considerable damage. They have not yet received authoritative information as to how fast they are being

⁸³ Field Marshal Hermann Goering, German Minister for Aviation.

⁸⁴ Winston Churchill, British First Lord of the Admiralty.

built. He said the British had captured some 60,000 tons of contraband headed for Germany more than they had lost on the ships sunk. I have no way of knowing whether these figures are accurate because Halifax said to the best of his memory these were the figures. I am sure he was trying to give them to me accurately but they sounded so much greater than I would have thought possible that I am wondering about them.

I would judge that the tone of the propaganda to emanate from England from here on is to be along the lines that the great, lumbering British Government is working up speed along all its different fronts and in all its different colonies and dominions to where they will deliver the big smash when it becomes absolutely necessary.

KENNEDY

740.0011 European War 1939/587 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, September 27, 1939—9 p. m.

[Received September 28—7: 15 a. m.]

630. In view of the rapid succession of events relating to Soviet policy at the present time, the ultimate end and aim of which are not yet clear, I believe that certain considerations which in my opinion are affecting the course being pursued by the Soviet Union at the present time will be of value, especially as from the beginning of Soviet-German collaboration there has been a strong tendency in French and British diplomatic circles here to entertain the hope that friction has or will shortly arise between the two countries. This tendency has been especially manifest since the establishment of the line of demarcation between German and Soviet troops which admittedly turns over to the Russian armies a much larger portion of Poland than had heretofore been anticipated. The view is expressed in British and French circles that this line was dictated by Stalin and forced upon Hitler against the latter's will and is based upon the reasoning that by the establishment of this line the Russian forces obtain the Galician oil fields and now block German access to Rumania and that in consequence Germany has become dependent upon Russian goodwill in respect of supplies of oil from Rumania. It is further argued that Germany is likewise now precluded from opposing any Soviet aims in respect of the Baltic.

It is now almost certain that genuine confidence cannot exist between Stalin and Hitler and that when the former conceives it to be in the interest of the Soviet Union he will not hesitate to betray

his agreement with Hitler. I am unable to share the optimism of my French and British colleagues that this eventuality is in any way imminent.

While it is quite possible that the line of the Vistula was at Soviet request I have no evidence to support the view that it was drawn against any real opposition coming from Germany. Far from denoting friction between Soviet Russia and German Government I regard it as further indication of far-reaching cooperation between the two Governments. The line was arrived at according to my information without delay and when agreed upon was at least 4 or 5 days march in advance of positions occupied by the Russian troops. I furthermore [point out?] as of considerable significance the fact reported in my telegram No. 620, September 26, 10 p. m.,⁸⁵ that the Soviet Government demanded from the Estonian Foreign Minister last Sunday a further increase of transit and storage facilities in Estonia for Soviet goods which could only be bound for Germany. The Estonian source from which this information was received stated that it was his impression that in pressing its demands in this respect the Soviet Government had been clearly acting in the interests if not at the direct behest of Germany. Furthermore, the fact that Ribbentrop,⁸⁶ whatever may be the real purpose of his visit to Moscow today, will be here at the same time as the Turkish Foreign Minister would appear to indicate close Soviet-German cooperation in matters affecting the Balkans and the Black Sea. It is possible that in addition to settling certain questions dealing with the fate of Poland, Ribbentrop and Stalin will work out with the acquiescence of Turkey a scheme for the neutralization of the Balkans and the Black Sea area. It is likewise of some significance that the first public report of Ribbentrop's impending visit to Moscow came from Japanese sources. It may therefore well be that some arrangement in respect the Far East will be discussed.

STEINHARDT

740.0011 European War 1939/609 : Telegram

The Minister in Rumania (Gunther) to the Secretary of State

BUCHAREST, September 28, 1939—3 p. m.

[Received 11 p. m.]

277. The Turkish Ambassador has confided to me that the visit of his Minister of Foreign Affairs to Moscow apart from informing himself as to Russia's real intentions has as its purpose the discussion

⁸⁵ *Foreign Relations, The Soviet Union, 1933-1939*, p. 941.

⁸⁶ Joachim von Ribbentrop, German Minister for Foreign Affairs.

of a plan to form a Balkan union to comprise eventually, if possible, Hungary and Bulgaria and to be formed with or without Russian cooperation—preferably with, as that would imply that Russia has no immediate plans of aggression in this part of the world. It is hoped that Italy appalled by the opening of the sluices to the Bolshevik hordes will also approve and support. This would be much more far-reaching than the proposed pact of nonaggression, heretofore muted, and more comprehensive than Gafencu's constructive project mentioned in my No. 141 of August 17, 11 a. m.⁸⁷ The Ambassador said that in any case his Government would work for this union which would comprise some 55,000,000 people even without Bulgaria and Hungary and would serve as a formidable rampart against either Russian or German aggression. It is quite possible that the German Government has heard of this project which may be one reason additional to those mentioned in my 270 of September 26, 11 a. m. [*p. m.*]⁸⁷ for Von Ribbentrop's sudden departure for Moscow. Were such a union to be effected in time to be of use it might spell peace in this part of the world for many years to come, surely it would be to the advantage of both Hungary and Bulgaria to join, as in the event of Russian invasion those countries would suffer ruin and disaster such as that of the rest. The project as explained to me provides for a token cession in Dobrudja on the part of Rumania to Bulgaria but who knows what Russia would demand.

Discussing developments in Poland the Ambassador heartily concurs in the views set forth in my telegram No. 257 September 23, 8 p. m. that Germany has already been outwitted by Russia and is suffering discomfiture. He goes so far as to say that Hitler's seeming eagerness to launch a peace offensive is partly inspired by realization of this and fear that should Germany become seriously involved in the west Russia would improve the opportunity of expanding further in central Europe and southeastern Europe. In the gangster warfare now going on it is not without the bounds of possibility however that Hitler might succumb to the temptation to annihilate the cream of the Russian Army now easily get-at-able in Poland as there would then be nothing much left in Russia to oppose his annexation of the entire Ukraine.

The Ambassador expects Saracoglou to stop at Constanza on his way back from Russia in order to confer with Gafencu. The Ambassador will be there and has promised to inform me of developments.

Copy sent by air to Istanbul and Rome.

GUNTHER

⁸⁷ Not printed.

740.0011 European War 1939/604 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, September 28, 1939—7 p. m.

[Received September 28—3:10 p. m.]

2237. Gafencu, Foreign Minister of Rumania, stated to the French Ambassador in Bucharest this morning that the concentration of Soviet troops on the Rumanian border and activities of Soviet agents within Rumania were so extraordinary that he anticipated an almost immediate attack by the Soviet Union on Rumania. He stated to the French Ambassador that Rumania would resist any Russian attack. It is believed here that Rumanian resistance if any would be of extremely brief duration.

The French Ambassador in Rome has had another conversation with Ciano which was friendly but produced no concrete results.

The French are still hoping that the Turks will decide to sign the agreements with France and Great Britain within 24 hours.⁸⁹

The information of the French Foreign Office with regard to the Soviet-Estonian negotiations indicates that the Soviet Union has asked Estonia to conclude a defensive alliance with the Soviet Union.⁹⁰

BULLITT

740.0011 European War 1939/603 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, September 28, 1939—7 p. m.

[Received September 28—6:45 p. m.]

1471. My 1469, September 28, 6 p. m.⁹¹ In Soviet circles in Berlin the emphasis in connection with Ribbentrop's visit to Moscow is being placed upon the settlement of problems relating to Polish territory although they do not exclude the possibility that other matters will be discussed. They say that there is a complete understanding between Moscow and Ankara and are inclined to speak with some assurance as to Soviet claims to Bessarabia which they intimate may fall to Russia as easily as did the Polish territory. Furthermore they point to Lithuania and especially to Estonia and in this connection the report of the sinking of a Russian vessel by an unknown submarine in the Baltic has given rise to grave concern among the military experts

⁸⁹ The treaty of mutual assistance was signed at Ankara, October 19, 1939, League of Nations Treaty Series, vol. cc, p. 167.

⁹⁰ Signed at Moscow, September 28, 1939, League of Nations Treaty Series, vol. cxcviii, p. 223.

⁹¹ Not printed.

of those countries in Berlin as to the possibility that the Soviets will use as a pretext for the invasion of Estonia a claim that that country is forming a base for foreign submarines. Soviet representatives here also discuss the possibility of a military alliance with Germany and in general make no efforts to conceal their satisfaction in the developments of the past weeks as affecting their country.

In German official circles the report of a possible military alliance with Russia is also current but in general there is a certain reserve in reference to the immediate purposes of Ribbentrop's trip to Moscow. Indications are multiplying of dissatisfaction in higher military circles here as well as in the party itself with the pro-Soviet policy of the regime and although this attitude is not clearly articulate and is in no way expressed by Government officials it has already given rise to the comment that Ribbentrop's visit is not intended so much to mark a closer cooperation with the Soviets as to induce a certain restraint in the development of what appear to be increasing requirements on the part of that Government.

KIRK

740.0011 European War 1939/635 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, September 30, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received 8:30 p. m.]

2262. For the President and the Secretary. I have just had a conversation with Leger⁹² who was in consultation this morning with Daladier and the chiefs of the General Staff.

Leger asserted that the meeting this morning had been called because the French Government now had information from diplomatic sources, military sources, and secret service sources which indicated that it was 98% certain that the Soviet Government had promised to participate in the offensive against France which is being prepared by Germany to the extent of sending 2000 Soviet bombardment planes. He added that French information from Italy indicated that the Italians were completely convinced that the Soviet Union would send these 2,000 bombardment planes to attack France and that in consequence Mussolini had decided that when the German-Soviet offensive against France should be launched the Italian air force also would attack France.

Leger added that all information available from all sources indicate that the German offensive against France would be loosed in from 5 to 8 days.

⁹² Alexis Léger, Secretary General of the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

He went on to say that in spite of the desperate appeals of the French Government to the British Government to send British pursuit planes and bombardment planes to France the British had refused to send any first class planes on the plea that, in spite of their public statements, they were not in the least ready to engage in serious aerial warfare. Leger went on to say that the French General Staff was convinced that a bombardment of all the lines of communication of the French Army would be loosed by 6 to 8,000 bombing planes which would be without parallel for horror in human history. The General Staff was convinced that however bravely the French Army might fight it would be cut off rapidly from its base of supplies and destroyed.

Leger concluded by saying "The game is lost. France stands alone against three dictatorships. Great Britain is not ready. The United States has not even changed the Neutrality Act. The democracies again are too late. The Germans know that at this minute with Russian and Italian support they can crush the French Army. Therefore they will attack."

I argued with Leger that it was against all the interests of the Soviet Union to assist Germany to knock out France and England completely. Leger replied that whether or not it was against what he and I considered to be the interests of the Soviet Union, the Soviet Union had promised to give this support and what was equally important the Government of Italy was convinced that the Soviet Union would give this assistance.

Leger went on to say that the news of the military support which the Soviet Union had promised to give to Germany had now begun to percolate to the Committees on Foreign Affairs of the French Senate and the French Chamber of Deputies. It was for this reason that in both those Committees there was at the present time a profound and a desperate desire to accept the German-Soviet peace proposal.

As you know Leger has been consistently on the side of fighting whatever the cost. The views he expressed today were therefore impressive.

Since Leger has the absolute confidence of Daladier and is in most intimate contact with him, the above represents, I am certain, Daladier's view of the present situation.

I have avoided seeing Daladier for several days since I have felt that as American Ambassador I must avoid having any influence on the terrible decision which now faces France.

I should be glad to know if you have any views which you desire me to express to Daladier in the present situation.

BULLITT

761.6211/227 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

[Extract]

LONDON, September 30, 1939—9 p. m.

[Received 11:52 p. m.]

1882. Preliminary reaction of responsible officials of the Foreign Office to the German-Russian agreement announced at Moscow yesterday⁸⁸ are: (1) that it caused no surprise here; (2) that as far as it is possible to assess the motives of the Russian Government there is nothing to indicate any change or deviation from what are believed to be the basic Russian purposes and desires: (a) for all of the Western nations to exhaust themselves fighting each other, with Russia outside ready to take any advantage that suits her of their ultimate weakness; (b) the historic, nationalistic desire of Russia to recover Russian Poland, the Baltic States and Bessarabia, in fact any territory that was ever under Russian sovereignty. (In this purpose Russia is no different to [from] the Russia of Catherine the Great and the nineteenth century); and (c) the desire to prevent Germany from becoming the controlling factor in the Balkans and the determination to keep from the Black Sea, with the eventual object of securing effective control of the Dardanelles.

Whether the present agreement with Germany will affect any or all of the basic purposes of Russia is a matter of conjecture. As the present situation and set-up are seen by the Foreign Office, Russia would gain no real advantage in pursuance of her objectives by becoming involved in a world war; viewing the situation in the light of what would appear to be Russia's own selfish interests a full fledged military alliance with Germany would therefore seem unlikely. On the other hand the British Ambassador at Moscow reports that Ribbentrop was received with really unprecedented enthusiasm by the Soviet officials and that there is a possibility that this enthusiasm may carry the Soviet Government toward aggressive adventures which would be at variance with their past policies and perhaps even at variance with the material interests of Russian [garbled group]. As a merely preliminary view, Sir William Seeds thinks that the test of Russia's immediate intentions with regard to the Western war will be whether her proposals for a general peace are brought forward through a third power or whether the initiative will be taken by the

⁸⁸ For correspondence concerning the Germany-Soviet boundary and friendship treaty and the declaration of the Government of the Reich and the Government of the U. S. S. R., signed September 28, 1939, see pp. 477 ff. For texts, see *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941*, pp. 105-108.

Soviet Embassy in London. If the latter procedure should be adopted Seeds suggests to his Government that Russia be reminded of the advantages which would come to her through following up recent suggestions for an Anglo-Russian trade agreement and conversely that if Russia did enter the war on the side of Germany, it would mean the complete disappearance of her foreign trade (except in the Baltic) including that with the United States which was mentioned.

KENNEDY

761.6211/233

The Polish Ambassador (Potocki) to the Secretary of State

[WASHINGTON,] September 30, 1939.

SIR: I have the honor, upon instructions of my Government, to inform the Government of the United States that the agreement signed in Moscow between the Government of Germany and of Soviet Russia on September 28, 1939, assuming to dispose of the territory of the Polish Republic is an illegal act in direct violation of existing treaties and international law.

In consequence the Government of the Republic of Poland refuses to recognize this agreement and will strive, with all means at its disposal, to free the territory of the Republic of Poland from occupation by alien troops and to restore to its people their inalienable rights to freedom and self-determination.

Accept [etc.]

JERZY POTOCKI

740.0011 European War 1939/734 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, October 7, 1939—10 p. m.

[Received October 7—8: 12 p. m.]

704. The French Chargé came to see me this afternoon and stated that, as I knew, at the time of the Soviet invasion of Poland he had opposed a declaration of war or rupture of diplomatic relations on the part of the French Government by reason of the Soviet action. Since that time however the development of Soviet-German collaboration and in particular the agreements and the declaration signed by Ribbentrop and Molotov on September 28 and other developments had caused him to modify his previous opinion. He said that he was gradually approaching the point of view that from a psychological point of view it would be a mistake for England and France to continue to

remain passive in the future in the face of what appears to be increasing Soviet alignment with Germany and that he was considering recommending to his Government the necessity of the adoption of a much firmer attitude toward the Soviet Union including if necessary a rupture of diplomatic relations.

He then inquired of me whether I believe that the American neutrality law would be amended and if so when as he felt that any gesture on the part of the English and French Governments would be immeasurably strengthened if it came immediately after a change in the neutrality bill. I replied that although I had no information from official sources on the subject it was my personal opinion based on reports appearing in the American press and my judgment of American political values that the existing neutrality laws would be amended along the lines of the bill proposed by the President and that I anticipated action on this bill would be taken by Congress within 2 or 3 weeks.⁹⁴

The French Chargé d'Affaires then asked what information I had in regard to the possibility of a Soviet-Japanese *rapprochement*, as he felt that the position of Japan vis-à-vis the Soviet Union might be a factor in determining the French and British decision. I told him in reply in strict confidence that my information was to the effect that the Japanese Government up to the present at least has not shown any pronounced disposition to enter into a general political understanding with the Soviet Union.

In conclusion the Chargé d'Affaires inquired as to the procedure which should be followed in sounding out the American Government as to its willingness to represent French interests in Moscow in the event of a rupture of diplomatic relations. He emphasized that while he did not think his Government was considering taking immediate action along these lines and that his inquiry was purely anticipatory, he contemplated recommending to his Government that it inform itself in the premises. I replied that in my opinion the proper procedure would be for the French Ambassador in Washington to approach the Department.

STEINHARDT

740.0011 European War 1939/827 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, October 20, 1939—8 p. m.
[Received October 20—4:15 p. m.]

2537. The authoritative source referred to in my No. 565 of March 25, 1 p. m.⁹⁵ has just received the following direct information:

⁹⁴ See pp. 656 ff.

⁹⁵ Not printed.

The King of Italy states that at the outbreak of war Mussolini desired to enter the war on the side of Germany and the King was obliged to threaten that he would not sign the order for war against France. Since that time Mussolini constantly has been anxious to find an opportunity to enter the war on the side of Germany. Ciano, however, is supporting the King in his opposition to such a policy. The King feels, however, that if the German Army should be successful in marching through Switzerland and reaching the valley of the Rhone it would be impossible for him to prevent Mussolini from bringing Italy into the war on the side of Germany. Except in case of this eventuality the King believes that Italy will remain neutral.

BULLITT

740.0011 European War 1939/834 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Chargé in Germany (Kirk)

WASHINGTON, October 21, 1939—11 a. m.

742. Personal for Kirk from the Secretary. Please call at the earliest possible occasion on some high German official (you are of course the best judge as to whom it would be most useful for you to see) and tell him orally that American public opinion is becoming increasingly perturbed at the reported concentration of German troops on the Dutch and Belgian frontiers. You may add that your Government was gratified to note the recent statement made by the Minister of War that the neutrality of the Netherlands and Belgium would not be violated by Germany, but it feels that were an explanation in line with this assurance to be given as to the purposes of the reported concentration it would have a reassuring effect.

HULL

740.0011 European War 1939/841 : Telegram

The Minister in Rumania (Gunther) to the Secretary of State

BUCHAREST, October 23, 1939—1 p. m.

[Received 5:55 p. m.]

351. Whereas the terms of the Franco-British-Turkish pact may be considered as a diplomatic defeat for Germany and as erecting a definite barrier against German aggression in southwestern Europe, on the other hand it leaves the door wide open to aggression from Russia. There is no echo here of the jubilation in the allied countries over this pact.

As pointed out in paragraph 3 of my telegram No. 203, September 16, 9 p. m.,⁹⁶ it has not been my belief that Germany would attempt the conquest of Rumania except possibly later as an incidental

⁹⁶ Not printed.

in a desperate last chance thrust intended to menace eventually the Suez Canal. Even this she would probably not be likely to attempt unless sure of Italian collaboration. On the other hand, it is my belief that Russia presents a much greater danger to this part of the world than does Germany. England, which appears to be courting Russia, would hardly go to war with her to protect Rumania. When the time comes the British guarantee of this country, it may well be argued, was intended originally to apply only in the case of German aggression. The French would do nothing unless England led the way. Though Turkey would not concur it is quite clear from Franco-British-Turkish pact that it will not defend Rumania except indirectly in case Bulgaria also attacks. Possibly there is already an agreement in principle between Germany and Russia regarding the Black Sea zone as there was concerning the Baltic States. In any case only Germany would appear to stand in the way of such plans as Russia may have or develop for German aggression upon Rumania. Therefore unless the Balkan-Danubian bloc or federation is effectively and promptly consummated Russian aggression is just a question of whether and when. In the event of it the very fact of the imminence of a Balkan-Danubian federation might even be taken as the excuse for explicit demands backed up by a threat of force.

GUNTHER

740.0011 European War 1939/848 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, October 24, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received 9 p. m.]

1817. Personal for the Secretary. I have made two approaches with a view to carrying out your instructions as set forth in your 742, October 21. The only results attained so far is a statement through a high official in the Foreign Office to the effect that several days ago the Belgian military authorities in Brussels inquired of the German Military Attaché there as to the reported concentration of German troops on the Belgian frontier and were told that no German mechanized troops were in that area but that information had reached Germany that the French had concentrated mechanized troops on the French-Belgian frontier and that Belgian troops were massed on the Belgian-German border. The suggestion was implied that explanations of these reports elicited from the French and Belgians might be helpful.

I am hoping to be able to avail myself of a more direct contact in the near future in an attempt to give some positive effect to your instruction.

KIRK

740.0011 European War 1939/874 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, October 26, 1939—10 a. m.

[Received 3:17 p. m.]

1838. Personal for the Secretary. In continuation of my 1817, October 24, further information in the line of an explanation of the concentration of German troops on the Belgian and Dutch frontiers has reached me from unofficial sources to the effect that these troops which are not mechanized consist of reserves for a possible offensive against the Maginot Line and have been established in that sector as constituting an area better protected from enemy air raids. It has further been intimated also from unofficial sources that explanations of these concentrations might be forthcoming from the German side if requested by the Belgian and Netherlands Governments but that any steps along these lines other than those which may have already been taken might be subject to serious objections.

In connection with the foregoing I need not assure you that in my conversations on the matter in question the confidential and personal nature of your instructions is being strictly observed.

KIRK

740.0011 European War 1939/873 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, October 26, 1939—11 a. m.

[Received 6:04 p. m.]

1839. My 1804, October 22, 7 p. m.⁹⁷ Although no direct information is available or can be expected the opinion prevails that a decision has been reached to launch airplane attacks against the British fleet as well as shipping and military objectives in England in the near future, possibly next week. All preparations are believed to have been made for these attacks and the main considerations at present are said to be the weather and visibility especially with a view to regulations of the raids. The opinion as to the possibility of a land offensive in the west is more divided but the more measured view is that any offensive in that direction will be limited to those sectors where British troops will be concentrated and that a major offensive along the front will not be launched at present. This view gives effect to the distinction which has been made and particularly stressed in Ribbentrop's speech⁹⁸ between the violent enmity manifested against Great Britain and the indulgent attitude towards France and also ad-

⁹⁷ Not printed.⁹⁸ At Danzig, October 24, 1939.

mits of the possibility which is said to be entertained by influential party leaders and even by Hitler himself that within a limited period of time France may be utilized to bring about peace with England.

In those circles, however, which as stated in my telegram under reference any development is expected at any time attention is particularly directed towards the threat of violation by Germany of neutral territory and especially of Holland and Belgium. In this connection it is stated on reliable authority that the plan already exists for the invasion by Germany of France through Belgium and the use of that territory in launching attacks against England. Belgium it is said if alone attacked might resist for a period of 3 weeks but in the event that the approach should be made through Holland as well, Belgium would be helpless to resist. At the present time according to information available to foreign military attaché it is believed that between 60 and 80 German divisions are concentrated in the west of which 12 are stated to be on the Dutch frontier, 15 on the Belgian-Luxemburg borders, 11 between the Mosel and the Rhine, 7 south of Karlsruhe, and additional forces including mechanized troops assembling east of the Rhine. It is not known that the German troops in the west are as yet fully prepared for a major offensive. Furthermore, indications are lacking as to whether a decision has been reached to put into operation the plan of attack which would violate Belgian and Dutch neutrality and in this connection it has been said that although the divergence of command favors a general land offensive before British preparations have further materialized and war supplies from the United States are rendered available, Hitler himself is opposed to such a course at present. The fact remains, however, that the reported presence of German troops on the Belgian and Dutch frontier subject as it may be to explanations on other grounds is a cause of grave concern to those who fear an extension of the war.

It is with that fear in view that possible means have been explored to minimize the danger and the following suggestion is submitted for such consideration as it may merit: any direct representation to the German Government on the part of the Governments of Belgium and the Netherlands might prove difficult from the point of view of the latter Governments and might not carry sufficient weight to serve the purpose intended. Some intervention therefore by a powerful neutral would appear to be indicated and the first choice is the Government of the United States. In making any such *démarche* with a view to attaining the ends desired cognizance should be taken of the fact that in Germany the possibility of the violation of neutral territory by England and France also has not been eliminated from consideration. Any step therefore should be taken with regard to the British and French Governments as well as to the German Government and in

the same general tone. Furthermore, attention should be given to the susceptibilities of the German Government which, in such matters, chooses to adopt the attitude that some accusation is being launched against it and unjustly so. The *démarche* therefore should be secret and confidential and should be given no publicity whatsoever. The form of such a *démarche* which has been suggested is a personal message from the President to the chiefs of the respective states on the lines of the interest of the entire world in the preservation of neutrality in general and the protection of the neutral status of Belgium and Holland in particular.

In submitting the foregoing suggestion and especially in judging the opportune moment for its possible implementation I need not point out that in circumstances such as the present until action was understood the intent of the German Government can only be inferred and that even a decision taken may be subject to change before it is actually put into effect.

KIRK

740.0011 European War 1939/1003a : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Minister in Hungary (Montgomery)

WASHINGTON, November 13, 1939—6 p. m.

251. As rumors are again reaching Washington that Germany may be planning some move against Hungary in the near future, we suggest that it might be desirable for you to take early occasion to see the Prime Minister,⁹⁹ and if it can be done without too much comment, the Regent,¹ and obtain the benefit of their general viewpoint.

For your private information, the Rumanian Minister here stated that he had positive information that the German Government had inquired of the Hungarian Government some 2 weeks ago if Hungary would permit the passage of German troops through Hungary against Rumania. The Hungarian Government is reported to have refused.

HULL

740.0011 European War 1939/1022 : Telegram

The Minister in Hungary (Montgomery) to the Secretary of State

BUDAPEST, November 15, 1939—7 p. m.

[Received 10 p. m.]

311. Referring to Department's telegram 251, November 13, and the Legation's telegram No. 310, November 14,² the Prime Minister yester-

⁹⁹ Count Paul de Teleki.

¹ Nicholas Horthy de Nagybanya.

² Latter not printed.

day took occasion to converse at length with me regarding the international situation and Hungary in particular at a small intimate tea to which his wife had invited me informally on the preceding day. Since for some time he had been in many respects reticent to me and to the Ministers of the belligerent countries I found his behavior astonishing but my British colleague confided to me this morning that he had had a similar experience and he attributed Count Teleki's action to Hungarian conviction that the war was not favoring Germany and it now served future Hungarian interests to deal in a more friendly and open manner with the Allied Powers (though the Prime Minister has not seen Loeb which omission O'Malley³ attributed to a distrust of the French) and the United States. The Prime Minister's attitude was consistent with that of the Foreign Minister who, when last I spoke with him, actually showed an anti-German trend of mind.

Speaking calmly and apparently undisturbed by the international situation Count Teleki said substantially the following: Germany's main objective was to destroy Great Britain in the course of which in the present war three avenues lay open to Germany—a direct attack upon Great Britain which now was difficult, a thrust through Switzerland which however had the undesired feature of leading to France, and the invasion of (one or both) the Netherlands and Belgium to obtain bases from which to attack Great Britain directly but in this she was deterred for the moment by fear of American public opinion which she did not wish to arouse against her. The only alternative was a direct attack on the Maginot Line which Germany ultimately might be compelled to undertake. No decision for a definite plan of campaign yet had been made because of divided counsel. In consequence Germany's attention was diverted by this situation and there was no menace by her to small countries until a campaign had been initiated and had failed following which, to bolster up public opinion, a German conquest of a small country might be expedient. However, other small states such as those of the Oslo group⁴ and Switzerland for logical and more strategic reasons were in greater danger than was Hungary. There was no present advantage to make a thrust to the southeast because independent Hungary and Rumania best could supply Germany with foodstuffs and oil. Germany had expressed no thought of and made no suggestion of requesting the passage of troops through Hungary to attack Rumania. On the contrary she had expressed a desire for amicable relations between Hungary and Rumania in order that her oil supply should not be interrupted. Russia and Italy were additional factors against German invasion of Hungary.

³ Owen St. Clair O'Malley, British Minister and Consul General in Hungary.

⁴ Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden.

Russia's entire program was made in preparation of a distant and eventual struggle with Germany. The two countries had agreed to maintain peace in Southeastern Europe to enable Germany to receive supplies but Russia would do all possible to prevent Germany from reaching the Black Sea.

Italy considered Hungary her closest friend and supporter and Hungary had consulted her in every action since the outbreak of war. Italian attitude toward the Axis had remained unreconcilable but a German attack on Hungary represented a virtual attack on Italy and undoubtedly such action would orientate Italy to the west if not bring her into the war on the side of the Allies. Yugoslavia also could not remain impassive to an invasion of Hungary aimed at her ally Rumania and it was conceivable that ultimately she might come to the assistance of Hungary with the backing of Italy. Consequently a German attack on Hungary or Rumania was improbable under present conditions but not impossible. Hungary would never consent to the entrance or passage of German troops and would resist such action, though perhaps hopelessly, to the end. The Russian and Slovak frontiers were being fortified and it was hoped ultimately to fortify the entire northern frontier to which Germany could not object because she herself was fortifying her Russian frontier.

The Prime Minister also denied rumors of his serious illness and probable resignation and said there would be no approval of Cabinet reshuffle.

The British Minister expressed to me his entire agreement with the Prime Minister's conclusions.

The Rumanian Minister this morning denied to me having any knowledge of a German request for the passage of troops through Hungary although he had heard rumors to that effect from time to time.

MONTGOMERY

770.00/665 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, November 16, 1939—8 p. m.

[Received November 16—5 : 23 p. m.]

2381. I saw Halifax this evening and he gave me the following information regarding the Balkan situation. England has been urging Turkey to try to work out some kind of an agreement with Italy along the lines of the Greek pact with Italy⁶ in order that a neutral

⁶Treaty of Friendship, Conciliation and Judicial Settlement, signed at Rome September 23, 1928, League of Nations Treaty Series, vol. CVI, p. 219.

bloc might be formed in the Balkans. For a few days the idea seemed to be working rather well but at the present moment it is not getting along as well as the British would like to see it. The Germans have been planting plenty of seeds of discontent in many of the Balkan states and particularly Bulgaria, to the effect that England was behind the whole proposition and was using them for her own interests and pointing out to the Bulgarians that the Turkish troops on Bulgaria's borders was an instance of just how honest the potential neutral bloc was. They talked peace and put their soldiers on the borders. England in order to counteract this persuaded the Turks to withdraw these troops and Halifax said it has made a splendid impression in Bulgaria. So while for the moment the situation is not as bright as it was a week or 10 days ago he is still hopeful something may be worked out.

As regards Italy there is every indication that they are becoming more and more anti-German, particularly on the basis of the German-Russian agreement. He told me that the Italians are most unpopular in Germany but that nobody is permitted to say this out loud. Halifax told me a story which he never wants to get out: He said that when Ciano last saw Hitler, after a rather heated discussion, Hitler said to him, "You were born an ass and will die an ass." I said to Halifax that this proved two things: my own impression of Ciano and that Hitler is rather a smart fellow. Halifax said, "Needless to say, this is not creating any great good-will in Rome for the Germans." The British are also arranging to buy some airplanes from the Italians and this they feel will help them considerably.

As far as Germany goes they are still at a loss. Their information indicates that Goering is talking rather openly against Ribbentrop and that he is saying they won the Polish military battle and lost the political one. Halifax told me that Sikorski, the Polish general, whom they all like very much told him two things: First, that the Russian Army is unbelievably bad; that they would never fight anybody outside of Russia and that in his opinion they will not dare take on Finland; secondly, when the Germans and Russians were together the Germans were practically subservient.

Halifax told me that the Russians in answer to the British suggestions for trade agreements said they did not want to talk while they were carrying on these negotiations with Finland and they did not want to appear to be too friendly with Great Britain while they were having an argument with Finland.⁷

⁷ For correspondence concerning the Soviet demands on Finland and the outbreak of the winter war, see pp. 952.

With reference to the Far Eastern situation he said the British had been helped a great deal by Mr. Grew's speech⁸ and actions. Halifax said he told Winston Churchill last night at a Cabinet meeting that he did not consider the foreign policy of the British toward the Far East particularly heroic but he had one of three alternatives: First, he could not afford a repetition of incidents such as took place 5 or 6 months ago at Tientsin;⁹ it did British prestige inestimable harm in India and the Far East; secondly, while he thought the Chinese were the people to be with in this battle he was in no position to take the Japanese on in a wideopen break at this time; therefore, since he did not want to be humiliated and they could not fight the Japanese, the third alternative was to get along the best way they could until things cleared up considerably in the west. He said Churchill made a surprising statement to the effect that the future of the world would rest with China, Russia, the United States, and England. Halifax said, "Be that as it may, it certainly is not the line-up at the minute."

KENNEDY

740.0011 European War 1939/1045 : Telegram

The Minister in Hungary (Montgomery) to the Secretary of State

BUDAPEST, November 17, 1939—2 p. m.

[Received 2:40 p. m.]

312. Referring to the Department's telegram No. 251 of November 13, the Regent received me by appointment last evening when he evinced no concern regarding the possibility of German or Russian aggression upon Hungary but was emphatic in denouncing the entry into Central Europe of Russia who was deluding Germany whom she would not permit to enter Rumania. Russia herself had definite intentions of seizing Bessarabia at the earliest safe moment and otherwise of achieving her imperialistic designs which included the defeat of Germany. The only solution he envisaged was to end the war which to him was capable of justification and to drive Russia from Europe by the combined forces of a European coalition by the present belligerents and Hungary.

Attributing the Munich outrage¹⁰ to a person high in the Nazi hierarchy he saw Germany disunited because of minority and religious malcontents and with no military officer capable of imposing an army control. In any eventuality, including peace, he regarded Germany's

⁸ At Tokyo, October 19, 1939; Department of State *Bulletin*, November 11, 1939, p. 509.

⁹ See vol. iv, pp. 163 ff.

¹⁰ Attempted assassination of Hitler, his staff, and party leaders in bomb explosion at Munich, November 8, 1939.

present position as worse than at the outbreak of hostilities. The Polish campaign he found to have been a fiasco for the Poles because of long and detailed German planning and of her wide use of sabotage.

Italy he asserted had promised military assistance in the event of an attack on Hungary by either Germany or Russia and, with hopes of circumventing the Rumanian-Yugoslav pact,¹¹ negotiations were in progress with a view to obtaining a similar guarantee from Yugoslavia.

Parenthetically Eckhardt¹² has just returned from Belgrade where Macek¹³ and Serbian leaders suggested to him the formation of an Adriatic bloc to consist of Greece, Albania, Yugoslavia, Hungary and Italy.

Hungary had no aggressive intentions to retrieve Transylvania but she could not look with equanimity upon a Russian invasion of that region which was improbable because of Russian interest in Black Sea ports and Dardanelles.

The Regent stated that he had caused the resignation of Minister of Commerce Kunder because of his efforts in behalf of Germany and that he intended eventually to cause the removal of all National Socialist sympathizers in the Hungarian Cabinet and to ban the National Socialist Parties but was advised by the Prime Minister to proceed cautiously. He ended with a castigation of Imredy¹⁴ and a rebuke for his Jew law.

The Regent commended the international efforts and actions before and since the outbreak of war of President Roosevelt¹⁵ whom with Mussolini he considered the two most powerful men in the world.

MONTGOMERY

740.0011 European War 1939/1080 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, November 23, 1939—9 p. m.

[Received November 23—8:05 p. m.]

2814. The Minister of the Netherlands called on me this afternoon and said that it was now the view of his Government that Germany would not attack the Netherlands this autumn.

He added that although there was no formal agreement between the Netherlands and Belgium, or Belgium and France, he was now convinced that in case of a German attack on the Netherlands the

¹¹ Signed at Belgrade June 7, 1921, League of Nations Treaty Series, vol. LIV, p. 257; extended May 21, 1929, *ibid.*, vol. xxviii, p. 221; and extended February 16, 1933, *ibid.*, vol. cxxxix, p. 233.

¹² Tibor Eckhardt, leader of Hungarian Agrarian Party.

¹³ Vlatko Matchek, Yugoslavian Vice President of the Council and leader of Croatian Peasant Party.

¹⁴ Bela de Imredy, previous Hungarian Prime Minister.

¹⁵ See pp. 130 ff. and 350 ff.

Belgian Army would march at once in support of the Dutch Army and the Belgian Government would ask the French Government to send the French Army at once into Belgium to support the Belgian Army.

The Minister of the Netherlands went on to say that the information of his Government from the Far East indicated that there was now no danger that Japan would attack the Dutch East Indies. He added that it was the impression of his Government that the policy of the Government of the United States vis-à-vis Japan had greatly moderated the policies of the Japanese Government and that his Government was most heartily grateful that the Government of the United States was following its present line of policy in the Far East.

BULLITT

740.0011 European War 1939/1081: Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, November 23, 1939—10 p. m.

[Received November 24—9:30 a. m.]

2815. Daladier said to me today that it was still extremely difficult for him to believe that the Germans would not attack somewhere this autumn. Since it now appeared that the attack which had been organized against the Netherlands, Belgium and France was less probable than it had been 10 days ago, he thought that the Germans might attempt an operation to the southeast.

He had reason to believe that the Germans were attempting to reach agreement with the Soviet Union which would permit Germany to occupy Hungary and a piece of Rumania while the Soviet Union should occupy the remainder of Rumania. He also had reason to believe that the Germans were attempting to reach an agreement with Italy for a division of Yugoslavia and Greece which would give Germany control on Salonika. He had no indication however that these attempts of the Germans to reach agreements with the Soviet Union and Italy were meeting with success.

In spite of the development of public opinion in Italy favorable to France and England it appeared that Mussolini personally had not given up his hope to be able to acquire large territories by cooperation with Germany.

It was obvious that Turkey from the point of view of France and England was the key to the situation in the Eastern Mediterranean. The Turks were displaying their customary courage and he was determined to support Turkey to the limit under any and all circumstances.

Daladier said that his information with regard to Germany's plans to move toward the southeast was fragmentary and not altogether

convincing. He found it even more difficult to believe however that the German Army would remain altogether quiescent and that Germany would attempt to win the war merely by use of planes, submarines and mines, counting on an exhaustion of France and England before the exhaustion of Germany.

The latter theory is not held by many members of the Government in Paris who point out that since the blockade has to cover the entire area from the Rhine to Vladivostok Germany may well hope to be able to hold on until the exhaustion of the financial, economic and shipping resources of France and England.

The fact is that the present inaction on the western front is so complete and so contrary to expectation that all responsible public officials in France are engaged in inventing explanations which have a greater basis in imagination and logic than through the facts and events. Almost anything may happen. No one knows what will.

BULLITT

740.0011 European War 1939/1091 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, November 27, 1939—3 p. m.

[Received 4:35 p. m.]

2834. Champetier de Ribes¹⁶ said to me today that it was now absolutely certain that if Germany should attack the Netherlands, Belgium would march at once in support of the Netherlands and would appeal at once to France for military support which would be accorded immediately. He added that the specific arrangements for giving this assistance had already been made.

The Minister went on to say that telegrams received by the French Government this morning indicated that the German Government might be thinking again of attacking the Netherlands in the near future.

BULLITT

740.0011 European War 1939/1092 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, November 27, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received November 27—5:55 p. m.]

2837. The British Ambassador said to me today that Sir Percy Loraine, British Ambassador in Rome, had passed through Paris yesterday and had said to him that he was absolutely certain that Mussolini himself had turned away from Germany and was much more

¹⁶ French Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

favorable to France and England than he had been in the past. He added that Loraine was confident that this evolution would continue provided the French and British should have sufficient discretion not to talk about it.

Sir Ronald Campbell also said to me that his Government did not believe that there was any chance that the Japanese and Soviet Governments would reach agreement for a division of China.

BULLITT

740.0011 European War 1939/1145 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, December 11, 1939—6 p. m.
[Received December 11—2:08 p. m.]

1065. In the course of a conversation yesterday the Italian Ambassador told me that Italy would probably not take any action or even seriously object if Soviet action against Rumania was confined to the occupation of Bessarabia but that any attempt on the part of the Soviet Union to penetrate further into the Balkans or along the shore of the Black Sea would be opposed by Italy, possibly even by force of arms. In this connection the Ambassador did not exclude the possibility of an Italian-Turkish-French-British combination to resist any serious Soviet penetration in the Balkans. In discussing the general Italian policy the Ambassador said that at the beginning of the war the Italian Government had been concerned lest the French and British endeavor to force Italy out of its neutral position but that this fear appeared now to be groundless and the impression prevailed in Rome that Great Britain and France shared the Italian desire to keep the war out of the Mediterranean which he characterized as the dominant principle of Italian policy at the present time.

STEINHARDT

770.00/705 : Telegram

The Minister in Yugoslavia (Lane) to the Secretary of State

BELGRADE, December 27, 1939—8 p. m.
[Received December 27—7:05 p. m.]

372. Legation's telegram No. 365, December 13, 6 p. m.¹⁷ The Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs¹⁸ said to me yesterday that while a bloc in the terms proposed by Rumania might be dead, the idea for a Balkan neutral group to include Bulgaria is still alive. If

¹⁷ Not printed.

¹⁸ M. Smiljanic.

and when Bulgaria is invited to join a neutral bloc with the present members of the Balkan Entente,¹⁹ Bulgarian territorial revindications would undoubtedly be put forward as a condition. The members of the Entente are still all agreed to form a bloc when the time arrives to approach Bulgaria.

Smiljanic expressed the opinion that if Bulgaria should join the bloc Italy too would become more enthusiastic over the project provided that Hungarian-Rumanian difficulties could be adjusted. He expressed apprehension that unless the various differences in the Balkans were adjusted and Italian cooperation obtained, the involvement of the Balkans in the war would be probable. While admitting that Italy controls Hungarian foreign relations he did not make the usual reference to the fear of Italian hegemony.

LANE

740.0011 European War 1939/1365 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, December 30, 1939—3 p. m.
[Received December 30—10:35 a. m.]

1159. Counselor of the French Embassy told me yesterday in strict confidence that he and his Ambassador had come to the conclusion that the German Government is desirous of seeing a rupture of diplomatic relations between France, Great Britain and the United States and the Soviet Union²⁰ because of the obvious advantages to Germany which would result therefrom.

STEINHARDT

III. THE BOUNDARY AND FRIENDSHIP TREATY BETWEEN GERMANY AND THE SOVIET UNION SIGNED AT MOSCOW, SEPTEMBER 28, 1939, AND EARLY ATTEMPTS AT GERMAN-SOVIET WARTIME COOPERATION

761.6211/182 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, September 9, 1939—noon.
[Received September 10—3 a. m.]

1166. My 1028, September 3, 10 a. m.²¹ Although no information has been published regarding the activities of the Soviet military

¹⁹ Greece, Rumania, Turkey, and Yugoslavia.

²⁰ Presumably over the question of the Soviet Union's attack on Finland. See pp. 952 ff.

²¹ Not printed.

plenipotentiary since his arrival in Berlin on September 3, there is a persistent rumor here, apparently emanating from German sources, to the effect that conversations have been in progress having to do with the conclusion of an active German-Russian military alliance. It has thus far been impossible to obtain any substantiation of this story and according to reports which I have received indirectly from certain Russian circles the Russian military delegation has manifested resentment of the alleged German initiative in spreading such rumors. Although I have been unable to ascertain his motives in doing so, I am informed again through Russian sources that General Acakajew²² applied for the documents necessary to enable him to leave Germany for Sweden en route to Moscow.

KIRK

761.6211/197: Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, September 20, 1939—6 p. m.
[Received September 20—3:06 p. m.]

578. I have learned from a reputable source that a German mission arrived in Moscow today by air from Riga. As several German officers in uniform have been seen in a Moscow hotel today the mission is apparently primarily one of a military nature.

STEINHARDT

761.6211/200: Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, September 21, 1939—5 p. m.
[Received September 21—3:55 p. m.]

584. My telegram No. 578, September 20, 6 p. m. In addition to the German military mission at present in Moscow which according to the German Military Attaché²³ is here for the purpose of fixing exactly the line of demarcation in Poland between the German and Soviet forces, there are present in Moscow a number of German civilians, apparently industrialists or engineers. The exact purpose

²² Reference probably intended for General Maxim Alexeyevich Purkayev, head of the Soviet military delegation, and Military Attaché in the Soviet Embassy in Germany.

²³ Lt. Gen. Ernst Köstring, German Military Attaché in the Soviet Union.

of the civilian mission is unknown but it is presumably to further economic collaboration between Germany and the Soviet Union.

STEINHARDT

740.0011 European War 1939/522 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, September 25, 1939—11 a. m.
[Received September 25—9:14 a. m.]

1416. My 983, September 1, 1 p. m.²⁴ The morning papers published a DNB²⁵ announcement to the effect that ratifications of the Soviet-German Nonaggression Pact of August 23²⁶ were exchanged yesterday in Berlin by State Secretary von Weizsäcker and the Soviet Ambassador Schkwarzev.²⁷

KIRK

761.6211/215 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, September 27, 1939—3 p. m.
[Received September 27—8:05 a. m.]

624. The press today publishes a communiqué issued last night concerning the impending visit of Ribbentrop²⁸ which reads as follows:

“On the invitation of the Government of the U. S. S. R., the German Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Von Ribbentrop, is arriving in Moscow on September 27 to discuss with the Government of the U. S. S. R. questions in connection with the events in Poland.”

The press reports in a Tass²⁹ despatch from Berlin that on September 24 the instruments of ratification of the Soviet-German Non-

²⁴ Not printed.

²⁵ Deutsches Nachrichten Büro, German semi-official news agency.

²⁶ For the text of the Treaty of Nonaggression, with the secret additional protocol, between Germany and the Soviet Union signed in Moscow and dated August 23, 1939, see Department of State, *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941* (Washington, 1948), p. 76.

²⁷ Alexander A. Shkvarzev, Soviet Ambassador to Germany from September 3, 1939.

²⁸ Joachim von Ribbentrop, German Foreign Minister. For the preliminaries leading up to the second visit of the German Foreign Minister to Moscow, see *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941*, pp. 86 ff. *passim*.

²⁹ Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union, an official communication agency of the Soviet Government.

aggression Pact were exchanged between the Soviet Ambassador and the State Secretary of the German Ministry for Foreign Affairs followed by an exchange of friendly speeches.

STEINHARDT

740.0011 European War 1939/586 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, September 27, 1939—9 p. m.
[Received September 27—5:40 p. m.]

632. My telegram No. 594, September 23, noon.²¹ I am informed in the strictest confidence that the line of demarcation between the Russian Soviet and German armies is temporary and that the future frontiers of the Polish state have already been agreed upon in principle between Germany and the Soviet Union. My informant states that the line of military demarcation was agreed upon in principle well in advance of its final establishment and that the only discussion between the Soviet and German Governments arose from the fact that the German Government desired a straight north and south line running through Warsaw, whereas the Soviet Government preferred that throughout its length the line follows the course of the rivers. Although Ribbentrop's instructions are not known my informant anticipates that in addition to agreeing finally upon the exact frontiers of the future Polish state questions relating to the Balkans and the Black Sea area and even those relating to the Far East will be discussed. My informant was categorical in his denial of the existence of any friction between the Soviet and German Governments and stated that on the contrary the Russians have thus far been completely loyal in their cooperation.

STEINHARDT

740.0011 European War 1939/601 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, September 28, 1939—6 p. m.
[Received September 28—2:40 p. m.]

640. I am informed that conversations between Stalin and Ribbentrop were resumed at 2 p. m. and will be followed at 5 p. m. by a banquet in the Kremlin for the Germans in honor of Ribbentrop. No indication is yet available as to the subjects under discussion other

²¹ Not printed.

than that contained in my 632, September 27, 11 p. m. [9 p. m.]. Insofar as concerns the Far East it is significant that according to reliable information party propagandists in Moscow have been recently informing meetings that at the present time there are two principal Imperialist powers in the Orient, Great Britain and the United States, who are endeavoring to foment a Soviet-Japanese war but whose efforts have been foiled by the wise diplomacy of Stalin.³² It will be noted that this propaganda closely resembles that which was used in explanation of the signature of the Soviet-German pact last August.

STEINHARDT

761.6211/222 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, September 29, 1939—10 a. m.

[Received 2:25 p. m.]

1472. DNB early this morning published reports from Moscow giving the text of the agreements concluded between Germany and Russia in Moscow³³ which in summary are as follows.

1. Treaty signed September 28 and effective immediately upon signature defining a common German-Russian frontier in former Polish territory. Both parties recognize this line as final and "will reject any intervention by third powers in this settlement."

According to the description given by DNB this frontier begins at the southern tip of Lithuania, runs from there in a general westerly direction north of Augustowo to the frontier of the German Reich and follows this frontier to the Pisa River. From there it follows the course of the Pisa as far as Ostrolenka. It then runs in a southeasterly direction until it reaches the Bug River near Nur. It continues to run along the Bug as far as Krystynopol then turns to the west and runs north of Rawa Ruska and Lubaczow to the San. From here it follows the course of the San up to its source.

In the treaty Germany and Russia declare that they consider this settlement as a sure foundation for a continuing development of friendly relations between the two peoples.

2. Joint declaration by the German and Russian Governments dated September 28 in which, after stating that by their final settlement of the Polish question they have created a sure basis for a per-

³² A truce to terminate the fighting on the Mongolian-Manchurian frontier had been signed in Moscow between Japan and the Soviet Union on September 15, 1939. For correspondence on negotiations between Japan and the Soviet Union, see vol. III, pp. 62-71.

³³ A report of this agreement is contained in telegram No. 649 of the same date from the Ambassador in the Soviet Union, not printed. For text of the Boundary and Friendship Treaty, with one confidential protocol and two secret supplementary protocols between Germany and the Soviet Union, signed in Moscow and dated September 28, 1939, see *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941*, p. 105.

manent peace in Eastern Europe, the two Governments express their view that it would serve the real interests of all peoples, that all [an?] end be put to the state of war between England and France on the one hand and Germany on the other. The two Governments declare that they will exert joint efforts, as the case may be in agreement with other friendly powers, to attain this goal as quickly as practicable. Should these efforts be unsuccessful it would thus be established that England and France are responsible for the continuation of the war, in which case the German and Russian Governments will mutually consult each other concerning the necessary measures.

3. The following exchange of letters between Molotov³⁴ and Ribbentrop under date of September 28:

(a) Letter from Molotov to Ribbentrop in which the former states that the Russian Government desires to develop with all means economic relations and an exchange of goods between Germany and Russia; that an economic program will be formulated by both parties in accordance with which Russia will deliver raw materials to Germany which Germany will compensate by long term industrial deliveries; that the program will be so formulated that the highest volume of exchange of goods attained in the past will again be reached and that both parties will issue instructions and will see to it that the necessary negotiations will be begun and brought to a conclusion as quickly as possible.

(b) Letter from Ribbentrop to Molotov acknowledging receipt of the communication mentioned above and expressing the approval of the Reich Government and its intention to undertake what is necessary in this sense.

KIRK

740.0011 European War 1939/624: Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, September 29, 1939—8 p. m.
[Received September 29—4:46 p. m.]

655. I am informed in the strictest confidence that the Far East was not discussed during the Stalin-Ribbentrop conversations and that questions relating to the Balkan States and the Black Sea were only touched upon in general. I obtained the impression that the German Government considers the latter two questions as of direct and special interest to the Soviet Union to be decided by the latter as it sees fit. My informant stated that the Soviet-German agreement had been reached with a minimum of difficulty and that prior to the opening of the discussions Stalin had laid great emphasis on the importance of the establishment of a firm foundation for close and enduring relations between Germany and the Soviet Union and had intimated a common enmity towards Great Britain.

STEINHARDT

³⁴ Vyacheslav Mikhailovich Molotov, People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union.

761.6211/237 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, October 5, 1939—3 p. m.

[Received October 5—12:23 p. m.]

686. Although not yet publicly announced I am reliably informed that yesterday the German Ambassador⁸⁵ and Molotov signed the supplementary protocol provided for in article I of the Soviet-German treaty of September 28.⁸⁶ In addition to providing for the creation of a mixed commission to arrange the details of the Soviet-German frontiers in Poland I understand the protocol also established "Soviet and German spheres of interest". I have been unable as yet to ascertain where these "spheres of interest" are located, but they may well refer to the Baltic and Balkan areas.

Repeated to Riga.

STEINHARDT

761.6211/244 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, October 9, 1939—1 p. m.

[Received October 9—9:40 a. m.]

706. The press today reports the arrival yesterday in Moscow of Ritter,⁸⁷ a special plenipotentiary of the German Government for economic matters, and an economic delegation of 12 headed by Schnurre.⁸⁸ The delegation includes representatives of the German Ministries of Economy, Agriculture and Railways. According to the announcement Hencke,⁸⁹ the head of the German Frontier Commission, also arrived with the delegation. The delegation was met by officials of the Commissariats for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade. A further announcement in today's press states that Molotov received Ritter and Schnurre yesterday and that during the con-

⁸⁵ Friedrich Werner, Count von der Schulenburg.

⁸⁶ Signed at Moscow on October 4, 1939; for text, see Department of State, *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945* (Washington, 1954), Series D, vol. VIII, p. 208; or Martens, *Recueil de traites*, vol. cxxxiii, p. 641.

⁸⁷ Karl Ritter, Ambassador on special assignment in the German Foreign Office, in charge of economic warfare questions.

⁸⁸ Karl Schnurre, head of Eastern European and Baltic Section of Commercial Policy Division of the German Foreign Office; for the German aspirations for facilitating trade with the Soviet Union, see the Foreign Office memorandum, *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941*, p. 119.

⁸⁹ Andor Hencke, attached to the German Foreign Minister's staff for special duties at the outbreak of war; member of the mixed German-Soviet Commission for the Frontiers of Poland.

versation agreement was reached for the "speedy realization and on a wide scale" on the economic agreement concluded during Ribbentrop's last visit. The announcement states that in particular agreement was reached to the effect that "the Soviet Union shall immediately begin to supply Germany with raw materials and Germany to carry out deliveries to the U. S. S. R."

STEINHARDT

761.67/217: Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, October 17, 1939—7 p. m.

[Received 8:17 p. m.]

765. For the Secretary and the Under Secretary. My telegram No. 727, October 11, 3 p. m.⁴⁰ After a meeting late yesterday in the Kremlin which lasted 2 hours the Turkish Foreign Minister⁴¹ decided to return to Ankara tonight without signing any agreement with the Soviet Union.

The following account of the course of the negotiations was given to me this afternoon by the Turkish Foreign Minister in the strictest confidence.

Turkey had not sought negotiations with the Soviet Union looking towards the conclusion of any agreement. The Turkish Government was entirely satisfied with the state of its relations with the Soviet Union and the general situation resulting from its tentative agreements with England and France,⁴² from the standpoint of the Balkan Entente,⁴³ and the Montreux Conference of 1936.⁴⁴ However, in view of the friendly relations existing with the Soviet Union he had

⁴⁰ Not printed.

⁴¹ Sükrü Saraçoğlu.

⁴² The British Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, announced in the House of Commons on May 12, 1939, the Anglo-Turkish agreement on mutual assistance "in the event of an act of aggression leading to war in the Mediterranean area"; see United Kingdom, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Commons, 1938-39, 5th series, vol. 347, pp. 952-956. For the comparable Franco-Turkish declaration of mutual assistance of June 23, 1939, see *New York Times*, June 24, 1939, p. 4, or German White Book, *Documents on the Events Preceding the Outbreak of the War* (New York, German Library of Information, 1940), doc. No. 310, p. 332. The 15-year mutual assistance pact concluded between Great Britain, France, and Turkey was signed at Ankara on October 19, 1939; for text, see League of Nations Treaty Series, vol. cc, p. 167, or Department of State *Bulletin*, November 11, 1939, p. 544.

⁴³ Signed by Greece, Rumania, Turkey, and Yugoslavia on February 9, 1934, at Athens; for text, see League of Nations Treaty Series, vol. cLIII, p. 153.

⁴⁴ For correspondence regarding the Conference held in Montreux June 22-July 20, 1936, relating to the Regime of the Straits, see *Foreign Relations*, 1936, vol. III, pp. 503 ff.; for text of the convention signed on July 20, 1936, see League of Nations Treaty Series, vol. cLXXXIII, p. 213, or British Cmd. 5249, Turkey No. 1 (1936).

accepted the Soviet invitation to proceed to Moscow to discuss questions of common interest. The original proposals advanced by Stalin at the first meeting which were along the lines reported in my 669, October 3, 6 p. m., 1939⁴⁵ had constituted in the eyes of the Turkish Government an acceptable basis for the negotiation of an agreement, as Stalin recognized the validity of the Turkish obligations to Great Britain and France and had been reassured in return that under no conditions did these obligations envisage Turkish hostilities against the Soviet Union. On the basis of this agreement in principle and after consultation with his Government in Ankara a draft agreement had been prepared which provided for a Soviet-Turkish pact of mutual assistance in the Black Sea area; and recognition that the Dardanelles should continue to be governed by the Montreux Convention of 1936. In subsequent meetings, however, the Soviet Government had raised other questions which departed from the basis of the original understanding.

The Soviet Government among other things had attempted to insert a clause in the proposed agreement to the effect that the agreement should in no way bring the Soviet Union into conflict with Germany⁴⁶ and had likewise attempted to obtain a modification of certain articles of the Montreux Convention which would have the effect of closing the Dardanelles to the fleets of any non-Black Sea power under any conditions or failing such a provision in the agreement to exact private assurances from Turkey to the same effect. In the course of these discussions Molotov had attempted to ascertain the Turkish attitude in a number of hypothetical circumstances not directly related to the negotiations, some of which would have involved the impairment of Turkish commitments to England and France. The question of Rumania had also been subsequently raised by the Soviet Government with the object of obtaining assurances of Turkish neutrality not only in the event of the Soviet seizure of Bessarabia but also in the event of a Bulgarian attempt to acquire the Dobrudja.

The Turkish Foreign Minister and his Government consistently rejected the attempts of Molotov to modify in any important degree the basis of the agreement in principle. Numerous formulas were proposed by both sides in an endeavor to reconcile their differences and finally the Foreign Minister suggested that the Soviet Government submit a draft of its own. This draft proved to be entirely unsatisfactory to the Turkish Government in that it contained not only the clause precluding any Soviet-German conflict but also contained features which would have limited Turkish freedom of action in respect of the Dardanelles. Following the rejection of this draft

⁴⁵ Not printed.

⁴⁶ For the interest evinced by Germany in the negotiations between Turkey and the Soviet Union, see *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941*, pp. 110 ff.

the Soviet Government endeavored to obtain the return of the copy from the Foreign Minister, but was informed that it had already been sent to Ankara.

No progress was made at the meeting yesterday and the Foreign Minister thereupon decided to return to Ankara this evening and so informed Molotov. Molotov, obviously concerned lest his departure give the appearance of a breakdown, endeavored to persuade the Foreign Minister to remain 3 or 4 days longer, promising to work out a solution. The Foreign Minister refused and told Molotov that the Turkish Government had been and still was prepared to conclude a treaty along the original lines and that the negotiations could be carried on in Ankara through the customary diplomatic channels.

The Foreign Minister stated that his Government had consulted with the British and French Governments throughout the negotiations, in particular with respect to Rumania, and that Great Britain had taken the position that there would be no objection to Turkish neutrality in the event of Soviet aggression against Rumania provided the present status of the Dardanelles remained unchanged. The Foreign Minister stated that he had told Molotov that Turkey would not oppose Soviet action in respect of Bessarabia as Turkey construed its obligations under the Balkan Entente to refer only to the frontiers between the Balkan States but that should Bulgaria attempt to seize the Dobrudja, Turkey would come to Rumania's assistance. He informed Molotov, however, that Turkey would not commit itself in advance as to its course of action with respect to the Dardanelles in the former contingency.

The Foreign Minister was frank in stating that Great Britain had sought to make use of the Turkish-Soviet negotiations in an attempt to drive a wedge between Germany and the Soviet Union. He emphasized that Soviet-Turkish relations would remain unimpaired whether or not a pact was signed and repeated that the Turkish Government was willing to conclude a mutual assistance pact with the Soviet Union, but not to the extent of disturbing its relations with England and France. I obtained the distinct impression that the Turks have had the better of the negotiations with the Soviet Government and that in consequence there is a possibility that the Soviet Government, because of the loss of prestige otherwise involved, may decide to drop the proposals objectionable to Turkey and may sign an agreement as originally envisaged. I am also of the opinion that the Soviet Government may now be somewhat more cautious in its approach to the Bessarabia question and endeavor to obtain that region by agreement with Rumania rather than by force, even though such agreement may entail concessions to Rumania.

760D.61/309 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, October 18, 1939—2 p. m.

[Received 2:05 p. m.]

1740. The announcement in the Berlin press that the Swedish explorer Sven Hedin was received by the Fuehrer has started rumors that Hedin, known to be in the good graces of the National Socialist Party and Government circles, has come to Berlin on a mission which is either instigated or at least known to the Swedish Government of placing before Hitler the predicament in which the Nordic and Baltic States find themselves in the face of Soviet Russian designs in the Baltic.⁴⁷

This rumor was denied by a member of the Swedish Legation here who insists that Hedin has no official mission or any connection with the Swedish Government. He added his personal opinion that it would probably be better from every point of view if Hedin had not undertaken his private trip to Germany. According to this source the Swedish Government does not believe that Russia will make any definite demands upon Sweden or Norway at this time, but if intensified warfare develops between Germany and its opponents Russia might take advantage of the situation to attempt at least to extend its influence to the western Scandinavian countries. In any case the informant thought that Russia was determined to obtain control of the Baltic and, given the independent spirit of the Finns, this might result in war between Russia and Finland,⁴⁸ an eventuality which would presumably result in the defeat of the latter because of its inferiority in planes and armored motorized equipment.

In connection with the foregoing a rumor has reached the Embassy to the effect that the German Government is in obligation to carry out a further demand from the Soviet Government that in return for a maintenance of German-Soviet relations on their present cooperative basis the Germans grant Russia special opportunities with regard to the Baltic and ultimately the Nordic States with the exception of Lithuania and Denmark which, because of their contiguity to Germany, are recognized to be the latter's special concern and according

⁴⁷ For pressure by the Soviet Union upon Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania to conclude pacts of mutual assistance, see *Foreign Relations, The Soviet Union, 1933-1939*, pp. 934 ff.

⁴⁸ For the Soviet demands made upon Finland, their rejection, and the ensuing attack by the Soviet Union upon Finland, see pp. 952 ff. Regarding the position in which Germany found itself in this matter, see *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941*, pp. 111, 121-123, 127-131.

to this rumor an immediate aim of the Soviet Government is to obtain participation in the control or ownership of the Aaland Islands. Furthermore, it is said that the Russians are pressing for an urgent reply and that Hitler is despatching an emissary to Moscow in connection with this matter.

KIRK

760D.61/309 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, October 18, 1939—3 p. m.

[Received 5:27 p. m.]

1741. Continuing my 1740, October 18, 2 p. m. Whether this story is true and how far Germany has acceded or is prepared to accede to the extension of Russian influence in the Baltic have not as yet been subject to confirmation; but it is not unreasonable to assume that while Germany is confronted with the possibility of major military action in the west, it is in no position to adopt any course with regard to Soviet Russia which might jeopardize the immediate advantages of Russian indulgence or even cooperation. That Germany has already agreed to a very considerable extension of Soviet military and political control in the Baltic area is evident however from her apparent lack of protest against Soviet encroachments in the three southern Baltic States and from the fact that Germany is repatriating German populations from those countries where important German colonies have resided for hundreds of years. Aside from possible promises of military and naval aid, the price which Russia may be paying for German non-resistance to Soviet designs in the Baltic and elsewhere may be an enlarged guarantee to provide Germany with substantial quantities of Russian raw materials. A month ago German economic authorities appeared to be skeptical concerning the possibility of any immediate and substantial imports from Russia but now it appears that they are beginning to believe that Russia will really make an effective effort to furnish raw materials to Germany. While their estimate of Russian motives center largely about conjectures that Russia may be employing a temporary ruse to disarm objections to its Baltic encroachments, that it may be apprehensive of German strength, or that it wishes to prolong the war between Germany and the Allies, these German authorities nevertheless look for augmented deliveries of supplies from Russia.

In Soviet circles in Berlin it is stated that the German trade delegation headed by Schnurre and Ritter (see my 1629, October 8, 11 a. m.⁴⁹)

⁴⁹ Not printed.

is expected to remain in Moscow for some time and that in view of the complexity of the problems involved the negotiations may be protracted. There is an impression, however, in other diplomatic circles here that some definite development in Soviet-German relations is now under advisement and that a manifestation thereof may be expected possibly in the near future.

KIRK

741.6711/10 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, October 19, 1939—8 p. m.
[Received 8:11 p. m.]

2525. I talked with Daladier,⁵⁰ Champetier de Ribes,⁵¹ Léger⁵² and Coulondre⁵³ this afternoon. They were all delighted by the signature of the treaties between Turkey, France and England.⁵⁴ The information of the French Government indicates that both Molotov and Stalin made a most violent and bitter effort to prevent the Turkish Government from signing the treaties in the terms which were signed today even going so far as to use threats.

The French Government believes that the Soviet Government went as far as it did in attempting to prevent the signature of these treaties because the Soviet Government had promised Germany to prevent Turkey from signing the treaties in exchange for Germany's agreement to give the Soviet Union a free hand in the Baltic.

It is believed by the French Government that the Soviet Union has promised Germany to give Germany diplomatic support in all issues not directly affecting adversely Soviet interest.

The signature of the treaties it is believed will have a considerable restraining influence on Soviet activities directed against Iran since any attempt by the Soviet Union to enter Iran and control the Iranian oil fields can now be countered by the entry of the British and French Fleets into the Black Sea and the bombardment and destruction of Baku.^{44a}

BULLITT

⁵⁰ Édouard Daladier, President of the French Council of Ministers.

⁵¹ A. Champetier de Ribes, Under Secretary of State in the French Foreign Office.

⁵² Alexis Léger, Secretary General of the French Foreign Office.

⁵³ Robert Coulondre, French Ambassador in Germany at the outbreak of war; Director of the Cabinet of the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

⁵⁴ See footnote 42, p. 484.

^{44a} Undoubtedly the Black Sea port of Batum is meant.

761.6211/267 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, October 20, 1939—4 p. m.
[Received October 20—1:52 p. m.]

780. My 649, September 29, 10 a. m.⁵⁵ Tass announcement published in the leading Moscow newspapers this morning reports the ratification by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet-German Treaty of Friendship and Frontiers of September 28 and the supplementary protocol of October 4.⁵⁶

The ratification of the Soviet-German treaty at this time is apparently designed to reaffirm Soviet-German friendship validated following the Soviet failure with Turkey and may be an indication of closer collaboration referred to in the last paragraph of my 776, October 19, 6 p. m.⁵⁷ In this connection a member of the German Embassy as his personal opinion [expressed?] the view that the failure of the Soviet Union and Turkey to reach an agreement reflects Soviet "loyalty" to its commitments to Germany, as the Soviet Union could without difficulty have obtained an agreement with Turkey which would have been in accordance with Soviet interests, but not in keeping with the spirit of present German-Soviet relations. He denied categorically that Germany had exerted any pressure on the Soviet Government in respect to the Turkish negotiations and said that Germany had been careful to leave the question of an agreement with Turkey to the Soviet Government alone. He was quite frank in stating, however, that Turkey was now definitely aligned with England and France, but added that in view of the increasing Soviet-German collaboration the position of Turkey had been rendered more "precarious" as a result. My informant expressed the opinion that under the present circumstances, the Soviet Union would proceed very cautiously in regard to Bessarabia.

STEINHARDT

761.6211/268 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, October 23, 1939—7 p. m.
[Received October 23—2:15 p. m.]

787. My 706, October 9, 1 p. m. In connection with the departure yesterday of Ritter, the German special agent for economic matters,

⁵⁵ See footnote 33, p. 481.

⁵⁶ A similar report was contained in telegram No. 1779, October 20, 11 a. m., from the Chargé in Germany (not printed).

⁵⁷ Not printed.

a Tass announcement in today's press states that the German-Soviet economic negotiations in Moscow "as was to be expected are proceeding entirely satisfactorily" and referring to the return of Ritter, "after the successful clarification of questions in principle," the announcement states that the economic delegation headed by Schnurre will remain and that in the near future an important Soviet economic commission headed by the People's Commissar Tevosyan⁵⁸ will proceed to Germany for the discussion of questions connected with Soviet orders in Germany and German exports to the Soviet Union. Tevosyan is All Union Commissar for the Shipbuilding Industry.

The German Embassy in private conversation has expressed great satisfaction with the progress in the economic discussions in Moscow and has stated that the Soviet Government has shown itself disposed to make greater efforts to supply Germany with raw materials than had been anticipated. At the same time it is admitted that the internal economic requirements of the Soviet Union impose definite limitations on the character and amount of raw materials which can be supplied to Germany in the immediate future.

In respect to the present discussions it was stated in confidence that the present discussions have not attempted to establish definitely the total amount of raw materials of various kinds that the Soviet Government can or will in the future supply in return for German machinery, but have been confined to a general agreement in principle and to the practical discussion of the type of material separately. Arrangements are now being made for the exchange of such materials as are immediately available. My informant stated that discussions up to the present have dealt solely with the matter of trade between the two countries.

It has been left entirely to the Soviet authorities to decide what type of, and in what quantities, raw materials can be made available for export to Germany. The question of the despatch of German specialists to the Soviet Union has not been even discussed but it was indicated that German oil specialists might be sent to the Galician oil fields in Soviet occupied Poland. My informant expressed the opinion that due to the intention of the Soviet Government to import certain machinery from Germany, previously manufactured in the Soviet Union, raw materials previously utilized for that purpose would be made available for export to Germany and additional Soviet capital and labor would be released for increasing the production of raw materials. Although my informant was rather vague about details I believe that the present discussions in respect of raw materials have dealt with timber, cotton, cereals, certain mineral ores and oil.

STEINHARDT

⁵⁸ Ivan Tevodrosovich Tevosyan.

661.6231/245 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, October 28, 1939—3 p. m.
 [Received October 28—10:31 a. m.]

825. In a Tass despatch the press today reports the arrival in Berlin of the Soviet economic mission headed by Tevosyan. I understand that this delegation is composed of no less than 60 persons representing various branches of Soviet industry for the purpose of placing orders for German machinery.

A number of specialists of the German economic mission in Moscow have returned to Berlin following the conclusion of an agreement for the delivery by the Soviet Union to Germany of a million tons of barley, oats and other fodder. Delivery is to begin within 10 days and to be completed within 2 months. This agreement will not be announced, I understand, until termination of the work of the German economic delegation here, and the conclusion of further agreements relating to the delivery of other Soviet raw materials to Germany.

Repeated to Berlin.

STEINHARDT

761.6211/306

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

[Extract]

No. 132

Moscow, October 30, 1939.
 [Received December 1.]

SIR:

The Soviet-German treaty⁵⁹ for the partition of Poland requires little comment. The line establishing the frontier between the Soviet Union and Germany is clearly drawn according to ethnological lines.

The protocol referred to in article I, the details of which were not published, was signed on October 4 by the German Ambassador and Molotov in Moscow. The treaty was ratified by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the German Government on October 19, 1939. In this connection, as reported in my telegram No. 702 of October 7, 9 p. m.⁶⁰ I was authori-

⁵⁹ Of September 28, 1939.

⁶⁰ Not printed.

tatively informed that Stalin had categorically refused to include within the territory to be retained by the Soviet Union an appreciable quantity of racial Poles. It is probable that Stalin desired to accept only territories inhabited by White Russians and Ukrainians in the belief that should Germany be defeated in the present war and a Polish national state recreated as a result thereof, the absence of any appreciable quantity of Poles on the territory acquired by the Soviet Union would facilitate its retention.

From the point of view of general Soviet policy the most interesting article of the treaty is article II which recognizes the frontier as "final" and asserting flatly that both parties will "eliminate * any interference with this decision by third powers", associates the Soviet Government in opposing what was at least one of the initial war aims of Great Britain and France.

The joint statement that both the Soviet and German Governments will direct their common efforts in agreement with other friendly powers, if necessary, to bring about peace and that if these efforts fail Great Britain and France will bear the responsibility for the continuance of the war, is a somewhat curious declaration on the part of the Foreign Minister of a country which professes to consider itself neutral in the present conflict. Viewed in this light it constitutes further evidence that the Soviet Union is in fact if not in law nearer to being an associate of the German Government than a neutral state.

The exchange of letters between Molotov and Von Ribbentrop dated September 28 announcing the intention of Germany and the Soviet Union to embark on an economic program under which the Soviet Union will supply Germany with raw materials in return for delivery of industrial goods "to be effected in the course of a lengthy period" is perhaps the most significant result of Von Ribbentrop's second visit to Moscow. In view of the importance of this subject it will be made the subject of a special despatch following the conclusion of the economic negotiations which are still continuing in Moscow between the German economic mission and the Soviet authorities.⁶¹

In conclusion it may be stated that the result of Von Ribbentrop's second visit outlined above constituted the logical development of the Soviet-German collaboration initiated by the treaty of non-aggression and consultation concluded on the occasion of his first visit.

Respectfully yours,

LAURENCE C. STEINHARDT

* The literal translation of the Russian verb "ustranit" is "to put aside". [Footnote in the original.]

⁶¹ These negotiations were concluded by the German-Soviet Commercial Agreement signed in Moscow on February 11, 1940. For a discussion of the agreement, see the Foreign Office memorandum by Karl Schnurre, February 26, 1940, *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941*, p. 131.

761.6211/280 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, October 31, 1939—noon.

[Received October 31—11 a. m.]

839. My telegram No. 706, October 9, 1 p. m. I am informed in strict confidence that the German economic delegation here has reached an agreement with the Soviet authorities for the delivery during the next year of slightly less than 1,000,000 tons of petroleum products ranging from high test gasoline to crude oil. In respect of high test gasoline it was stated that satisfactory samples had been presented to the German experts by the Soviet authorities (while it is possible that this high test gasoline may be furnished by Ufa refineries which were recently installed by American engineers it is also possible that the reexport to Germany of high [test] gasoline imported from the United States is contemplated). My informant added that at the end of this week the economic mission headed by Schnurre will return to Berlin for a temporary visit over the Soviet holidays.⁶²

As of interest in connection with the foregoing a member of the Italian Embassy informed me in the strictest confidence that about 2 weeks ago the Italian semigovernmental corporation which under the terms of the Italian-Soviet commercial agreement purchased some 400,000 tons of Soviet mazut⁶³ had been informed by the Soviet trade delegation in Rome that the next delivery of oil would not be made. Under instructions from the Italian Government, the Embassy here took up the question with the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs but as no reply has been received as yet my informant was unable to say whether the statement of the Soviet trade delegation referred to one particular delivery or to all future deliveries. My informant concluded with the observation—as an example of "Soviet efficiency"—that after the Soviet trade delegation had stated that the oil would not be delivered the Italian vessel which had previously left Italy unaware of the new situation arrived in Batum, received the oil without difficulty and departed for Italy.

Repeated to Berlin.

STEINHARDT

⁶² In celebration of the anniversary of the Bolshevik revolution, October 25/November 7, 1917.

⁶³ A petroleum residue.

761.6211/286 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, November 4, 1939—9 a. m.

[Received 10:08 a. m.]

1943. My 1739, October 18, 1 p. m.⁶⁴ DNB announces the conclusion yesterday of an agreement between the German and Russian Governments which will grant all Germans from the western areas of the Ukraine and White Russia the right to resettle in Germany and which will grant all Ukrainians, White Russians and Ruthenians from Germany's sphere of interests in the territories of the former Polish State the right to resettle in Russia.⁶⁵ It is stated that the wishes of the persons affected shall be decisive in the matter and that certain safeguards have been provided for the protection of the personal property values involved. According to the DNB announcement the agreement was concluded in the spirit of friendship which marks the relations between Germany and Russia.⁶⁶

KIRK

661.6231/249 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN (via Copenhagen), November 21, 1939—4 p. m.

[Received November 23—10 a. m.]

2102. My 1740, October 18, 2 p. m. According to German officials the first phase of the Soviet-German trade negotiations which have been in progress since the exchange of notes between the Foreign Ministers of the two countries on September 28 providing for the elaboration of a mutual economic program will soon be completed. The German Government hopes however that the first stage of the negotiations will be followed by standing consultation and cooperation towards the improvement of exchanges and transportation between the two countries.

⁶⁴ Not printed.

⁶⁵ Following appeals by the "elected" National Assemblies of the Western Ukraine and Western White Russia, in the territories taken from Poland after its defeat, the Supreme Council of the Soviet Union acceded to the petitions and incorporated these areas into the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and the White Russian Soviet Socialist Republic, at the beginning of November 1939. See telegram No. 826, October 28, and telegram No. 850, November 2, from the Ambassador in the Soviet Union, *Foreign Relations, The Soviet Union, 1933-1939*, pp. 785 and 790, respectively.

⁶⁶ In his telegram No. 916, November 20, the Chargé in the Soviet Union reported that a Commissariat for Foreign Affairs communiqué confirmed the signature on November 16, 1939, of the agreement implementing the confidential protocol of September 28, 1939, between Germany and the Soviet Union in regard to the exchange of nationals in the German and Russian occupied areas of Poland. (761.6211/300) For text of protocol, see *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, Series D, vol. VIII, doc. No. 158, p. 165.

According to one of the German delegates the Russian negotiators have so far shown a large spirit of accommodation agreeably surprising the German delegation which had anticipated that the conversations would be difficult and marked by haggling over prices and quantities. Ambassador Ritter who is in charge of the negotiations for Germany told a member of the Embassy that results were much greater than he expected, that Russia had so far agreed to furnish "several million marks" of raw materials including foodstuffs.

As to the kind and quantity of commodities which Russia has so far agreed to deliver the German press has announced that the Reich will receive 1,000,000 tons of feed, grain, mainly barley. (See my 1870, October 28, noon).⁶⁷ Wiehl,⁶⁸ who is nominally head of the trade negotiations in the Foreign Office, although for certain matters he now seems to be subordinate to Ritter, his predecessor, informed a member of the Embassy that Russia had also agreed to furnish 1,000,000 tons of petroleum products and he asserted that this was an initial quantity which would later be increased. Another advantage known to have been gained by the Reich is the agreement of the Russian Government to permit the free transit of German exports and imports from Iran, Afghanistan, the Far East over Russian territory. The *Ostwirtschaft*, a semi-official publication devoted to Germany's Eastern trade, has announced that special licenses for transit to and from these countries will be issued by the Soviet trade representative in Berlin.

The Embassy is also informed that the Soviet Trade Commission had agreed to furnish the Reich with 100,000 tons of cotton during the next 12 months. This report obviously requires confirmation since the amount is several times higher than normal exports of cotton by the Soviet Union.

While, according to statements by German officials, trade negotiations with Russia have so far been more successful than anticipated by the German authorities, sources in contact with these negotiations state that the Reich has no reliable indications or assurances that expansion of trade with Germany has been adopted by the Soviet Government as a permanent policy. These sources stated that while Russia finds it economically necessary or advantageous at this time to purchase certain German equipment, mainly machinery, but also according to certain reports armor plate strips, submarine naval equipment and artillery, the real motives behind the new willingness to trade with Germany are obviously political and that the continuation of the present situation is therefore highly uncertain. Inform Treasury.

KIRK

⁶⁷ Not printed.

⁶⁸ Emil Karl Josef Wiehl, Ministerialdirektor, head of the Commercial Policy Division of the German Foreign Office.

761.6211/309 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, December 15, 1939—noon.

[Received December 15—11:16 a. m.]

1083. The press today in a Tass despatch from Berlin reports the exchange of instruments of ratification of the Soviet-German Treaty of September 28⁶⁹ and publishes favorable comment from the German press on the durability of German-Soviet friendship "despite the efforts of London and Paris" to convey the impression that there exists a secret hostility between these countries. The press likewise reports that the Soviet economic mission headed by Tevosyan has completed its work in Germany.

I am informed by the German Embassy that Ritter, the German Plenipotentiary for Economic Matters, accompanied by an economic delegation headed by Schnurre, will arrive in Moscow at the end of this week to continue the Soviet-German economic talks. As reported in my telegram 892, November 14, 2 p. m.,⁷⁰ it had been expected that Schnurre, with only the technical economic staff, would return to Moscow to complete detailed implementation of the economic program. The return of Ritter who, as reported in my telegram No. 787, October 23, 7 p. m., during his visit to Moscow was said to have reached an agreement in principle with the Soviet authorities on the question of Soviet-German economic relations, would appear to indicate that there still remain at issue certain basic questions in the economic relations between the two countries.

Repeated to Berlin.

STEINHARDT

661.6231/252 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, December 16, 1939—4 p. m.

[Received 10:05 p. m.]

2384. My 2102, November 21, 4 p. m. Authoritative sources have admitted that the million tons of Russian feed grain which were hailed as a great first concrete result of the new German-Soviet economic entente, delivery of which was to have been completed by the

⁶⁹ A similar report of the ratification of these agreements was also contained in telegram No. 2339, December 14, 7 p. m., from the Chargé in Germany (not printed).

⁷⁰ Not printed.

end of the year, have only now started to move into Germany. The greater part of this grain, it was said, will come via the Baltic.

According to these sources the German, Soviet and Rumanian Governments have just completed a series of conferences with regard to rail connections between the three countries. It was stated that the Russians have now finished changing the gauge of the main lines leading up to their new frontier in former Poland, but it was admitted that the Polish lines leading to Germany are still far from being thoroughly restored. The Russians are leaving one normal gauge line through Galicia to permit German imports from Rumania.

The Russian trade delegation which has been here several weeks has completed its inspection of German export production and has returned to Russia. Preliminary negotiations with regard to Russian exports to Germany appear to have been completed some weeks ago in Moscow and it is said that the final determination of the terms of exchange and delivery of Russian and German products will be arranged in a new set of negotiations which will shortly start in Moscow.

The impression prevails that a few weeks ago German authorities were sincerely convinced that Russia would furnish with reasonable promptness a fairly substantial volume of needed raw materials but that at the present moment these authorities are less sanguine as regards delivery dates and quantities of the commodities negotiated for.

KIRK

761.6211/312: Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, December 20, 1939—noon.

[Received December 20—11:18 a. m.]

1113. The press announces today without comment the arrival in Moscow yesterday of Ritter, the German Plenipotentiary for Economic Matters, and Schnurre, accompanied by an economic delegation including representatives of the German Ministries of National Economy, Agriculture, Foreign Affairs, and a number of experts.

STEINHARDT

IV. PEACE MOVEMENTS AND PROPOSALS FOLLOWING THE
OCCUPATION OF POLAND

740.00119 European War 1939/17 : Telegram

The Minister in Rumania (Gunther) to the Secretary of State

BUCHAREST, October 2, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received October 2—4:30 p. m.]

296. For the President and the Secretary. The Rumanian Minister for Foreign Affairs⁷¹ today asked to convey to you his inquiry as to whether a peace initiative by President Roosevelt was under contemplation. He expressed his own deep interest in this possibility. Just before the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs had expressed his view to me that only through the initiative of our President could the peace movement be effective, he added that failing peace the outlook was indeed dark for Rumania, for either the Allies were victorious, in which case Rumania would have no protection against Russia, or Germany won, in which event Rumania would forcibly become its vassal. Both were of the opinion that a long drawn out war would only end in the destruction and misfortune of all Europe and provide a fertile field for anarchy.

GUNTHER

740.00119 European War 1939/16 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, October 2, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received October 2—2:50 p. m.]

1893. At luncheon with Churchill⁷² today I received the impression that any terms that might be offered by Hitler on a peace basis would be rejected. There may be a slight hope that if he asks for an armistice pending a discussion of the terms, it might be agreed to, principally because England feels she could use the time to great advantage. Churchill told me that there are rumblings from the French that England should be sending up a much bigger army, but the truth of the matter is that the Government here for the last 3 years forgot somehow or other to order the material necessary to equip a big army so they cannot send up a big army because they have no equipment for it.

He says that up to date there is no evidence that the Germans are bringing up troops on either the Dutch or Belgian borders that would indicate they are going to violate the neutrality of either of these countries but that they are massing large forces behind the Siegfried Line.

⁷¹ Grigore Gafencu.

⁷² Winston Churchill, First Lord of the Admiralty.

It becomes more and more apparent as I talk to them that they are definitely apprehensive of Germany's strength in the air but in no event will they start the bombing into Germany first. They have no intention of fighting Russia now or later on. Already I see an argument arising that the part of Poland the Russians have is really all Russian. Churchill does not feel that the power of Russia to move out over the world is nearly as dangerous as the Germans and for that reason the Germans under the Nazi regime must be finished off.

I judge there is a feeling that if women and children are killed as a result of these bombings in England that the United States will tend more toward their side. Churchill said "After all, if they bombed us into a state of subjection, one of their terms of course would be to hand over the fleet and if we attempted to scuttle the fleet their terms would be that much worse. And if they got the British fleet, they would have immediate superiority over the United States and raiders troubles would then begin".

I judge that nobody in authority likes this picture at all but they are keeping up a bold front and seeing what the winter will bring forth. They all contend that all they want is revision of the Neutrality Act⁷³ to give them an opportunity to buy in America but I do not believe it for a minute. If Germany does not break and throw Hitler out, after the passage of the Neutrality Act they will spend every hour figuring how they can get us in.

KENNEDY

740.00119 European War 1939/17 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Minister in Rumania (Gunther)

WASHINGTON, October 3, 1939—7 p. m.

165. Your 296, October 2, 5 p. m. No indications have been received here as to any desire on the part of the belligerents for a peace initiative to be taken from here and of course no steps are under contemplation.

HULL

740.00119 European War 1939/25 : Telegram

The Minister in Rumania (Gunther) to the Secretary of State

BUCHAREST, October 4, 1939—4 p. m.

[Received 9:35 p. m.]

305. For the Secretary and President. My No. 296, October 2, 5 p. m. Prime Minister Argetoianu has also asked me whether any

⁷³ The revised Neutrality Act was approved November 4, 1939; 54 Stat. 4. For correspondence pertaining to the act, see pp. 656 ff.

peace initiative is under contemplation. I told him I was not informed but that speaking in a purely personal capacity such a move seemed premature; anyway Germany's condition has not yet been even officially outlined. In reply to my queries regarding the background of his and Gafencu's inquiries I elicited the information that Von Papen⁷⁴ had approached the Rumanian Ambassador at Ankara with the suggestion that the Baltic States make a united peace movement. Argetoianu said the matter was under consideration but that they wanted to hear from us first and then see whether the Scandinavian, Baltic and other neutral states in Europe would act in unison. He seemed to think that only we could determine England.

GUNTHER

740.00119 European War 1939/22 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, October 4, 1939—6 p. m.
[Received October 4—3:31 p. m.]

1919. I have just seen Halifax.⁷⁵ They have heard nothing from Italy or from Germany on any peace proposals. When they are made they will consider them from two angles: (1) the question of tactics they should adopt; and (2) the substance that the propositions will contain. As to the first, unless it is an overt humbug, they propose to give it careful consideration; as to the substance, of course it is very difficult at this time to form any judgment. They feel that they are in a very difficult position as far as making any agreement with Hitler and the Nazis is concerned, but until the proposition has been made they do not know what to say and they intend to take counsel on the substance with all of the neutrals, not particularly the United States.

The important and most disconcerting thing in his mind is that the Russians are attempting to make the Turks so change their agreement with England and France⁷⁶ as to make it worthless. The basis of this seems to be that the Russians want the Turks to agree that if England gets into a war, with Russia on the opposite side, the Turks will agree not to aid England and France. Halifax thinks that the Turks are a little bit muddled about the facts at the minute because the Turkish Minister at Moscow told the British representative there that it was not quite as bad as it appeared on the surface, but the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs at Ankara notified the British Ambassador there that the demands of the Russians if complied with would

⁷⁴ German Ambassador in Turkey.

⁷⁵ British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

⁷⁶ Signed October 19, 1939, League of Nations Treaty Series, vol. cc, p. 167.

completely wipe out the value of the Anglo-French-Turkish agreement. I asked Halifax if he thought that meant that the Russians intended to fight on the side of Germany and he said that he was not clear on that point. He was still very hopeful, however, that the Italians were not going in although he is frank to say he cannot tell from one minute to the next. As soon as he has anything definite from Turkey or from Italy on the German proposition he will advise me at once.

Halifax also expressed the opinion that if this war continues it will mean Bolshevism all over Europe.

In a casual conversation after discussing the above it became clear to me that the Government are already aware that there is some agitation springing up in England critical of the conduct of the war by the Government and contemplating throwing the Government out and probably bringing Churchill in as Prime Minister. I think that Chamberlain⁷⁷ and Halifax are aware of this situation but for the minute do not appear to be very much worried about it.

KENNEDY

762.65/751 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Italy (Phillips) to the Secretary of State

ROME, October 4, 1939—6 p. m.
[Received October 4—3:57 p. m.]

438. During a brief conversation with Ciano⁷⁸ this afternoon outside of the Foreign Office he mentioned that the purpose of his recent visit to Berlin was largely informatory. He expressed the opinion that the real crisis of the war was upon us this week. He did not give me any idea of the nature of the peace proposals which Hitler will make in his forthcoming Reichstag speech but he hoped that when made they would receive considered attention and would not be abruptly turned down by the British and French Governments or by their press. He added that if the peace proposals should be rejected and the real war begun, the horrors that would be unleashed would be beyond description. He mentioned under his breath certain terrible devices which would be employed by the Germans. In reply to my inquiry as to Italy's position he seemed satisfied that the position already taken would be maintained indefinitely. He said furthermore that the German Government fully understood Italy's attitude in this respect.

PHILLIPS

⁷⁷ British Prime Minister.

⁷⁸ Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

740.00119 European War 1939/27 : Telegram

The Minister in Rumania (Gunther) to the Secretary of State

BUCHAREST, October 5, 1939—10 a. m.

[Received 10:15 a. m.]

308. I have told the Minister for Foreign Affairs what you said in your No. 165, October 3, 7 p. m., and he was most appreciative. The Minister said that he supposed the peace feelers were probably premature and that Europe would go on to destruction. Discussing the matter in a general way he expressed the fear that only Russia would be the victor in a long war. I must say I concur.

GUNTHER

740.00119 European War 1939/29 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, October 5, 1939—8 p. m.

[Received October 5—4:25 p. m.]

1942. My 1919, October 4, 6 p. m. The Foreign Office as yet has no information as to when and how the German peace proposals may be put forth. Recent information indicates that it is unlikely Mussolini will consent to be the medium, particularly if the proposals are of such a nature that it is obvious that they would be refused; they reason that Mussolini would then be put in the unenviable position of having backed an impossible proposition, which might weaken his capacity for resistance to German pressure.

The Foreign Office is increasingly apprehensive of Soviet influence in Germany, this opinion being based on what are said to be reliable reports of growing Bolshevik sympathies among the German masses; since the conclusion of the German agreement with Russia these sympathies are being openly shown.

KENNEDY

[The German Chancellor delivered a speech in the Reichstag on October 6, 1939, outlining German war aims. A summary is contained in telegram No. 1613, October 6, 1939, 3 p. m., from the Chargé in Germany (not printed). This speech was reported in the press and an English translation is printed in Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *International Conciliation No. 354*, page 495.]

740.00119 European War 1939/38 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Poland (Biddle), Then in France, to the
Secretary of State*

PARIS, October 6, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received 8:21 p. m.]

2. 1. Conversation with official Polish circles this afternoon discloses a negative reaction towards Hitler's speech. They feel it is impossible for the Western Powers to accept a truce now under conditions as set down by Hitler which conditions they are inclined to feel are even more uncompromising than were expected by the more optimistic of Western European political circles.

2. General Silorski⁷⁹ will make an address tonight the gist of which is as follows: (a) no Polish Government would recognize the partition of Poland; (b) the Poles would go on fighting at the side of their allies; and (c) the Polish Government was determined to restore a great Poland which would be just to all her subjects.

BIDDLE

740.00119 European War 1939/36 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, October 6, 1939—7 p. m.

[Received October 6—6:05 p. m.]

2362. There is not the slightest chance that the French Government will desire to use Hitler's speech in the Reichstag today as the basis for an armistice.

The speech is considered by the officials at the Foreign Office to present no basis whatsoever for peace and it is considered not particularly adroit from the point of view of propaganda.

It was noted with great interest here that there was no indication in the speech that Hitler had any promise from the Soviet Government of military support by planes or other weapons on the French front. It was also noted that his reference to Italy was of a nature to indicate that his relations with Mussolini at the moment are not intimate.

It is believed that in view of Hitler's remarks about Belgium and the Netherlands it will be difficult for him to start attack against France by entering either one of those countries.

Indeed the speech has created the impression that either because of the lateness of the season, or because of the present attitude of Italy, or because of fears as to the future actions of his new partner in crime Stalin, Hitler may be hesitant about starting any offensive on the Western front.

⁷⁹ Commander in Chief, Polish Army in France.

It has not yet been decided by the French Government whether or not any formal reply should be made to this utterance of Hitler's. At the moment it seems that it will merely be alluded to in some speech.

The greatest interest was aroused by Hitler's reference to cooperation between the Soviet Union and Germany for the solution of ethnic problems in Eastern and Southeastern Europe. These passages were too vague to make it possible to draw definite conclusions from them but they seemed to open vistas of German and Soviet intrusion into the affairs of Hungary and all the Balkan States.

The impression is definite that Hitler has been obliged to give the Soviet Union not only the Baltic States but also Rumania as a sphere of untrammelled activity.

BULLITT

740.00119 European War 1939/34 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, October 6, 1939—8 p. m.

[Received October 6—3: 01 p. m.]

1954. First reactions to Hitler's peace proposals of Foreign Office officials, who have been in conference all the afternoon with the Prime Minister and Lord Halifax, are to the following effect: that the proposals as they stand are too vague to offer any basis for a conference unless they are implemented by some concrete action on the part of Germany which could be accepted as an evidence of good faith and as at least a provisional guarantee against further aggression. Such a gesture it is suggested might be the evacuation of the Polish part of Poland. A conference on the basis of Hitler's proposals as they stand would put all the cards in Hitler's hand. He would simply demand concrete concessions of far reaching import from the Allies in return for vague assurances on Germany's part. They feel that it is impossible as yet to give a considered opinion on the possibilities which the proposals may offer for negotiation but they are to be given the most studied and careful consideration. The Prime Minister and Lord Halifax have in fact already said in Parliament that any German proposals would have such consideration. The Government is giving out a statement tonight which will be broadcast to America.

A Foreign Office official expressed the view that there are two practical possibilities of following up these proposals to good effect if allowed: (1) that the German Government may be maneuvered into a position where it will be obvious even to the German people that Hitler personally is the sole obstacle to peace, and (2) that failing

this it may be possible to maneuver Hitler himself into a position where he will have to make a peace that the Allies would be willing to accept. These ideas were not elaborated. The official says that they are convinced that strong influences around Hitler, including Goering,⁸⁰ are pressing him to stop the war. They frankly state in the Foreign Office that they have no idea what Hitler's next move will be or when it will come but they are not going to a conference with Germany unless the present proposals are preliminary to more concrete expression and are redrawn in such form as to offer some hope that a negotiated settlement can be reached.

KENNEDY

740.00119 European War 1939/44 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, October 7, 1939—3 p. m.
[Received October 7—11:02 a. m.]

2377. Leger⁸¹ informed me this morning that the French Government has decided that Hitler's speech requires no reply and that any observations on it may be made fittingly in the course of routine utterances by members of the French and British Governments.

BULLITT

740.00119 European War 1939/52 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, October 7, 1939—5 p. m.
[Received 8 p. m.]

1628. For the Secretary and Under Secretary. Insofar as can be judged at present there is no concurrence in the impressions from foreign circles here created by Hitler's Reichstag speech. Representatives of those countries which feel most strongly the imminent threat of an extension of hostilities are inclined to emphasize those parts of the speech relating to the establishment of peace, whereas others offer the opinion that had Hitler really desired peace he would have offered more constructive suggestions along that line and that in reality the speech contributed little or nothing to rendering peace more possible of acceptance on the part of England and France.

The reaction in German circles to the Reichstag speech appears to be on the whole favorable and the impression prevails that the address takes its place among Hitler's more forceful and reasoned

⁸⁰ Hermann Goering, Reich Minister for Air.

⁸¹ Secretary General of the French Foreign Office.

utterances. On the theory that at the present stage every day that elapses without an outbreak of intensified hostilities in the West is a day gained for peace, many Germans are appreciative of the fact that Hitler posed no ultimatum. While the proposals were not of such a nature as to compel conviction that they will be accepted, Hitler is felt in these circles to have forcefully outlined the German position concerning the uselessness and futility of a general war and the least that is hoped for is that they may lead to the initiation of negotiations which if once started might render difficult a resumption of fighting in the event of failure.

In connection with the foregoing I am in a position to quote the statement of a German for whose integrity I can vouch and who as a close follower and friend of Hitler for many years is in constant touch with him. This person assures me that he knows Hitler is sincerely desirous of peace, that the suggestions to that end outlined in his Reichstag speech were by no means easy for him to make, that he is hoping that rendering suggestions will evoke some response which will enable the development of further proposals looking to the termination of the present state of war and that he has no intention of precipitating drastic action so long as he considers that there is still a possibility that progress along those lines may be made. According to the same authority the situation to the east however must be left to Germany and Russia to determine and in the event that no inclination towards peace is detected from abroad Hitler on the established conviction that Germany is the victim of injustices of the past will carry the war to its catastrophic consequences.

It was apparent in this conversation as in the case of talks with other Germans that the Government of the United States is regarded as holding the first position as an advocate of peace and in this particular instance it was clear that the thought was present that the President might take this occasion to convey to Hitler indirectly and confidentially an oral message which would endorse sincere efforts to bring about peace and encourage a clarification of the bases on which that peace might be established.

KIRK

740.0011 European War 1939/729 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Belgium (Davies) to the Secretary of State

BRUSSELS, October 7, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received 6:35 p. m.]

152. For the President and the Secretary. There is great fear here that there is possibly imminent some action of either one or the other of the belligerents which will harden the present situation into an

irrevocable, bitter, real, long and horrible war. It is directed not only to the possibility of an immediate German assault on the Western front but to the fact that the other side might precipitately do something that would destroy the trembling "bridge of peace" which delay might yet afford. They still cling desperately to the hope that time and development of some possibly unforeseen events might avert the catastrophe before it is hardened into finality. In this, their darkest hour, I have been requested by a high source to say that the only person in the world who can possibly avert the holocaust is the President of the United States and to express their hope that he might find some means of again making some effort similar to the noble ones which commanded the admiration of the liberty loving world in previous crises.

Despatch following by special messenger on Clipper.⁸²

DAVIES

740.00119 European War 1939/54 : Telegram

The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State

HELSINKI, October 8, 1939—7 p. m.

[Received 8:25 p. m.]

223. In the course of the conversation reported in my immediately preceding telegram⁸³ the Minister for Foreign Affairs spoke of the appalling prospect before the world if the present war is not soon ended since it would spread indefinitely. He asked, as if thinking aloud, whether a lead could not be given somewhere to bring the war to an end by exploring at least some of the points made in Hitler's latest speech. He was fearful not only of a general collapse of European civilization but naturally for the fate of his own country in conditions where, as he said, naked force alone rules. He said he had in mind a possible lead by the United States which would be supported unanimously by the Northern neutrals in accordance with agreement already discussed and existing among them. I inquired whether he wished this intimation conveyed to you and he answered that he would appreciate my doing so. He added that according to his information Great Britain and France were sounding possibility of peace, either through a neutral country which was not named, or through the Pope.

⁸² Despatch sent direct to the President is filed in the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, N. Y. It contained the information that the source of the appeal was King Leopold.

⁸³ Telegram No. 222, October 8, 6 p. m., p. 962.

I do not wish to question in the slightest the Minister's utter sincerity in the foregoing, but have no doubt his request was made under the powerful impression of the circumstances already reported.

SCHOENFELD

740.00119 European War 1939/55: Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, October 9, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received 6:36 p. m.]

1650. My No. 1545, October 2, 8 p. m. and subsequent confidential telegram.⁸⁴ Following is an account of the origin here of a report which has been circulated abroad as to mediation on the part of the United States in the present conflict: On Friday evening following Hitler's Reichstag speech Schmidt, Head of the Foreign Press Section of the Foreign Office, invited press representatives from the following countries to a special conference—Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United States. Schmidt began by emphasizing that the importance of Hitler's speech might be considered as residing quite as much in the fact that it was meant to be an appeal to the neutrals as it was to the belligerents and then developed the idea of the service that a great neutral which he at first named as Italy might render in offering mediation in the present conflict. Schmidt did not on his own initiative mention the United States in this connection but, in reply to a question as to whether Hitler would accept an offer on the part of President Roosevelt to propose an armistice or truce and the opening of negotiations for a general peace, is reported to have said that Germany most certainly would accept such an offer. Schmidt also intimated that Germany might be willing to take part in a conference at a place "far removed from the scene of conflict" which certain press representatives thought might mean Washington.

KIRK

740.00119 European War 1939/57: Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, October 9, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received 8:47 p. m.]

711. The *Izvestia* this morning in a leading editorial entitled "Peace or War?" comes out strongly in support of the German peace offer contained in Hitler's speech. After emphasizing the complete collapse

⁸⁴ Not printed.

in Poland and the intention of the Soviet and German Governments to guarantee peace and order within the territory of former Poland, the editorial states that in view of these facts since the French and British are waging war against Germany for the restoration of Poland the continuation of the war can in no way be justified. The editorial then reviews favorably the peace offer contained in Hitler's speech to the Reichstag on October 6 and states that the proposals of Hitler may be accepted, refused, or both, but "it is impossible not to recognize that in any case they may serve as a real and practical base for negotiations for the conclusion of peace.[""] However, the editorial continues, despite the statements of the French and British Governments concerning their desire for peace, the reaction of the French and British press to these proposals, which presumably reflect the view of their Governments, would appear to indicate that they will be refused without consideration since according to these newspapers the purpose of the war is now the destruction of Hitlerism. The editorial then asserts that every man has the right to express his own opinion in regard to any ideology, may respect or hate Hitlerism but that to destroy human beings for such reason would be "senseless and stupid cruelty" and would return us to the Middle Ages and the destructive religious wars of that time. The editorial then attacks "the ruling classes" of England and France which it states have never been noted for their willingness to shed blood or incur expenses to achieve an idealistic aim and that in the present case the slogans concerning the necessity of destroying the Hitler spirit are merely used to conceal more practical aims towards the maintenance of their world hegemony. Bernard Shaw in an article said to have appeared in the *New Statesman and Nation* is then quoted to the effect that England is merely fighting to weaken Germany, that "chatter concerning liberty, democracy, et cetera, is mere deception", and that peace should be concluded. The editorial asserts that, "It must be admitted that Bernard Shaw is in many respects right.[""] The editorial continues with the statement that the English and French ruling circles "are very little concerned over the fate of Poland or the freeing of the German people from the Hitler regime and are continuing the war for the preservation of their colonial possessions and the right to uncontrolled exploitation of hundreds of millions of colonial slaves". After stating that "attempts to ignore the peace proposals of Germany means the assumption of responsibility for the colossal sacrifices and destruction of the war,[""] the editorial concludes that the question of war or peace is now posed and that those who stand for a war to victorious conclusion are for war against peace which in any case is not in the interest of the working classes since "the working class can only suffer in such a war".

740.00119 European War 1939/68 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, October 10, 1939—5 p. m.
[Received October 10—3:20 p. m.]

2409. Champetier de Ribes⁸⁵ informed me this afternoon that Daladier⁸⁶ tonight in his speech would set forth in broad terms the war aims of France but would avoid specific details. He would point out clearly however that it was impossible to establish in Europe a genuine peace so long as promises with regard to the future would have to be made by men who had proved that their word could not be trusted.

The object of the speech, Champetier added, would be to turn down Hitler's vague proposals in a constructive manner.

BULLITT

740.00119 European War 1939/75 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, October 11, 1939—8 p. m.
[Received 9:05 p. m.]

1683. My 1664, October 10, 7 p. m.⁸⁷ and 1628, October 7, 5 p. m. There is every indication that Hitler's Reichstag speech and his address of yesterday have raised the morale of the rank and file of the German people and have strengthened still further the Fuehrer's position in the country. Hitler has stated that he wants peace and this desire is shared by the German people. He has also made it clear that if peace is not forthcoming he will be prepared for military action and his past record does not contain conspicuous instances wherein he refrained from pursuing the course which he declared. If therefore no intervention is forthcoming which might lead to a respite or to the initiation of peace overtures there is reason to believe that he will in this instance also follow the course he has declared and that despite the lack of enthusiasm for the war the discipline and strength of the regime will enable the initiation and for the time being at least the prosecution with all available means of the action his policies dictate.

KIRK

⁸⁵ French Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

⁸⁶ Édouard Daladier, President of the Council of Ministers and Minister for National Defense.

⁸⁷ Not printed; it reported Hitler's speech at the opening on October 10 of the "Great German War Winter Help Campaign, 1939-1940." (740.00119 European War 1939/70)

740.00119 European War 1939/78: Telegram

The Minister in Switzerland (Harrison) to the Secretary of State

BERN, October 12, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received 9:03 p. m.]

125. For the Secretary and Under Secretary. I have been informed that passing as a representative of the President in connection with present peace efforts W. R. Davis, oilman and promoter of barter sales of Mexican oil to Germany, recently obtained an interview with Marshal Goering. Their conversation is said to have related principally to the possibility of American mediation, guarantees and eventual participation of the United States in financial and economic cooperation. I am told that Goering and his entourage were deeply interested and readily accepted Davis' *bona fides*. Davis is said to have arrived in the United States by Clipper last Monday.

According to my informant Ribbentrop's⁸⁸ influence with Hitler is still paramount. Although somewhat discredited by the unexpectedly high-handed action of the Soviets in the Baltic States Ribbentrop is supported by Hitler while Goering, old army circles, important commercial elements, and now of great importance Himmler and the police are opposed to Ribbentrop and want peace. Ribbentrop will, so my informant states, continue to sabotage any peace proposals. Should he have to submit them to Hitler he would urge against their acceptance. There is just one junior official in the Foreign Office who supports Ribbentrop's policy. Weizsaecker⁸⁹ has twice submitted his resignation which has twice been refused. If peace efforts are to be successful they must not be submitted through Ribbentrop. Assurances that peace might be possible would strengthen the hands of Goering and those who think as he does and so my informant believes would enable them to refute Ribbentrop's argument that Great Britain and France desire only to crush Germany and do not want peace.

My informant fears that if the war goes on it can only result in the Bolshevization of Germany. He is convinced that Hitler will Bolshevize Germany rather than suffer defeat. While he does not believe that Hitler can be entirely eliminated at this time he envisages the possibility of making him a mere figurehead as "the leader" and turning over the actual control of the government to Goering as Chancellor supported by the conservative elements aforementioned and the police under Himmler.

HARRISON

⁸⁸ Joachim von Ribbentrop, German Minister for Foreign Affairs.

⁸⁹ Baron Ernst von Weizsaecker, State Secretary in the German Foreign Office.

740.00119 European War 1939/73 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

[Extracts]

LONDON, October 12, 1939—noon.
[Received October 12—6:55 a. m.]

2009. Personal for the President and the Secretary. Following is advance copy made available to me by Lord Halifax of the statement to be made in the House of Commons this afternoon by the Prime Minister⁹⁰ in reply to Hitler's peace proposals. There may be minor changes from this text.

"Last week in speaking of the announcement about the Russo-German pact^{90a} I observed that it contained a suggestion that some peace proposals were likely to be put forward and I said that if such proved to be the case we should examine them in consultation with the Governments of the Dominions and of the French Republic in the light of certain relevant considerations.

I am glad to think that there is complete agreement between the views of His Majesty's Government and those of the French Government. Honorable Members will have read the speech which was broadcast by M. Daladier last Tuesday. 'We have,' he said, 'taken up arms against aggression; we shall not lay them down until we have certain guarantees of security—a security which cannot be called in question every six months.'

I would sum up the attitude of His Majesty's Government as follows:—

Herr Hitler rejected all suggestions for peace until he had overwhelmed Poland, as he had previously overthrown Czechoslovakia. Peace conditions cannot be acceptable which begin by condoning aggression.

The proposals in the German Chancellor's speech are vague and uncertain and contain no suggestion for righting the wrongs done to Czechoslovakia and to Poland.

Even if Herr Hitler's proposals were more closely defined and contained suggestions to right these wrongs, it would still be necessary to ask by what practical means the German Government intend to convince the world that aggression will cease and that pledges will be kept. Past experience has shown that no reliance can be placed upon the promises of the present German Government. Accordingly, acts—not words alone—must be forthcoming before we and France, our gallant and trusted ally, would be justified in ceasing to wage war to the utmost of our strength. Only when world confidence is restored will it be possible to find solutions of those vital questions of

⁹⁰ For complete text of speech before the House of Commons, October 12, 1939, see Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *International Conciliation No. 354*, p. 529.

^{90a} See pp. 477 ff.

disarmament and restoration of trade which are essential to the well-being of the peoples.

There is thus a primary condition to be satisfied. Only the German Government can fulfil it. If they will not, there can as yet be no new or better world order of the kind for which all nations yearn.

The issue is therefore plain. Either the German Government must give convincing proof of the sincerity of their desire for peace by definite acts and by the provision of effective guarantees of their intention to fulfil their undertakings or we must persevere in our duty to the end. It is for Germany to make her choice."

KENNEDY

740.00119 European War 1939/83 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, October 13, 1939—4 p. m.

[Received 11:25 p. m.]

1710. The following version has been given the Embassy by a correspondent attending Reich Press Chief Dietrich's interview last night which it is understood has been the subject of varying reports both as to subject matter and emphasis:

After referring to Chamberlain's speech of yesterday as a studied insult to the German people Dietrich said that it seemed as if nothing could prevent a "blood bath" except perhaps successful mediation by a neutral country. In reply to a question he stated that the United States would certainly qualify as a neutral power in a position to undertake mediation and according to certain persons present he was more explicit in characterizing the role which the United States was in a position to play in preventing war and in bringing about peace. Dietrich is also reported to have mentioned that Great Britain in making its "insolent reply" to Germany evidently felt that it could count on American support, an eventuality which he, Dietrich, was inclined to doubt.

I am informed that at the noon foreign press conference today Schmidt, Chief of the Press Section of the Foreign Office, read out an "official statement on Chamberlain" intended for the foreign press which I understand is being carried in full by the American press agencies and which is of the same general tenor as this morning's Berlin editorial comment (see my 1703, October 13, 9 a. m.⁹¹.) In reply to the question as to whether Germany had given up hope Schmidt is reported to have answered, "Germany never gives up hope." Great Britain and France, he said, had answered Hitler through the respective speeches of Chamberlain and Daladier but "no neutral has as yet spoken." With respect to Dietrich's statements last night Schmidt said that these were merely intended as an expression of a personal

⁹¹ Not printed.

viewpoint and Schmidt pointed out that, "The United States was not the only neutral".

With further regard to Dietrich's interview of last night DNB has just issued the following communiqué.

"In connection with an Associated Press Berlin report that Reich Press Chief, Dietrich, made a statement according to which only an intervention by Roosevelt could halt the war in the West, which has been interpreted variously abroad as an appeal to Roosevelt to intervene, we announce that no such appeal was made at all or intended. This appeal was due to a misunderstanding of a private conversation which did not permit of this interpretation."

KIRK

740.00119 European War 1939/82 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, October 13, 1939—10 p. m.

[Received October 13—11:30 a. m.]

1704. I learn from a Dutch journalist with a reputation for reliability that last week certain apparently authorized German personages approached Colijn, former Premier of the Netherlands, with the request that the Netherlands Government propose its good offices for mediation between Germany and Great Britain. My informant states that after consultation with the Queen it was decided that the Netherlands Government would be willing to propose its good offices provided that it was specifically called upon to do so. The journalist asserted that he was summoned to The Hague and was sent back to Berlin with authority from the Netherlands Foreign Office to sound out German officials in Goering's entourage and to intimate to them the readiness of the Netherlands Government to propose its good offices under the condition mentioned above. The Dutch journalist states that this informal manner of communication was apparently chosen in view of the unofficial nature of the initial German approach to Colijn. The journalist says that he communicated yesterday to an official associated with Goering the intimation referred to above.

KIRK

740.00119 European War 1939/92 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, October 16, 1939—7 p. m.

[Received October 16—4:55 p. m.]

2058. Personal for the Secretary of State. I have just seen Halifax. He hasn't much to offer except glittering generalities. The

first is that they have received soundings from the German Government in the last 48 hours, which purport to come from Goering, as to whether there is still an opportunity to discuss the matter. Halifax says that the Government are making it very difficult for the Germans in the above respect, but it will not surprise them to have a very formidable peace offensive begin at once. The French have also received intimations from Germany.

The other alternative which they have been given to understand is an immediate attack on the fleet and their shipping in docks and ports in England and a big push to drive the French back from German territory which Halifax says will not be difficult, as the French have practically withdrawn all their men already. Then Hitler will say, "I have now driven the French off German soil; before it is too late maybe we should talk again."

I judged from Halifax's whole conversation that they consider Hitler has gotten himself in a cofferbox and they are not going to do anything to help him out. Halifax says he is not foolish enough to believe that all the stories he hears out of Germany about the breakdown and difficulties, such as the Communist group having taken over factories in the Ruhr, are true, because he thinks there is too much enthusiasm amongst youth and from all their reports the idea that Germany cannot be beaten is still there. His only hope for the breakdown is in the topside people, who if they are convinced that they are in a bad way may make the right adjustments.

An interesting thing he said today is that their Ambassador in Lisbon cabled him this morning that the Germans are offering armaments and guaranteeing delivery within 4 weeks. Now since there is no possible way of getting this material here unless there is peace Halifax says he is a little bit at sea on this offer unless the big armament people know more than he does.

His wire from Ankara this morning indicates that the Russian proposition to the Turks will not make it impossible for the Turks to play along with the British and the French. He said that his information today is that the Russians are going to work out something with the Finns. The Russians also have sent word to him asking him about any further prospects of trade and Halifax's answer to them was, "How can we be sure that any trade we make with you will not redound to the benefit of Germany?" The Russian reply this afternoon was, "We look out for our own interests first." (Aside by Kennedy, "And how!")

On Wednesday of this week they propose publishing a memorandum from Henderson on his last 2 weeks in Berlin ⁹² and on Thursday they

⁹² British Cmd. 6115, Germany No. 1 (1939) : *Final Report by the Right Honourable Sir Neville Henderson, G. C. M. G., on the Circumstances Leading to the Termination of His Mission to Berlin, September 20, 1939.*

intend to publish all the material they have gathered on the question of German concentration camps and the treatment of prisoners.⁹³ They have hesitated to publish this while they thought there was any prospect of working anything out with Germany but the German papers have been so abusive that they thought they would start a little on their own side.

He said that as far as the Italians are concerned they are behaving very well from the British point of view. In fact whereas up to date they have kept to the middle of the road, Halifax now feels that they are siding over quite a bit to the British.

I asked him what he would expect in the nature of a guarantee that would be satisfactory to him that Germany would behave herself and he said the first requirement is that the German people must be convinced that Hitler lost ground and did not get away with it. From then on something could be worked out, but that is absolutely essential.

Summing up I would say that the British feel Hitler is in a bad way; that they are going to be tougher than ever in order to keep him there, and they think it quite likely that there will be one more peace effort before the trouble really starts.

KENNEDY

740.00119 European War 1939/111½

*President Roosevelt to the Ambassador in Belgium (Davies)*⁹⁴

[WASHINGTON,] October 19, [1939].

DEAR JOE: I am more than appreciative of the trouble you took to see that your letter of October 7th⁹⁵ was placed in my hands with the least possible delay. I have read it with the utmost care, and I hope that you will tell the King that I have given real study to his analysis of the situation as it exists today, and to his suggestion that I make some new move with a view to bringing about peace.

Not a day passes without my trying to see if a favorable opportunity exists for some move that would lead to peace. But now that hostilities are already under way I feel that any endeavor on the part of the United States to bring an end to this war should only be taken after it has become abundantly clear that the path towards which we may point does in fact lie in the direction of peace. I hope you will tell the King that I shall continue to watch the situation day by day, to study—as he does, though in my case from a greater distance—developments as they occur, and if the time should come when I felt that

⁹³ British Cmd. 6120, Germany No. 2 (1939): *Treatment of German Nationals in Germany 1938-1939*.

⁹⁴ Photostatic copy obtained from the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

⁹⁵ Not printed. For proposal presented in letter of October 7th, see telegram No. 152, October 7, 5 p. m., from the Ambassador in Belgium, p. 507.

some action on our part would have a good chance of turning the world back towards peace, I could seize it with the firm conviction that I had the support of the united country.

Let me add a line of thanks for your excellent and objective reporting. I follow news from Belgium with personal interest, and I was particularly happy to note the King's statement to you that he looked upon me as the friend of his late father, of himself, and of Belgium.

Very sincerely yours,

[File copy not signed ^{95a}]

740.00119 European War 1939/103 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, October 21, 1939—1 p. m.

[Received 3:45 p. m.]

1795. My 1704, October 13, 10 p. m. The Dutch journalist who apparently with the knowledge of the Dutch Foreign Office intimated to Budapest officials in Goering's entourage that the Netherlands Government would be willing to propose its good offices in the conflict if specifically called upon tells me that he has had two conversations on this subject with a person close to Goering. He states that in the second conversation that person who had apparently discussed the matter with his superiors expressed approval of the project in principle but suggested that the time for steps along these lines had not yet arrived and intimated that some drastic action might first have to be taken against Great Britain in order to convince the English of the inadvisability of continuing the war. The journalist is reported to have replied that in his opinion any such action would have the opposite effect. The journalist furthermore was given the impression that if a proposal should be confidentially conveyed to Germany that an informal meeting be arranged between a German, British and French representative for discussions the Germans would again [agree] but that no such initiative need be expected from the German side.

In connection with the foregoing it might be added that it has been reliably stated that whereas Hitler was in a receptive mood at the time of and immediately following his Reichstag speech his attitude has hardened following the Daladier and Chamberlain statements and that at the present moment this attitude has been further aggravated by irritation over the British-French-Turkish pact.

KIRK

^{95a} A notation attached to this letter states that the original was signed by the President October 19, and was given to Mr. Stanley Richardson to be taken by him personally to the Ambassador.

740.00119 European War 1939/104: Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, October 23, 1939—1 p. m.

[Received 5 p. m.]

2547. James Mooney, President of the General Motors Overseas Corporation, who came to Paris from Berlin yesterday called on me this morning and made the following statement:

Richter, lawyer of the General Motors works in Hesse, had talked to him about the desirability of ending the present war and had suggested that he should see Wohltat and Ribbentrop in Berlin. He had seen Wohltat who had arranged for him to see Goering. He had talked with Goering last Wednesday for two hours and a half. He had gathered that Goering did not wish him to see Ribbentrop.

Goering had stated that before beginning a serious war on the Western front he and that section of the Nazi Party which he represented desired to be certain that there was no possibility of making peace at the present time with France and England. He was not at all sure what Chamberlain and Daladier's speeches meant and he was not at all sure that they knew what the Fuehrer's latest speech meant. He thought therefore that a representative of the German Government should meet a representative of the British Government and perhaps also a representative of the French Government in a neutral country to make clear the points of view of the three Governments in order that if possible peace might be arranged now.

Mooney said that Goering had asked him to talk with Ambassador Kennedy and myself and try to get us to arrange such a conversation.

Mooney said that Goering did not believe that the German Army could break the resistance of the French Army. He seemed to think, however, that there was a chance that the German air force and submarines might be very annoying to the British fleet and merchant shipping.

Goering had said to him that if France and England should be willing to make peace now Germany would set up some sort of an autonomous Polish state with German control of its foreign relations and military defenses in the portion of Poland now held by Germany. Germany would also set up a similar state with cultural autonomy in the Czech portion of Czechoslovakia.

Goering indicated that he had no confidence in the continuance of cooperation between Germany and the Soviet Union and intimated that he would like to have an arrangement with France and England which would enable Germany to throw out the Bolsheviks from the portion of Europe which they now had seized.

Mooney requested me to urge the French Government to accept this proposal.

I replied that I could not urge the French Government to accept such a proposal or any other proposal without instructions from you to do so and I did not believe that you would wish to give me any such instructions.

I said, however, that I could inform the French Government of what Goering had said to him; but added that I believed the French Government would not be drawn into such a conversation.

Mooney requested me to urge Ambassador Kennedy to persuade the British Government to take up this proposal. I replied that I could not urge Ambassador Kennedy to do so, but could merely inform him that Mr. Mooney was coming to London. Ambassador Kennedy telephoned me while Mooney was with me and I informed him that Mooney would call on him with a story from Berlin.

BULLITT

740.00119 European War 1939/104 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Bullitt)

WASHINGTON, October 25, 1939—7 p. m.

1308. Your 2457, October 23, 1 p. m. You were quite right in assuming that this Government would not instruct you to urge that the French Government accept Mooney's proposals. Please inform Kennedy.

HULL

740.00119 European War 1939/112 : Telegram

The Minister in Switzerland (Harrison) to the Secretary of State

BERN, October 31, 1939—11 a. m.

[Received 4:02 p. m.]

130. For the Secretary and Under Secretary. Reference my telegram No. 125, October 12, 5 p. m. Same informant claims that he has heard from Berlin that word of satisfactory progress has been received from Davis.

My informant also alleges that after communicating with certain high placed British friends, he discussed the situation with their representative sent here to see him. Such mediation, he believes, is not practicable for the moment. The first step he says will be to discredit Ribbentrop, the second to persuade Hitler to withdraw in favor of Goering. This he considers difficult and delicate though not impossible. Also a double-cross by Hitler is not to be excluded and some means will have to be found to guard against this. It would, he thought, be helpful if the stigma of Prussian ruthlessness and Prus-

sian influence could somehow be eliminated and if something could be done to improve the situation of the church in Germany.

My informant also said that he was leaving for Berlin where he would explain "his" peace plan to his German friends and if, as a result of his conversations he should have a second plan to propose, he would pass that on to his British friends but would not meet them in Switzerland. He will return here with his family early in January. He referred to the recent German announcement of a continental blockade of England and said he was inclined to expect intensified air and naval action against England rather than an attack against France. If this information is to be credited, it would appear that while the British may not be averse to listening to what Goering may have to offer, they do not favor mediation at this juncture and are standing pat on their demand that Hitlerism must go.

HARRISON

740.00119 European War 1939/122 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN (via Copenhagen), November 5, 1939—noon.

[Received November 7—9:46 a. m.]

1954-1956. Some time ago I had occasion to meet informally Schacht, former President of the Reichsbank, and he took the initiative in discussing the possibility of ending the war. In the course of the conversation Schacht endorsed the view which has been variously reported that mediation by the President might bring about peace and indicated his sympathy with those groups in Germany which were dissatisfied with the present leadership (see my 1524, September 30, 7 p. m.⁹⁶). This conversation was inclusive and I did not resume it.

Recently a member of the Embassy who was acquainted with Schacht made a personal call on him during the course of which Schacht disclosed that some 3 weeks ago he had written to Leon Fraser⁹⁷ referring to an invitation from the latter last February for Schacht to make an address before the Academy of Political Science in New York which had been declined and asking that a similar invitation be now extended to make a non-political address before some non-political institution. He had written to me that the invitation should be sent by cable *en clair* with a statement that the President had been consulted and had expressed no objections to his coming and that further the President would receive him should he call at the White House to pay his respects. He said that on the basis of such a

⁹⁶ Not printed.

⁹⁷ New York financier; former president of the Bank for International Settlements.

telegram the German Government of which he was nominally still a Minister could not refuse to let him make the trip and declared his belief that the presentation of his ideas to the President of a solution of the European problem would launch a peace movement which would be ultimately accepted by all warring governments, his own included. Schacht did not disclose the details of his peace program but asserted that he had not discussed his project with any member of the Reich Government and requested that the Embassy refrain from sending anything in regard thereto unless by confidential cable in confidential code from a neutral country. I need not add in this connection that no intimation will be conveyed to Schacht as to any consideration or action which his foregoing statement may be receiving insofar as this Embassy is concerned.

In connection with the foregoing I may state that recently other unofficial and apparently entirely personal efforts to find some means of terminating the state of war while it is still limited in operation have come to my attention. The individuals involved in these efforts vary in their views as to whether peace might be brought about by the present regime in Germany or whether a modification of that regime must precede any such attempts. They all point, however, to the lack of war enthusiasm and even a growing discontent in the country in the face of the hardships suffered by the civilian population as a result of the present undeclared situation and emphasize the opinion that even a military victory for Germany would not compensate the sacrifices and devastations of a general war and that a defeat of Germany with a second Versailles would not only prove to be no lasting solution but would merely enure to the benefit of Soviet Russia. With a view to avoiding those two contingencies the necessity for laying the bases for a peace have been emphasized and although it has been impossible to determine what might actually constitute a peace program from the German standpoint various features of such a program may be adduced as emanating from different processes of thought in Germany. In the first place an immediate cessation of hostilities would be indicated as essential. Furthermore, certain arrangements affecting Bohemia, Moravia and Poland should certainly be envisaged. A system for the humane treatment of racial problems as well as for the appeasement of religious controversies should be determined. The question of colonies and German access to raw materials would also require attention. Furthermore, some plan of international collaboration both in the political and in the economic field should be established in which Germany would participate on the basis of equality and in this plan the problems of world financial and economic recovery and of disarmament would be included.

The foregoing items are based on conjecture or on impressions derived from indications received from different sources and are in

no way exhaustive. Those in Germany who are opposed to the present regime apparently feel that some design for what they term a decent peace with the hope of economic reconstruction would gain the support of the moderate elements in Germany as well as of the army and if furthered by the President and accepted by the present opponents of Germany would, owing to the force of public opinion, eventually be accepted either by a reformed or by a changed leadership in the country. On the other hand there are those who maintain that even the present Government has been and may still be ready to endorse certain of the foregoing items and that the war need not be extended while efforts toward peace are regarded as still within the realm of possibility. Whatever may be the relative significance of these views, however, it is my opinion that a grave error of judgment would be committed if not only the probability were not faced that at the present stage such opposition to the regime as may exist in Germany would fail to force the abandonment of plans which may have been decided upon or may be in the process of decision but also if the possibility were not envisaged that drastic action might be precipitated thereby. The impression prevails that some delay in action has occurred but whether this apparent delay is due to continued regard for the possibility of a peace or to the perfection of plans for the further consolidation of German strength both at home and abroad or to some other consideration, it is believed that the final action either in war or in peace will now, as in the past, depend upon the conclusions at which Hitler will eventually arrive as to the means which he regards as best adapted to attain his aims and as to the time for their initiation.

KIRK

755.56/171 : Telegram

The Minister in the Netherlands (Gordon) to the Secretary of State

THE HAGUE, November 7, 1939—noon.

[Received November 7—10:10 a. m.]

257. Immediately upon the arrival of the King of Belgium last night upon his hastily arranged visit to Queen Wilhelmina conversations were begun which lasted from 10 p. m. to 2 a. m. Aside from the King and Queen only the Dutch and Belgian Foreign Ministers participated and the conversations which covered questions of policy to be pursued in various contingencies were political in their nature and not military. They were resumed at 9 o'clock this morning and are still continuing.

I hope to have further news this evening.

GORDON

740.00119 European War 1939/126 : Telegram

The Minister in the Netherlands (Gordon) to the Secretary of State

THE HAGUE, November 7, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received November 7—4:32 p. m.]

258. My 257, November 7, noon. The conversations in question resulted in the despatch of a message to the King of England, the President of France, and Chancellor Hitler. The English text thereof given me by the Foreign Office reads as follows:

“At this hour of anxiety for the whole world before the war breaks out in Western Europe in all its violence we have the conviction that it is our duty once again to raise our voice. Some time ago the belligerent parties have declared that they would not be unwilling to examine a reasonable and well-founded basis for an equitable peace. It seems to us that in the present circumstances it is difficult for them to come into contact in order to state their standpoints with greater precision and to bring them nearer to one another. As sovereigns of two neutral states having good relations with all their neighbors we are ready to offer them our good offices. If this were agreeable to them we are disposed to facilitate, by every means at our disposal they might care to suggest to us and in a spirit of friendly understanding, the ascertainment of the elements of an agreement to be arrived at. This, it seems to us is the task we have to fulfill for the good of our people and in the interest of the whole world. We hope that our offer will be accepted and that thus a first step will be taken towards the establishment of a durable peace. The Hague, November 7, 1939. Wilhelmina. Leopold.”

It appears that for some days past the two sovereigns have felt that if they were to follow up their tender of good offices of last August⁹⁸ there was no time to lose, but as there was some difficulty in agreeing upon the text of a further proposal King Leopold yesterday afternoon offered to come over and settle the matter in direct conversation.

As indicated in my telegram of this morning the conversations which centered about the drafting of the present proposal covered various aspects of policy, which might be entailed by the despatch of the note and the reactions thereto of the three recipients.

GORDON

740.00119 European war 1939/135 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, November 8, 1939—3 p. m.

[Received 3:55 p. m.]

2686. Champetier de Ribes said to me this morning that the French Government had received no information whatsoever from either the

⁹⁸ See telegram No. 108, August 30, 6 p. m., from the Chargé in Belgium, p. 390.

Belgian or the Dutch Government with regard to their decision to make a peace appeal until 7 o'clock last night.

It was his opinion that the Dutch and Belgian Governments had been driven to this action because of the fear of the Queen of the Netherlands that Germany really must invade the Netherlands unless the Netherlands should be prepared to permit German occupation of the entire country except the quadrilateral of Amsterdam, Haarlem, The Hague and Rotterdam.

In his opinion the German Government might make good its threat or it might be that the German threat was designed merely to enlist the Queen of the Netherlands and the King of the Belgians as recruits in Hitler's peace offensive.

The most gloomy hypothesis was that the Queen of the Netherlands had decided to permit the Germans without fighting to occupy her country except for the quadrilateral cited above; but felt she must have an excuse in order not to shock her people and the public opinion of the world too profoundly. The excuse might be the rejection by France and England of her peace appeal.

He went on to say that neither the King of the Belgians nor the Queen of the Netherlands could in reality have the slightest hope that their peace appeal might be successful in ending hostilities. Before the peace appeal both the French and British had made too clear their determination to fight on until Poland and Czechoslovakia should have been restored. The question therefore was: What sort of a maneuver lay behind the proposal?

The French and British Governments were in consultation as to the reply which should be made.

It was indeed astounding that the King of the Belgians, the independence of whose country existed only because France and England had refused to make peace so long as German troops were on Belgian soil, should now be attempting to obtain a precarious and momentary safety for his country at the expense of Poland and Czechoslovakia.

There was of course not the slightest chance that the appeal would be accepted by the French and British.

Champetier de Ribes said that the Belgian Ambassador had asked to see him this afternoon and that he might have this evening some sort of certain information that would be authoritative. Up to the present time neither the French Ambassador in Belgium nor the French Minister in the Netherlands had been able to shed any light whatsoever on the hidden motives behind this maneuver.

740.00119 European War 1939/134 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Belgium (Davies) to the Secretary of State

BRUSSELS, November 8, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received 9 : 30 p. m.]

173. For the President and Secretary of State. From a personal conversation which I just had with the King, the following are the facts with regard to the situation referred to in my telegrams 166, 167, 169, 170, November 7, and 172, November 8.⁹⁹

Rumors of German troop concentrations and of great German activity in building pontoons, et cetera, on the Netherlands and Belgian borders coupled with intensive German press attacks on neutrals and Holland particularly, alleging their inability to protect their own sovereignty and neutrality, aroused the gravest apprehensions of the Government of Holland that there was impending an immediate German invasion. These were communicated by it to the King who, accompanied by a member of the General Staff and the Foreign Minister, motored Monday night to The Hague and had extended conferences with the Queen and her Ministers resulting in the offer of mediation as published. The King himself is of the opinion that the intelligence of the German High Command would prevent attempt at large scale action of this character on account of the lateness of the season and for other reasons but he nevertheless joined in the effort with the hope that it might afford the belligerents the means of at least discussing peace. Belgium protested against the violence of German press attacks yesterday and was assured they would stop. The King is deeply anxious to forestall the outburst of pending intense and violent war which in his opinion would utterly destroy European civilization.

I gathered the impression that Germany is pressing the neutrals to assume active responsibility in pushing a peace offensive if they wish to prevent the horrors of the unrestricted war that otherwise is impending. Because Germany's action is unpredictable Belgium is taking every precaution.

DAVIES

740.00119 European War 1939/133 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, November 8, 1939—7 p. m.

[Received November 8—5 : 15 p. m.]

2309. For the President and Secretary of State. I have just seen the Prime Minister. His opinion is that the memorandum from

⁹⁹ None printed.

Belgium and Holland was caused by declaration of Germany, in camping their troops on the Dutch and Belgian borders and advertising to the world that they contemplated going into one of these countries, forced these people to make this gesture, which they were glad to do because they considered it the means of self-preservation. Hitler's usual method of striking suddenly without advertising certainly was not the strategy employed here.

Chamberlain says, of course, he will give it serious consideration so that it may not be that he turned it down offhand but, of course, he will turn it down. He believes that Hitler will make about the same kind of statement regarding it that he made some weeks ago in his so-called peace overtures. Chamberlain believes that no peace proposal is practical just at this time. The German people have not suffered enough yet to be disgusted with the leadership. I asked him how long he thought this war would last and he [apparent omission] had not given an answer to that question to anybody but a few members of the War Cabinet. To me he said, "I do not believe it will go beyond the spring". I said, "On what do you base that opinion?" and he said that regardless of all the advice he receives not to depend on Germany breaking up it is his belief based on all the things he thinks he knows that the absence of any victories for Hitler and the continued pressure of the blockade will cause this condition in Germany. I said, "Suppose Hitler goes into Holland; won't that be sufficient to keep the German hopes up?" and Chamberlain said, "I consider that the loss of Rotterdam and our natural unwillingness to remain quiet while he establishes himself there will prevent that from being considered as a Hitler victory when the results are seen." (He will also have outraged any public opinion in the world that is not already outraged.) Chamberlain says that nothing Hitler planned has gone the way he thought it would go and that all advices he gets from Russia are that Stalin does not contemplate entering the war on Germany's side.

As regards Italy he says that not only has Italy no desire to fight on the side of Germany but he questions whether they are able to give military aid to anybody. He said that what they have found in the last month about the condition of the Italians indicates very clearly that Italy lacks a great many things necessary to fight any kind of a campaign.

A war that bores people is the only danger he sees now.

KENNEDY

740.0011 European War 1939/958 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Belgium (Davies) to the Secretary of State

BRUSSELS, November 8, 1939—11 p. m.

[Received November 8—8:35 p. m.]

174. For the President and the Secretary of State. I have just returned from a visit to Foreign Minister Spaak who stated that the situation was most tense and grave. He stated (1) that there were very large concentrations of German shock troops and mechanized and motor divisions along the Belgian and Dutch frontiers; and (2) that they were the same troops as those which invaded Poland and that their disposition indicated the same plan and manner of attack as that which was employed in Poland and that it indicated a simultaneous attack on Belgium and Holland. He then told me that in spite of the protest of the Belgium Foreign Office (my telegram No. 168, November 7, 6 p. m.¹) there had been persistent flights of German airplanes over Belgian territory and under such conditions as would warrant no other conclusion than that they were deliberate. (The Foreign Minister was evidently referring to a statement made earlier in the day by a Belgian officer to the effect that a dozen of these planes had been engaged in photographic work.) Notwithstanding official German denials the identity of the planes was clearly established.

In answer to my question he said that he did not believe that there was a 50-50 chance of avoiding war in Belgium. In response to another question he stated that he did not believe an invasion of Holland strategically required an invasion of Belgium but agreed with my suggestion that if the Netherlands were invaded undoubtedly Britain and France would necessarily have to come into Belgium to protect their flank.

On the diplomatic front he stated [apparent omission] looked exceedingly serious. In spite of the assurances given that the German press attacks would stop (see my telegram 173, November 8, 6 p. m.), he showed me a telegram just received Wednesday afternoon from Belgian Minister at Berlin who reported that the press reaction to the offer of mediation was unfavorable one, German comment being that in view of the speech of Lord Halifax the offer had failed before it had been born and that instead of doing useless things Belgium should try to preserve its own trusts and exert some control over the partisan pro-ally attitude of the Belgian press. The Foreign Minister considered that this indicated an unfavorable reception by German official circles of the offer of mediation although he had as yet received no official reply from Germany.

DAVIES

¹ Not printed.

740.00119 European War 1939/122

*Memorandum by the Assistant Secretary of State (Messersmith) to
the Chief of the Division of European Affairs (Moffat)*

[WASHINGTON,] November 9, 1939.

MR. MOFFAT: I discussed the appended telegram, No. 1954 from Berlin,² with the Secretary and the Under Secretary who were in agreement with my view, and which I understand is yours, that no reply or acknowledgment should be made to Berlin of the appended telegram. I pointed out that Dr. Schacht had some months ago been in touch with Mr. Burgess of the National City Bank and that Dr. Schacht had at that time been invited to make an address before the Academy of Political Sciences. This was abandoned. I stated that in my opinion this move of Dr. Schacht was not the independent move which he made it appear to be and that there was a good deal of probability that he was acting in fact with the full knowledge and approval of the German Government. I said there was at least reasonable ground to believe, keeping in mind other information which we have, that this move of Dr. Schacht was a part of the general effort of the German Government to establish contact with other governments through unofficial agents who appeared to be acting entirely independently of the German Government and in fact in some ways in opposition to it.

I said that there were some people in this and in other countries who persisted in believing that Dr. Schacht was a man who could be depended upon to act honestly and uprightly. There was, therefore, a certain danger involved in this approach to Mr. Fraser in the sense that we were not sure that such people might not feel that a really useful purpose might be served in having Dr. Schacht come here to make an address such as he suggests. The Secretary and the Under Secretary were in agreement that if we were in any way approached by Mr. Fraser or others in a similar position in this matter we would state that there was no more objection to Dr. Schacht coming here to make a non-political address than there was to anyone else coming. On the other hand, those who would in any way arrange such an opportunity for Dr. Schacht must understand that they must do it entirely on their own, that there could be no official sponsorship even of the most indirect character, and that certainly no official contacts, such as he has in mind, could be arranged.

G[EOERGE] S. M[ESSERSMITH]

² *Ante*, p. 521.

740.00119 European War 1939/139 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, November 10, 1939—8 p. m.

[Received November 10—5:05 p. m.]

2330. Personal for the President and the Secretary: Following is text of the British draft of the identic reply to the appeal of the King of the Belgians and the Queen of the Netherlands addressed to the King on November 7. This draft was communicated today to the French Government and the Government of the Dominions. When their replies are received delivery of the note will be concerted as to time with the French reply, and the Foreign Office states that while the British and French replies cannot be identic, they will be drawn up as nearly identic as possible as to substance. Subject to comments from the French and Dominion Governments, there may be minor changes in this draft. The Foreign Office hopes that delivery can be effected on Monday.³

“1. I have carefully examined, with my Governments in the United Kingdom, Canada, the Commonwealth of Australia, New Zealand, and the Union of South Africa, the appeal which Your Majesty and Her Majesty the Queen of the Netherlands addressed to me on November seventh.

2. I recall the appeal made by Your Majesty on August twenty-third in the name of the heads of states of the Oslo group⁴ of powers in which you pleaded for the submission of disputes and claims to open negotiations carried out in the spirit of brotherly cooperation. My Government in the United Kingdom as well as the French Government sent favorable replies to this appeal.

3. I recall also the joint offer of good offices made by Your Majesty and Her Majesty the Queen of the Netherlands to my Government in the United Kingdom and to the French, German, Italian, and Polish Governments on August twenty-eighth. This offer was welcomed by my Government and by the French, Italian, and Polish Governments. A few days later the German Government launched an unprovoked attack on Poland.

4. My Governments deeply appreciate the spirit of Your Majesty's offer and they would always be willing to examine a reasonable and assured basis for an equitable peace. It is and has always been my desire that the war should not last one day longer than is absolutely necessary and I can therefore at once reply to that part of Your Majesty's appeal in which you state your willingness to facilitate the ascertaining of the elements of an agreement to be reached.

5. The essential conditions upon which we are determined that an honorable peace must be secured have already been plainly stated. The documents which have been published since the beginning of the

³ The note was delivered on November 13, 1939.

⁴ Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden.

war clearly explain its origin and establish the responsibility for its outbreak. My peoples took up arms only after every effort had been made to save peace.

6. The immediate occasion of our entry into war was the violent German aggression against Poland. But this aggression was only a fresh instance of the German policy towards her neighbors and the larger purpose for which my peoples are now fighting is to secure that Europe may be redeemed 'from the perpetually recurring fear of German aggression so as to enable the peoples of Europe to preserve their independence and their liberties'. These words of the Prime Minister have been amplified and enlarged on a number of occasions, in particular by him on twelfth October in the House of Commons and by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in the House of Lords on second November.

7. The elements which in the opinion of my Government must form part of any settlement emerge clearly and distinctly from these declarations of policy. Should Your Majesty be able to communicate to me any proposals from Germany of such a character as to afford real prospects of achieving the purpose I have described above, I can say at once that my Governments would give them their most earnest consideration."

KENNEDY

740.0011 European War 1939/998 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Belgium (Davies) to the Secretary of State

BRUSSELS, November 13, 1939—11 p. m.

[Received November 13—10:42 p. m.]

184. For the President and Secretary of State. In connection with my visit to the King at the Palace this afternoon incident to the delivery of President's message contained in the Department's No. 77 received November 13,⁵ I respectfully report the following. At the conclusion of the discussion with reference to the President's message quite on his own initiative and to my surprise, the King discussed freely the international situation. He gave it as his opinion that there would be no German offensive against Holland and Belgium now for the following reasons:

(1) There were serious differences of opinion in Germany between the politicians of the Party who were eager for war and the German High Command who were strongly opposed.

(2) By reason of air reconnaissances and other information that had been obtained both the military group and Hitler had become much impressed with the extent of the Belgian defenses which have been developed most formidably including extensive inundations from the Albert Canal Road, obstructions, trenches, pillboxes, and the like.

(3) The lateness of the season combined with these conditions would make the enterprise most hazardous.

⁵ Not printed; this message was of an unofficial and personal nature.

In addition thereto he stated that in his opinion the purpose of the German concentration of troops had been to throw fear into Holland and Belgium to make them stand up against the British blockade in connection with the economic front. Delay in his opinion worked altogether to the advantage of the Allies.

With reference to the offer of "good offices" he stated that the only communication from the German Government thus far was that Hitler would study most carefully the proposal of the rulers of Holland and Belgium but that this situation was aided by "personal contacts" which he did not amplify but which I assumed referred to messages relative to congratulations over Hitler's escape at Munich.⁶

He thought that the concluding paragraph of King George's reply was a hopeful indication. He stated that his Government was pursuing the matter in collaboration with the Dutch Government. In that connection the Foreign Office today stated to Counselor Wilson that the two Governments were limiting their efforts solely to "good offices," namely, the transmission of viewpoints or messages, and not mediation in the sense of trying to adjust differences. The King further stated that should I desire to communicate his views to the President and the Secretary of State, I should ask that the subject matter thereof should be held in strictest of confidence and confined to the President and the Secretary of State and their immediate assistants.

In view of this limitation I have not forwarded this cable to The Hague pursuant to cable instruction No. 75, November 11, 7 p. m.⁷ and shall not do so unless specifically advised by the Department.

DAVIES

740.00119 European War 1939/151 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, November 15, 1939—8 p. m.

[Received 8:25 p. m.]

2058. My 2043, November 14, 1 p. m.⁷ A DNB announcement just issued states as follows:

"Ribbentrop received the Belgian Ambassador and the Netherlands Minister today. He advised the Envoys of Belgium and the Netherlands in the name of the Fuehrer that after the brusque rejection of the peace offer of the Belgian King and the Netherlands Queen by the British and the French Governments the German Government considers these proposals as disposed of."

⁶ Reference to the explosion of a time bomb in the Bürgerbräu Hall at Munich, November 8, a few minutes after Hitler's departure from the hall.

⁷ Not printed.

The Belgian Ambassador and Netherlands Minister were received at the Foreign Office shortly after 6:00 p. m. today.

KIRK

740.0011 European War 1939/1162: Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, December 14, 1939—2 p. m.

[Received 5:12 p. m.]

2973. I asked Leger this morning if the French Government had any information with regard to a report which had reached me yesterday from a source which I had found in the past to be most reliable to the effect that the Yugoslav Government definitely agreed to permit passage of Italian troops through Yugoslav territory and Hungary in case the Soviet Union should attack Hungary by way of the former Hungarian-Polish frontier.

Leger replied that the French Government had no information on this subject and added that he did not believe the report was true. He thought that the Italian Government itself might have begun to spread such a report as part of the present policy of Mussolini which was to obtain an early peace in Europe that would leave Nazi Germany intact.

I asked Leger to explain this statement about Italian policy and he did so at great length. Since François-Poncet, the French Ambassador in Rome, came to Paris 3 days ago to report to his Government on recent developments in Italy, Leger's views on this subject presumably are up to date and seem to justify a lengthy résumé.

Leger said that until the 14th of November Mussolini had been confident that Hitler was going to win the war. Mussolini had been informed that the German Army was going to attack Belgium and Holland on the night of the 13th of November and expected the attack to result in a definite German military victory. His views as to the strength of the German Army had been changed by the failure of the German Army to make the attack.

Mussolini attributed the announcement of the [apparent omission] to a lack of confidence on the part of the German Army in its ability to defeat the French and British. Furthermore, Mussolini was impressed by the fact that this adverse judgment by the German Government on the strength of its own army should have been made at a time which was more favorable for Germany than any future time could be. It was obvious that France and England would be much stronger militarily next spring than in the month of November. If Germany therefore could not attack successfully in November Germany certainly could not attack successfully in the future.

Mussolini therefore had come to the conclusion that Germany could not win the war by military means and that, if the war should go on, France and England finally would win it and destroy the totalitarian dictatorship in Germany.

Mussolini still desired to maintain his close contact with Germany and to have peace established in Europe on the basis of a four-power pact containing France, England, Germany and Italy, within the framework of which he could use Germany as a threat to obtain territorial and other concessions from France and England. He had therefore after some reflection in recent weeks embarked on a policy of bringing about a premature peace which would leave the present German Government in power. He was using various means to bring about such a peace in opposition to the creation of a great fear of the spread of Bolshevism in Europe.

The Italians, therefore, had taken the line of hostility to the Soviet Union and were continuing daily to push the idea that Germany must be spared defeat since Germany otherwise would become Bolshevik.

Mussolini had been able to enlist in this campaign for a premature peace that would leave the Nazi Government of Germany intact many neutral states which were most fearful of German or Soviet attack in case the war should continue. His propaganda was being supported also by Germany, and the Germans and the Italians had been able to enlist various well-meaning persons of various nationalities and many frightened persons especially in the Netherlands, Belgium and the Scandinavian countries. The Spanish Government also was assisting the Italian Government in this diplomatic campaign since the Spanish Government did not wish France and England to dominate Germany completely.

Leger went on to say that the French Government had the most indisputable and absolute proof that the action of the Argentine Government in taking such a strong line against the Soviet Union in Geneva⁹ had been the result of Italian diplomatic action in Buenos Aires. As a result the expulsion of the Soviet Union from the League of Nations, which he believed was now certain, would be the consequence of a most unusual combination of forces. On the one hand would be those states which desired to make the Soviet Union the unique object of detestation and desired to achieve a premature peace which would preserve the Nazi Government of Germany as a "bulwark" against Bolshevism, on the other hand there would be France and England which were convinced that it was necessary to condemn in the strongest manner all aggressors whether German or Russian.

Leger went on to say that the British Government had been doubtful of the expediency of expelling the Soviet Union from the League or of

⁹ For correspondence regarding Soviet aggression against Finland, see pp. 952 ff.

adopting sanctions against the Soviet Union but had taken the strong position it had taken because Daladier had insisted that this position should be taken.

He went on to say ultra confidentially that the French Government was about to ship 30 of the newest French pursuit planes to Finland. In this connection he stated that the German Government had seized all but 3 of the 40 Italian planes which the Italian Government had attempted to send to Finland via Germany.

Ultra confidentially also Leger said that the French and British Governments were now approaching the Norwegian and Swedish Governments with a view to obtaining the active intervention of Norway and Sweden on the side of Finland. He added that the French and British Governments would give every possible support in their power by sea, land and in the air to Norway, Sweden, and Finland if the Swedish and Norwegian Governments should decide to support Finland.

I expressed doubt as to the possibility that Sweden would support Finland actively but Leger insisted that there was a considerable possibility that both the Swedish and Norwegian Governments would give active support to Finland.

Leger went on to say that during the coming 3 months when there could be little fighting on the frontier between France and Germany he expected a great Italian effort to bring about a peace favorable to Germany. The French and British Governments would of course attempt to cut short any such peace offensive but there was said to be considerable danger that the fear of the small neutral states of Europe of German and Soviet aggression, the bogey of a spread of Bolshevism, and the well-meant but ignorant efforts of individual Americans and even the Governments of certain South American neutral states, might create great damage to the cause of democracy in Europe and definitive peace. France and England would not make peace until German imperialism disappeared.

BULLITT

740.0011 European War 1939/1314 : Telegram

The Minister in Norway (Harriman) to the Secretary of State

OSLO, December 22, 1939—noon.

[Received 4:06 p. m.]

118. Legation's despatch No. 539, December 12.¹⁰ Professor Wilhelm Keilhau, adviser to the Nobel Institute since 1922, told me today that in an effort to ascertain present opinions in leading German circles he recently sent to Berlin Tryggve Gran, a world known Nor-

¹⁰ Not printed.

wegian pilot, in whom he has complete confidence and one who is a personal, intimate friend of Goering through their common interest in aviation. Gran made the first flight across the North Sea in 1914 and was an officer in the British air force during the last war.

2. Gran returned to Oslo yesterday after a conference alone with Goering following which the latter after consultation with the German Foreign Office arranged a meeting between himself, Gran and high officials of the Foreign Office. Goering told him that as he was not Foreign Minister he could not take the responsibility of answering all Gran's questions but that what the Foreign Office officials stated at the meeting were also his views.

3. The following is the substance of the information Gran received at this meeting: the German pact with Russia was concluded in the belief that it was necessary but it would never have been negotiated if Germany had known the weakness of the Polish Army. To obtain the pact with Russia, Germany was forced to promise inactivity in case of a Russian attack on Finland and of a probable Russian attack on Sweden and Norway if the latter two countries declared war on Russia to help Finland. Germany therefore considers Finland as lost if the war in the West continues. This means an embarrassing position for the German Government as the German people and army are in full sympathy with Finland.

4. The defeat of Finland will take 6 months whereas Russia believes that it can be accomplished in much less time. In the event of defeat of Finland, Russia will not claim in Norway as far south as Narvik (the important seaport terminal of Norwegian-Swedish railway connecting with Sweden's mines) but it would claim those Norwegian ports further north which might be dangerous to Murmansk and also Spitzbergen and in the latter case claiming that Spitzbergen has majority of Russian workmen.

5. Germany is willing to enter peace negotiations if the initiative is taken principally by the United States or failing that by Italy and if Britain or France do not beforehand make any conditions, Germany wishing to enter negotiations on the same footing as other states. Germany on its part will not claim an armistice or interruption of blockade as conditions for negotiations. If peace could be obtained Germany is willing to break completely with Russia and even bring about a situation which might allow it to give military support to Finland. Stalin has made so many moves of which Hitler does not approve that there would be a way to find a *casus belli*. In this case the whole of Poland might be restored as completely independent provided Danzig and the Corridor remain German and Poland can be

allowed a new Corridor to the east. Czechoslovakia might also be restored provided Beneš¹¹ be not recalled. Such a peace would be the only possibility for Great Britain to restore Poland without war against a German-Russian alliance.

6. Keilhau states that in Gran's belief Germany is strong enough to resist for a long time so that if peace came now it would spare the world incalculable suffering and would perhaps be the only means of saving Finland and preventing the whole of Scandinavia from being devastated by war. He is of the opinion that this information should receive earnest official American consideration.

7. Keilhau emphasized that Gran's mission to Berlin must be kept strictly confidential as the Germans have stated that they will deny that any such information had been given should it be published.

HARRIMAN

740.00119 European War 1939/190 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, December 25, 1939—noon.

[Received 6 : 10 p. m.]

2460. In spite of the rumors and reports which are circulating regarding peace proposals, there is little indication that these rumors are regarded as of immediate significance here. Recent utterances have denied that importance is being attached to these considerations in German official circles and the proposals for a Christmas truce which the Vatican is believed to have made (see my 2212, December 2, 9 p. m.¹²) appear to have failed.

There seems to be no reliable evidence of a concurrence of views in the Government as to decisive action in the immediate future and some say that the failure to carry out plans for military action which were regarded as definite at certain dates in the recent past has engendered a state of indecision which prevails at the moment in minds of the highest authorities. It is rumored, however, that after December 27, important conferences will take place looking to some definite action in January. In the meanwhile, the visit which Hitler is reported to be making to the West front at the present time is not regarded as of significance from the standpoint of immediate military plans.

KIRK

¹¹ Eduard Beneš, former President of Czechoslovakia.

¹² Not printed.

740.00119 European War 1939/191 : Telegram

The Minister in Yugoslavia (Lane) to the Secretary of State

BELGRADE, December 26, 1939—7 p. m.

[Received 7:56 p. m.]

370. Press of yesterday and today gives great prominence to the peace initiative of the President and the Pope¹³ but does not give editorial comment.

A high Foreign Office official stated to me this evening that the Yugoslav Government, being neutral, welcomes any peace initiative especially when a disinterested country as the United States is associated therewith. He expressed the opinion that if Italy would associate itself with the initiative there would be a greater possibility of success owing to the effect upon the countries in Southeastern Europe.

Repeated to Rome.

LANE

740.0011 European War 1939/1370 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, December 30, 1939—7 p. m.

[Received 9:25 p. m.]

3063. A member of my staff accompanied Ambassador Phillips on a call on Leger this morning. In the ensuing conversation the Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs developed in great detail the thought reported in my No. 2973, December 14, 2 p. m., that Mussolini is seeking to bring about a premature peace that would preserve the Nazi regime in Germany and thereby protect his own regime in Italy.

Leger is convinced that Mussolini still leans toward Germany because (1) of considerations of regime and (2) because he fears that only with the entire weight of Germany can Italy exercise a real influence in European affairs against France and England. In other words, Leger believes that Mussolini still holds to the underlying principles of his fellowship pact of four [powers. At the same time] Leger feels that the Italian people, fully aware of their contribution to the Christian civilization of Western Europe, are alive to their responsibility to protect that civilization from the danger of Nazi Germany and Communist Russia.

¹³ Reference is to President Roosevelt's letter of December 23, 1939, to Pope Pius XII, indicating his intention to send a personal representative to Rome in order that parallel endeavors for peace and the alleviation of suffering might be assisted. For text of letter, see vol. II, section concerning the Vatican.

In these circumstances the French Government has considered it the course of universal [wisdom] neither to force Italy nor to attempt to bargain with her to abandon the policy of "non-belligerency". It is the French hope that by a natural evolution Italy, despite Mussolini's predispositions, will come to know where her true interests lie. In the meantime France is prepared through the purchase of Italian goods and a lenient enforcement of the blockade to make this non-belligerency as profitable as possible to Italy. Leger said that the French military authorities point out that the free exchange accruing to Italy as a result of this policy serves only to strengthen a potential enemy of France. The military, he said, are also critical of the policy because of the supplies which it is known are reaching Germany through Italy. Leger's reply to these critics is that no policy vis-à-vis Italy could be elaborated that did not entail risks.

Leger implied that this policy of hopeful benevolence toward Italy would have to be abandoned should Mussolini compromise himself by some "overt peace move" calculated to save Germany from the punishment that is due her. He said that Mussolini has had ample warning that while France would not take umbrage at Italy's policy of non-belligerency it would react immediately and strenuously to any effort on Italy's part to save the Nazi regime from the natural consequences of its ruthless acts of aggression and aggrandizement. He ascribed the failure of Italy and of Spain to take part in the German-Russian peace offensive of October–November to the force of these warnings.

In this connection Leger is unable to look upon the strengthening of the ties between the Papacy and the head of the Italian State as foreshadowing *only* good for Europe. He is fearful that a factor in this movement is Mussolini's desire to save Germany by a premature peace.

Leger does not rate the perspicacity of diplomats very high. He thinks it likely that many chiefs of mission here and particularly the representatives of some of the small neutral states and the Italian Ambassador have placed too much importance to the possibility of political change within France and to the current of opinion here that would like to turn the fury of French and British feelings on Russia and thereby get out of war with Germany. Leger said that French policy vis-à-vis Italy is concentrated upon the task of making Mussolini understand that France is in this war to the bitter end and that no matter what domestic political changes might occur no Government of France could do other than prosecute the present war to the end that is now sought, namely, the destruction of a German Government inspired by the precedent of Genghis Khan rather than traditions of European Christianity. He said that at the outset of this war France had found herself with her back to the wall, there was no

further ground for retreat and that it is of the utmost importance that Mussolini be made to understand that such was and remains the case.

Leger spoke of Mussolini's disclaimer in connection with President Roosevelt's laudable interest in peace and the appointment of Myron Taylor as the President's personal representative at the Vatican. He said that he had noted in the press yesterday the implication which he judged had come from the White House that the President does not believe that the next few months would prove opportune for any peace move and that probably circumstances would not be such as to favor such a move before next fall or later. Leger remarked that this was manifestly true, that France and England are determined to build a new Europe on a mature not a premature peace. It is his view that a peace move during the military inactivity of the winter could only complicate matters for France and England and would therefore arouse resentment here.

Leger is most suspicious of Holland with respect to a further inopportune step in favor of peace. He professed the opinion that as between the immediate danger of material loss resulting from warfare on its territory and future subservience to an all powerful Germany, Holland would choose the latter. He said that herein lies the true explanation of Holland's unwillingness to accept an agreement with Belgium. He said that every effort of Belgium to date looking to such an agreement has been repulsed by Holland.

Unfortunately according to Leger the same supineness obtains in Sweden and Norway. In a preceding conversation Charveriat¹⁴ had informed us that the Quai d'Orsay's first impression of the Swedish and Norwegian reaction to the Franco-British *démarche* in favor of substantial aid to Finland was not discouraging. Charveriat [said?] it would not have been surprising to the Quai d'Orsay had this *démarche* met with the immediate reply that the Norwegian and Swedish Governments could not entertain any proposal looking to their participation in substantial aid by France and England for Finland. Charveriat said that instead of such a refusal the two Governments had accepted the *démarche* without closing the door to examination and study of the problem. Leger on the other hand, who had just come from a long conference with Daladier and who therefore may have had information not available to Charveriat when we talked to him, said that the *démarche* had been refused by Norway and Sweden. Asked to explain the nature of the refusal, he replied that the two Scandinavian countries had said that they could not coop-

¹⁴ Émile Charvériat, Director, Political and Economic Affairs, French Foreign Office.

erate beyond what would be possible and proper under international law and that in any event whatever they did must remain secret from Germany.

Leger said that the Norwegians and the Swedes had been informed that France and England were prepared to go the limit in assisting the Finns; that it had been pointed out that the independence of Norway and Sweden was a matter of vital interest to France and England and that whatever might be the consequences of Norwegian and Swedish cooperation these consequences would be met in a forthcoming manner by France and England with the full might of their power.

Leger's reaction to what he termed an over-weening material interest on the part of the neutral states and particularly Holland, Norway, and Sweden one of contempt [rather] than of depression. He appears not to entertain the slightest doubt as to the outcome of this war no matter what may be the ultimate role of the small European neutrals or Italy. He was most emphatic on the point that everything possible would be done to further and strengthen non-belligerent or pro-Allied tendencies in Italy but that if Italy should take the lead in a new German peace offensive France would have no alternative but to reconsider her policy toward Rome.

Leger said that France and England have no concern whatsoever about what may be Russia's reaction to Franco-British policy either in the Scandinavian area or in the Balkans. He explained, however, that the Allies have no intention of taking the initiative in bringing their relations with Russia into line with their contempt and enmity for everything that Soviet Russia stands for. He said that the controlling consideration on this point was that it would be foolish for France and England to take the initiative in bringing about a situation which might worsen matters at this time for their ally, Turkey.

BULLITT

V. APPEALS OF PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT TO THE BELLIGERENTS AGAINST AERIAL BOMBARDMENT OF CIVILIAN POPULATIONS

740.00116 European War 1939/19a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy)*¹⁵

WASHINGTON, September 1, 1939—5 a. m.

744. You are to deliver the following message immediately in the name of the President to the Government to which you are accredited. Transmit at once by telegram the reply which may be made:

¹⁵ Sent also to Paris (No. 700), to Rome (No. 85), to Berlin (No. 388), and to Warsaw (No. 52).

"The ruthless bombing from the air of civilians in unfortified centers of population during the course of the hostilities which have raged in various quarters of the earth during the past few years, which has resulted in the maiming and in the death of thousands of defenseless men, women and children, has sickened the hearts of every civilized man and woman, and has profoundly shocked the conscience of humanity.

If resort is had to this form of inhuman barbarism during the period of the tragic conflagration with which the world is now confronted, hundreds of thousands of innocent human beings who have no responsibility for, and who are not even remotely participating in, the hostilities which have now broken out, will lose their lives. I am therefore addressing this urgent appeal to every government which may be engaged in hostilities publicly to affirm its determination that its armed forces shall in no event, and under no circumstances, undertake the bombardment from the air of civilian populations or of unfortified cities, upon the understanding that these same rules of warfare will be scrupulously observed by all of their opponents. I request an immediate reply. Franklin D. Roosevelt."

HULL

740.00116 European War 1939/23a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy)*¹⁶

WASHINGTON, September 1, 1939—6 a. m.

745. Department's 744, September 1, 1939, 5 a. m. It is in the highest degree important that the reply of the British Government be favorable and that it be received at the earliest possible moment by the Department so that it may be made public.

HULL

740.00116 European War/11 : Telegram

The Minister in Yugoslavia (Lane) to the Secretary of State

BELGRADE, September 1, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received 6:18 p. m.]

235. The Polish Military Attaché reports that the cities of Warsaw, Cracow and two or three others in that general area were bombarded on several occasions by German aviation.

General Majastorovic, Chief of the Military Intelligence Division, informs us that according to a telephone report from the Yugoslav Military Attaché in Warsaw a German attack was launched from East Prussia and the northern frontier of Poland which was repulsed, that

¹⁶ Sent, *mutatis mutandis*, to Paris (No. 701), to Rome (No. 86), and to Warsaw (No. 53).

10 German airplanes were brought down, that a major offensive starting from Slovakia and southeastern Germany is said to have met with some success.

LANE

740.00116 European War 1939/5 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Italy (Phillips) to the Secretary of State

ROME, September 1, 1939—6 p. m.
[Received September 1—1:35 p. m.]

359. Department's 86, September 1, 6 a. m.¹⁷ The following oral statement was given in reply at 5 p. m. by an official at the Foreign Office:

"Since the Fascist Government after today's meeting of the Council of Ministers has officially declared and announced 'that Italy will not take any initiative in military operations' the possibility which formed the object of the message from the President of the United States dated September 1 is therefore to be excluded as far as concerns Italy."

PHILLIPS

740.00116 European War 1939/10 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, September 1, 1939—11 p. m.
[Received September 1—8:27 p. m.]

1004. My 997, September 1, 7 p. m.¹⁸ I am in receipt of a note signed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs quoting a message from the Chancellor, of which the following is a translation, with the request that it be transmitted immediately to the President:

"Berlin, September 1, 1939.

Dear Mr. Chargé d'Affaires: With reference to your note of today, in which you communicated to me a message from the President of the United States concerning the bombing of non-military objectives, I have the honor to convey to you below the reply of the Reich Chancellor to this message:

"The view expressed in the message of President Roosevelt that it is a humanitarian principle to refrain from the bombing of non-military objectives under all circumstances in connection with military operations, corresponds completely with my own point of view and has been advocated by me before. I, therefore, unconditionally endorse the proposal that the governments taking part in the hostilities now in progress make public a declaration in this sense.

For my own part, I already gave notice in my Reichstag speech of today that the German air force had received the order to restrict its operations to military

¹⁷ See footnote 16, p. 542.

¹⁸ Not printed.

objectives. It is a self-understood prerequisite for the maintenance of this order that opposing air forces adhere to the same rule. Adolf Hitler.'

I should be very grateful to you if you would communicate the above answer immediately to President Roosevelt.

I avail myself, etc., etc. Ribbentrop."

KIRK

740.00116 European War 1939/12

The British Ambassador (Lothian) to the Secretary of State

No. 364

WASHINGTON, September 1, 1939.

SIR: I have the honour under instructions from His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to request that you will be so good as to deliver the following message to the President of the United States in the name of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom.

"His Majesty's Government welcome the weighty and moving appeal of the President of the United States against the bombardment from the air of civilian populations or of unfortified cities. Deeply impressed by the humanitarian considerations to which the President's message refers, it was already the settled policy of His Majesty's Government should they become involved in hostilities to refrain from such action and to confine bombardment to strictly military objectives upon the understanding that those same rules will be scrupulously observed by all their opponents. They had already concerted in detail with certain other Governments the rules that in such an event they would impose upon themselves and make publicly known."

I have [etc.]

LOTHIAN

740.00116 European War 1939/24

The Polish Ambassador (Potocki) to the Secretary of State

49-G/SZ

[WASHINGTON,] September 1, 1939.

SIR: Upon instructions of my Government I have the honor to request your good offices in transmitting to the President the following reply of the Polish Government to his message of this morning.

The text of the reply is as follows:

"The Polish Government acknowledge with thanks President Roosevelt's telegram regarding bombing from the air of civilians in unfortified centers of population during war. They entirely agree with the principles expressed and with the feelings which inspire them. It is with these principles in mind that the supreme military authorities in Poland issued formal orders to refrain in the event of war from the bombardment of open towns and from such similar action as would be of direct danger to the civilian population. Unfortunately Poland

whose territory has been since this early morning the object of unprovoked aggression by German forces has already been the victim of several attacks by air. The reported losses in civilian population render it doubtful as to whether the opposing side is respecting the rules to which the President refers. These rules which are the outcome of natural human feelings remain in force on condition and on the understanding that they will be also scrupulously observed by the opposing party."

Accept [etc.]

JERZY POTOCKI

740.00116 European War 1939/4 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, September 1, 1939.

[Received September 1—2:30 p. m.]

1711. I received at 6:15 this evening from the French Foreign Office the following reply to the President's message with regard to bombardment from the air of civilian populations:

"Mr. Ambassador: You kindly handed me this morning an urgent message from the President of the United States of America.

I have the honor to address to you herewith the reply of the French Government.

The French Government hastens to reply to the appeal, which the President of the United States of America addresses to all Governments which may find themselves engaged in the conflict, to ask them to avoid all recourse, in every case and in every circumstance, to bombardment from the air of civilian populations.

The French Government highly appreciating the spirit which inspires the initiative of President Franklin D. Roosevelt affirms its firm intention to conduct hostilities, if war should be imposed upon it as a result of the German aggression, in strict accord with the laws of war; and to do everything in its power to spare civilian populations the sufferings which modern war may entail. It is in this spirit of humanity, which has always dictated in all circumstances the conduct of the French Government, that orders have already been given to the Commander in Chief of all the French forces.

These orders exclude in particular the bombardment of civilian populations, and limit bombardment from the air to strictly military objectives.

It goes without saying that the French Government reserves the right to have recourse to any action which it might consider appropriate, if the adversary should not observe the restrictions to which the French Government itself has subjected the operations of its air forces."

BULLITT

740.00116 European War 1939/6 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Poland (Biddle) to the Secretary of State

WARSAW, September 1, 1939.

[Received September 1—5:55 p. m.]

245. Department's 52, September 1st.¹⁹ For President. In response to your message regarding bombardment from air of civilian populations or unfortified cities Minister Beck²⁰ in behalf of his Government wishes me to assure you that instructions have already been issued to Polish air and military forces to refrain from bombardment of unfortified cities or even military centers where such bombardment might endanger civilian population.

BIDDLE

740.00116 European War 1939/7 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Poland (Biddle) to the Secretary of State

WARSAW, September 1, 1939.

[Received September 1—5:48 p. m.]

246. Department's 52, September 1.¹⁹ My 245, September 1. For the President and Secretary.

1. With further reference to President's message Beck imparted (but not for publication) that strict instructions described my previous cable had been issued with initial mobilization orders. Moreover consistent with Polish restraint not one Polish plane had crossed over German territory during today's fighting.

2. Beck was concerned and was investigating reports that 70 civilians were killed in Lwów and considerable damage done in Gdynia as result of unprovoked air attacks.

BIDDLE

740.00116 European War 1939/21 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Poland (Biddle) to the Secretary of State

WARSAW, September 2, 1939—10 a. m.

[Received September 3—12:55 p. m.]

247. For the President and Secretary.

1. Beck informs me Dutch Minister in behalf of his Government handed Beck message at 4:30 a. m. from the German Government transmitted through The Hague at 1:30 a. m. Gist of message is to

¹⁹ See footnote, 15, p. 541.

²⁰ Józef Beck, Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs.

the effect that Germany offered to limit air attacks to military objectives providing Poland would observe same principles. In response to above Beck immediately sent The Hague a message to the effect that Poland would limit air attacks to military objectives providing Germany adhered to this principle despite the fact that the German air attacks and bombings had already wrought harm to civilian populations and open towns in Poland.

2. In examining Beck's telegram from The Hague and noting it was despatched at 1:30 a. m. I concluded that Hitler decided to limit aerial bombardments to military objectives vis-à-vis Poland only after he realized he might actually have to face the French and British as well as the Polish air fleets.

BIDDLE

740.00116 European War 1939/22 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Poland (Biddle) to the Secretary of State

WARSAW, September 2, 1939—4 p. m.

[Received September 3—1:50 p. m.]

251. For the President and Secretary.

1. Beck just informed me that despite Hitler's proposals to limit bombardment from air to military objectives and Poland's agreement to adhere to this principle (see my 247, September 2, 10 a. m.) Beck's reports just received indicate that at 8 o'clock this morning German planes bombarded (a) town of Ciechanów in vicinity of East Prussian frontier killing 21 civilians and 4 soldiers and wounding 36 civilians, 9 of whom were women, 4 were children; (b) city of Lublin killing 30 persons; number of wounded still unknown.

2. Beck states his Government takes extremely grave view of these acts especially in view of Hitler's proposals transmitted through The Hague and is considering what action will be taken.

BIDDLE

740.00116 European War 1939/19

The British Ambassador (Lothian) to the Secretary of State

No. 369

WASHINGTON, September 3, 1939.

SIR: I have the honour under instructions from His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to inform you that the following declaration has been made on behalf of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom and the French Government:—

“The Governments of the United Kingdom and France solemnly and publicly affirm their intention should a war be forced upon them to conduct hostilities with a firm desire to spare the civilian popula-

tion and to preserve in every way possible those monuments of human achievement which are treasured in all civilized countries. In this spirit they have welcomed with deep satisfaction President Roosevelt's appeal on the subject of bombing from the air. Fully sympathizing with the humanitarian sentiments by which that appeal was inspired they have replied to it in similar terms. They had indeed some time ago sent explicit instructions to the commanders of their armed forces prohibiting the bombardment whether from the air, or the sea, or by artillery on land of any except strictly military objectives in the narrowest sense of the word. Bombardment by artillery on land will exclude objectives which have no strictly defined military importance; in particular large urban areas situated outside the battle zone. They will furthermore make every effort to avoid the destruction of localities or buildings which are of value to civilization. As regards the use of naval forces, including submarines, the two governments will abide strictly by the rules laid down in the submarine protocol of 1936²¹ which have been accepted by nearly all civilized nations. Further they will only employ their aircraft against merchant shipping at sea in conformity with the recognised rules applicable to the exercise of maritime belligerent rights by warships. Finally, the two allied governments reaffirm their intention to abide by the terms of the Geneva Protocol of 1925 prohibiting the use in war of asphyxiating or poisonous or other gases and of bacteriological methods of warfare.²²

"An enquiry will be addressed to the German Government as to whether they are prepared to give an assurance to the same effect.

"It will of course be understood that in the event of the enemy not observing any of the restrictions which the Governments of the United Kingdom and France have thus imposed on the operations of their armed forces these governments reserve the right to take all such action as they may consider appropriate."

I have [etc.]

LOTHIAN

740.00116 European War 1939/20 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Poland (Biddle) to the Secretary of State

WARSAW, September 3, 1939.

[Received September 3—1:35 p. m.]

254. For the President and Secretary. Shortly before 9 a. m. at Constancin German bomber in power dive dropped six heavy bombs one of which seriously damaged villa adjacent to that of American Ambassador and to a lesser degree damaged that of the Ambassador. An incendiary bomb struck in the grounds of the Ambassador's villa but failed to explode. Neither the Ambassador nor members of his family all of whom were present in the villa at the time were injured. The fact that these bombs were released at the low point of a power dive from low altitude leads to the belief that bombing of villas was deliberate.

BIDDLE

²¹ See *Foreign Relations*, 1936, vol. I, pp. 160 ff.

²² For text of protocol, see *ibid.*, 1925, vol. I, p. 89.

740.00116 European War 1939/17 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, September 3, 1939—4 p. m.

[Received September 3—11 a. m.]

1753. I called on Bonnet²³ at 3 o'clock this afternoon at his request. He said that France was sincerely determined not to do any bombing of civilian populations. He would like to ask the Government of the United States to order its diplomatic and consular representatives in Germany and France to make a careful record of the way in which bombings were carried out.

I shall order our representatives in France to report to me constantly on the subject of bombings and I trust that you will issue orders to our representatives in Germany to the same effect.

You may have use for such reports in the near future.

BULLITT

740.00116 European War 1939/20 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Poland (Biddle)

WASHINGTON, September 3, 1939—10 p. m.

56. Your 254, September 3rd. In order to have all the facts available please telegraph whether there are at or near Constancin any targets of possible strategic importance such as factories for munitions or war supplies, depots, bridges or the like.

We were very relieved to hear that you were all safe and well.

HULL

740.00116 European War 1939/32a : Circular telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy)

WASHINGTON, September 4, 1939—2 p. m.

In view of the President's appeal of September 1, 1939, to the belligerents, and potential belligerents, to refrain from bombing other than strictly military objectives, it is desired that you insist upon the privilege of using your military attaché to inspect promptly by personal visit the scene of any bombing of a nonmilitary objective which may constitute a controversial case of disregard of the humane principle agreed to by the belligerents. It obviously will be necessary to eliminate from your investigations clear-cut cases of attack upon

²³ French Minister for Foreign Affairs.

military objectives incidental to which there may have been loss of civilian life. Prompt factual reports are desired of observed cases of bombing of nonmilitary objectives.

Same to AmEmbassy, Paris, AmEmbassy, Berlin, and AmEmbassy, Warsaw.

HULL

740.00116 European War 1939/26 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Poland (Biddle) to the Secretary of State

WARSAW, September 4, 1939—3 p. m.

[Received 5:10 p. m.]

259. Referring to the Department's No. 56, September 3, 10 p. m.

1. Constancin is a summer resort near the Vistula 18 kilometers south from heart of city and was selected in March by Protocol Division of Foreign Office as safest place for housing Warsaw Diplomatic Corps during impending hostilities.

2. Objectives in this locality of possible interest to German air force are: (a) electric power plant of Pruszkow 24 kilometers from my villa; (b) pilot school at Obory 3 kilometers from my villa; (c) emergency military bridge over Vistula 8 kilometers from villa; (d) small brick and tile factory with tall chimney 500 meters from my villa which although obviously not an objective of military interest might conceivably present that appearance due to the flat expanse of roof (wooden shingles). This brick factory was the object of concurrent attack.

3. Inasmuch as 12 or 13 bombs were released at the low point of a power dive in the vicinity of the factory it is possible that the bombing of my villa may have resulted from either poor marksmanship in the event pilot was aiming at factory or the intention to unload remaining bombs in surrounding woods.

4. Polish General Staff states that up until 6 p. m. yesterday they had been unable to verify rumors that German air force is employing poison gas.

Am grateful your personal interest.

BIDDLE

740.00116 European War 1939/37 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, September 6, 1939—8 p. m.

[Received September 6—4:50 p. m.]

1815. The Polish Ambassador tonight made a profoundly moving appeal to me to obtain [omission?] at once from the President a

protest against German bombardments of open Polish towns and civilian populations.

The Polish Ambassador said that today the French General Staff had admitted to his Military Attaché that three-fourths of the German Army and three-fourths of the German Air Force were attacking Poland. Nevertheless French and British had not yet attacked Germany.

Poland because of this inactivity was in a desperate situation. He believed that unless France and England should attack immediately the Soviet Union would attack and annex eastern Poland.

BULLITT

740.00116 European War 1939/42 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, September 8, 1939—3 p. m.

[Received 3:20 p. m.]

1844. Your circular September 4, 2 p. m. Competent French military authorities have informed our Military Attaché that they are glad to authorize the officers on the staffs of our Military and Naval Attachés at Paris to inspect promptly by personal [apparent omission] the scene of any bombing of a non-military objective in France. (According to the staff officer with whom Military Attaché talked, General Gamelin had endorsed "*tres bien*" on this order.)

BULLITT

740.0011 European War 1939/276 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, September 12, 1939—2 p. m.

[Received September 12—10:43 a. m.]

1606. The Polish Ambassador called to see me today in a most unhappy frame of mind, principally because the English are refusing to be of any practical assistance in counter attacks in Germany to assist the Poles in their fight. The Poles say that what is really making it impossible for them to hold out is the constant bombardment from the entire German Air Force. Raczynski said that the General who came up on the night of the 4th explained to him that the air force was flying in 21 divisions and they were all exerting their full strength against Poland and that with the terrific number of mechanized units, it was impossible for the Poles to stand out.

When the Polish Ambassador in Paris appealed to Daladier, Daladier said they had urged the British to make the counter attack but

the British seem to have in mind constantly the President's appeal to the countries against bombardment that might affect women and children. Raczynski said that when he urges the British to take up these attacks, while they do not say this to him, nevertheless he feels definitely they believe if they were to bomb Berlin or any of the German cities there would of necessity be some women and children killed and that public opinion would turn sharply against them in the United States, on the ground that they had started it and therefore could take the results.

Raczynski feels that what they really have in mind is the great danger that something might happen which would result in public opinion refusing to change the Neutrality Act, because if England and France are not able to buy material it will be absolutely necessary for them to get from the United States, the situation looks dark indeed. Therefore a series of bombings that would not result in any concrete advantage, so the British insinuate to him he tells me, might cause very serious repercussions.

He was anxious to know what might be the reaction on American public opinion if the British started bombing German towns. Of course he did not ask me for any direct impression but he asked me if I had any idea and I said I had not.

In all denying [*sic*] that you make on what is going to happen in Europe, it is well to consider that there are many people who are situated high in this Government who believe that the picture looks very dismal from the British-French point of view.

KENNEDY

740.00116 European War 1939/50 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Poland (Biddle) to the Secretary of State

KRZEMIENIEC, September 12, 1939—3 p. m.

[Received September 13—3:35 a. m.]

This place, a defenseless open village, was bombed at 11 a. m. today by flight of 4 German planes which dropped at least 12 bombs not only on outskirts but also along main street 300 yards from this Embassy and within even closer proximity of other missions as well as the Foreign Office now located here. Verified casualties include 11 killed, 40 seriously injured and many [slightly injured. Considerable damage to residential and] business property. Population terrorized by suddenness and unexpectedness of raid.

BIDDLE

740.00116 European War 1939/52 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, September 13, 1939—2 p. m.

[Received 5:40 p. m.]

1227. My 1004, September 1, 11 a. m. [*p. m.*] The following communiqué regarding the bombing and shelling of open towns in Poland was issued by D. N. B. this afternoon:

“The Fuehrer’s headquarters. Recently it has happened more and more frequently that Polish governmental and army authorities call upon the population of open cities to offer resistance to the entering German troops within the precincts of cities, towns and villages. In Warsaw the population was called upon by leaflets, the Polish radio and other forms of summons to adopt *franc-tireur* warfare. The city itself has been shelled by Polish artillery. In this connection the high command of the German armed forces makes the following announcement: The excessive consideration shown by the German artillery and German aviators for open cities, towns and villages is based upon the prerequisite that these are not declared and made war areas by the adversaries themselves. Since the Poles without consideration of their own population reject this principle, the German armed forces will from now on break the resistance in such localities with all the means at its disposal. The German Air Force in conjunction with heavy artillery will carry out those military measures which are appropriate for making clear to such localities in the shortest possible time the futility of their resistance. The responsibility for the consequences which thereby arise for the sorely tried population falls exclusively upon the Polish Government and its incompetent set of unscrupulous army commanders.”

KIRK

740.00116 European War 1939/79

The Polish Ambassador (Potocki) to the Secretary of State

49/G

WASHINGTON, September 15, 1939.

SIR: I have the honor to inform you that the German forces are resorting to methodical bombing of open cities and villages throughout Poland even far beyond the fighting line. It is evident that the above is aimed at the paralyzing and disruption of normal life of the civilian population. In many instances the bombing and machine gunning was made from planes at a very low altitude and directed at centers of inhabited localities, causing countless deaths of the defenseless population. Incendiary bombs have been used repeatedly in such a way which made it impossible to bring help and assistance.

The Polish Government informed the representatives of foreign countries of the above and filed with the Government of the Netherlands, as representing the German interests in Poland, an official

protest stating that Germany has broken the assurance given to the Government of the United States in its reply to President Roosevelt's appeal of September 3, 1939.

Accept [etc.]

JERZY POTOCKI

740.00116 European War 1939/57: Telegram

The Minister in Rumania (Gunther) to the Secretary of State

BUCHAREST, September 16, 1939—4 a. m.

[Received 9:05 a. m.]

For the President. The following telegram for you has been received by the Polish Ambassador here who has handed it to me for transmission.

“On instruction from President Moscicki I have the honor to forward the following telegram:

‘Mr. President, in reply to your telegram regarding the non-bombardment of open towns you received from the Polish Government a clear and straightforward answer. In connection with this, I consider it my duty to inform you that for some days past German aircraft have deliberately and methodically been bombing Polish towns and villages which contain no conceivable military objectives. Among the civil population there are thousands of dead and wounded. As this is a question which concerns the whole civilized world and as you, Mr. President, have shown a special interest in it, I wish to inform you of these facts. Ignacy Moscicki, General Headquarters.’

Beck.”

In handing this message to me he commented upon omission of mention of machine gunning from the air of refugees upon the roads and other civilians, reportedly including Papal Nuncio and various members of Diplomatic Corps.

GUNTHER

740.00116 European War 1939/61: Telegram

The Minister in Rumania (Gunther) to the Secretary of State

BUCHAREST, September 16, 1939—9 a. m.

[Received 6 p. m.]

200. Following from Biddle.

Z-5. September 15, 9 a. m. For the President.

1. With reference to (a) your telegram to President Moscicki at outbreak of hostilities regarding limitation of aerial bombardments to military objectives and (b) Moscicki's reply thereto. While latter is personally cabling you his observations upon incontestable facts concerning Germany's failure to adhere to the aforementioned principle, Beck advises me to cable you his own conviction (based upon tragedies he personally witnessed at various points) that from the outset Poland

has been the "victim of methodical bombing of open towns which, unfortunately in too many cases, have been defenseless and of absolutely no military interest to adversary."

2. In view of what the members of my staff and my family and I have experienced and witnessed I find it difficult in many cases to ascribe the barbaric aerial bombardment by German planes to anything short of deliberate intention to terrorize the civilian population and to reduce the number of child bearing Poles irrespective of category.

3. Our Military Attaché and his companions witnessed on their recent tour of Siedlce-Brest Litovsk region three distinct instances wherein unjustified bombarding took place.

4. Reference my telegram of September 12. My further investigation of outcome of bombardment of Krzemieniec reveals that the low flying planes which dropped bombs close to and directly in front of our Embassy also (a) dropped incendiaries in center of town; and (b) machine-gunned the open market place killing, to my knowledge, a woman and child and wounding several others; (c) dropped diminutive parachutes wherefrom were suspended glass bulbs and other small containers which being suspected of containing bacteria are now under official laboratory inspection. [Biddle.]

GUNTHER

740.00116 European War 1939/57 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Minister in Rumania (Gunther)

WASHINGTON, September 18, 1939.

129. For Biddle. Please convey to the President of Poland the following reply from the President of the United States to the former's telegram regarding attacks made from the air upon open villages and upon the civilian population of Poland.

"I have received your telegram stating that as the result of the bombing by German aircraft of Polish towns and villages possessing no considerable military objective thousands of the civil population of Poland are dead or wounded.

"It had been my hope following the receipt from the several belligerent powers of the replies to my appeal of September 1, in which they stated their intentions to limit the operations of their air forces to military objectives, that the world would be spared the horror of witnessing during this war the bombing of open towns and villages and the slaughtering of thousands of innocent and defenceless men, women, and children.

"I have been deeply shocked, therefore, by the statements contained in your telegram as well as by reports received from other sources including officials of this Government in Poland at the scene of hostilities.

"In view of the hundreds of thousands of lives which may be at stake, it is my earnest hope that the Governments of the belligerent countries will renew their orders prohibiting the practice of bombing civilians in unfortified centers of population from the air, and that they will take measures to assure themselves that their respective air forces are showing that regard for the lives of non-combatants which their replies to my appeal of September 1 have led the world to expect. Franklin D. Roosevelt."

HULL

740.00116 European War 1939/74 : Telegram

The Minister in Rumania (Gunther) to the Secretary of State

BUCHAREST, September 19, 1939—7 p. m.

[Received 11:50 p. m.]

223. Following from Biddle.

14. September 19, 10 a. m.

1. Subsequent aerial bombardment and aerial machine-gunning of Krzemieniec on September 12, Papal Nuncio called meeting of the mission chiefs for the purpose of obtaining their consent to address to His Holiness the Pope a collective protest. During meeting which was called in part expressly to be close to dugout, we were forced twice to seek refuge therein due to flights of low flying German planes which on these occasions terrorized but refrained from bombing or machine-gunning community. It was the consensus of opinion that these pilots were reconnoitering to ascertain exact damage of bombing or photographing for future attacks.

2. It was sense of meeting (a) that instead of making collective protest as first proposed by the Nuncio each mission chief would inform his respective Government of the facts in regard to agnostic bombardment and (b) that the Nuncio make a record of our agreement to do so. The collective protest failed because the Italian Ambassador and the Spanish and Bulgarian Ministers refused, that they could not do so without instructions from their respective Governments.

3. Accordingly verification of this bombardment could be secured through the Vatican and Governments of neutral countries represented at this meeting should they be willing to disclose the substance of their representatives' reports.

4. Dutch Minister accredited to Poland understands that his Government made [apparent omission] in Berlin based upon his report of September 12, aerial bombardment of Krzemieniec.

In confirmation and support of reports already submitted regarding the bombardments other than military objectives I am giving herewith individual statements of the officers of my staff as in scrap [escape?] by stages from Warsaw to the Polish-Russian frontier we

proceed along the southwardly route separately or in small groups for safety and in order to avoid attracting attention.

[Here follow individual statements of staff, which have been omitted.]

[Biddle]
GUNTHER

740.00116 European War 1939/79

The Secretary of State to the Polish Ambassador (Potocki)

[WASHINGTON,] September 21, 1939.

EXCELLENCY: I have received your note of September 15, 1939 stating that German forces are resorting to the methodical bombing of open cities and villages throughout Poland, and that the bombing and machine gunning from planes at a low altitude has caused countless deaths of the defenseless population. Notice is also taken of your statement that the Polish Government has filed an official protest with the Government of the Netherlands, which represents German interests in Poland, charging that Germany has broken the assurances given to the Government of the United States in its reply to President Roosevelt's appeal.

It had been the hope of this Government, in view of the nature of the replies made by the several belligerent powers to the President's appeal, that their airplanes would not resort to the bombing of open towns and villages or to the machine gunning of the civilian population.

The statements contained in your note, as well as those set forth in a telegram which the President of the United States has recently received from the President of Poland, have, therefore, deeply shocked this Government.

The President of the United States has already informed the President of Poland that it is his earnest hope that the governments of the belligerent countries will renew their orders prohibiting the bombing from the air of civilians in unfortified centers of population, and that they will take measures to assure themselves that their respective air forces are showing that regard for the lives of non-combatants which their replies to the appeal of the President have led the world to expect.

Accept [etc.]

CORDELL HULL

VI. SUSPENSION OF THE LONDON NAVAL TREATY OF
MARCH 25, 1936²⁵

500.A15A5/955 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, September 3, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received September 3—12: 55 p. m.]

1402. Following Foreign Office note of today's date just received:

"I have the honour to request Your Excellency to be so good as to notify the United States Government that in consequence of the state of war which exists with Germany and in accordance with the provisions of Article 24 of the Treaty for the Limitation of Naval Armament signed at London on the 25th March 1936 His Majesty the King of Great Britain, Ireland and the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Emperor of India in respect of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland hereby suspends in so far as he is concerned all of the obligations of the said treaty.

2. A similar note is being addressed to His Excellency the French Ambassador and the Italian Chargé d'Affaires.

I have the honour to be, etc."

KENNEDY

500.A15A5/958

The Chargé in Canada (Simmons) to the Secretary of State

No. 367

OTTAWA, September 12, 1939.

[Received September 14.]

SIR: I have the honor to enclose herewith copy of a note No. 190 of September 11, 1939, from the Department of External Affairs,²⁶ which states that in consequence of the state of war which exists with Germany His Majesty the King, in respect of Canada, hereby suspends in so far as he is concerned all obligations of the London Naval Treaty signed March 25, 1936.

Respectfully yours,

JOHN FARR SIMMONS

500.A15A5/957

The Secretary of State to the British Ambassador (Lothian)

WASHINGTON, September 18, 1939.

EXCELLENCY: Referring to my note of September 11, 1939²⁵ advising you of the text of a notification given on September 3, 1939 to the

²⁵ For previous correspondence relative to this treaty, see *Foreign Relations*, 1936, vol. I, pp. 102 ff.; for text of treaty, see Department of State Treaty Series No. 919, or 50 Stat. 1363.

²⁶ Not printed.

American Ambassador at London of the suspension of the London Naval Treaty of 1936, in respect of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, I have now the honor to inform you that the American Ambassador at London reported by cable on September 6, 1939 ²⁷ that he had received that day an identical note from the Foreign Office notifying suspension of the Treaty, in respect of the Government of India, and reported by cable on September 11, 1939 ²⁸ that he had received that day an identical note from the Foreign Office notifying suspension of the Treaty, in respect of the Governments of Australia and New Zealand.

The Government of the United States has taken due note of the foregoing notifications.

Accept [etc.]

For the Secretary of State:
R. WALTON MOORE

500.A15A5/961a : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Bullitt)

WASHINGTON, September 21, 1939—9 p. m.

1020. The United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and India have notified this Government that in consequence of the state of war which exists with Germany they have in accordance with article 24 suspended, so far as they are concerned, all of the obligations of the Naval Treaty signed at London on March 25, 1936.

Article 24, paragraph (2), of this Treaty provides that in the event of a suspension of the obligations by one party the other contracting parties shall promptly consult together with a view to agreeing as to the obligations of the Treaty, if any, which each of the High Contracting Parties may suspend.

Please consult with the Government to which you are accredited and inquire what are its intentions with regard to the suspension of the obligations of the Treaty. You may state that it is the intention of this Government, in view of the suspension of obligations by several Parties to the Treaty, to give notice that it considers it necessary to suspend the treaty obligations.

Repeat to American Embassy, Rome.

HULL

²⁷ Telegram No. 1491, not printed.

²⁸ Telegram No. 1574, not printed.

500.A15A5/962 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, September 22, 1939—noon.

[Received September 22—9:20 a. m.]

2114. Department's 1020, September 21, 9 p. m. On September 10, 1939 the French Foreign Minister sent me the following note which was transmitted to the Department under cover of my despatch 5005, September 14:²⁹

"I have the honor to request you to be good enough to inform the Government of the United States of America that in view of the state of war existing between France and Germany and by virtue of Article 24 of the London Naval Treaty of 1936 the Government of the French Republic suspends, insofar as it is concerned, the application of this convention.

A similar notification has been sent to the British, Canadian and Italian Governments."

I am today informing the Foreign Office that it is the intention of my Government, in view of suspension of the obligations by several parties to the London Naval Treaty of 1936, to give notice that it considers it necessary to suspend the treaty obligations.

BULLITT

500.A15A5/963 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Italy (Phillips) to the Secretary of State

ROME, September 23, 1939—noon.

[Received September 23—9:08 a. m.]

422. Department's circular 1020 received via Paris. The action indicated has been taken.

I was informed that the Italian Government was examining the question and had as yet taken no position in the matter.

PHILLIPS

500.A15A5/965a : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy)

WASHINGTON, October 2, 1939—6 p. m.

1134. Please inform the British Government that in view of the suspension of the obligations of the London Naval Treaty, 1936, by several other parties to the treaty and in accordance with article 24,

²⁹ Not printed.

this Government suspends so far as it is concerned all the obligations of the treaty.

Request that notice to this effect be transmitted to the Governments of Australia, New Zealand, and India.

Similar notice is being given to other parties to the treaty.

HULL

500.A15A5/965 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Italy (Phillips)

WASHINGTON, October 2, 1939—6 p. m.

118. Our 1020, September 21, 9 p. m. and your 422, September 23, noon. Please consult further with the Italian Government as to its intentions with regard to the suspension of the obligations of the treaty. After referring to our notification of September 21 of our intention to suspend the treaty obligations, inform them that in consequence of the suspension of the treaty obligations by several other parties and in accordance with article 24, this Government suspends so far as it is concerned all the obligations of the treaty.

Similar notice is being given to other parties to the treaty.

HULL

500.A15A5/968 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Italy (Phillips) to the Secretary of State

ROME, October 14, 1939—2 p. m.

[Received October 14—11:05 a. m.]

464. My telegram No. 441, October 5, 11 p. m.⁸⁰ By note dated October 10th received today the Minister for Foreign Affairs formally advises that "the Government of His Majesty the King of Italy and of Albania, Emperor of Ethiopia has on its part decided to avail itself of the option contemplated by article 24 paragraph 2 of naval treaty and declares the operation thereof to be suspended insofar as it is concerned."

PHILLIPS

⁸⁰ Not printed.

VII. ESTABLISHMENT OF ANGLO-FRENCH PURCHASING BOARD IN THE UNITED STATES FOR THE COORDINATION OF BRITISH AND FRENCH PURCHASING DURING THE WAR

841.24/83

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Chief of the Division of Controls (Green)

[WASHINGTON,] June 29, 1939.

Mr. V. A. L. Mallet, Counselor of the British Embassy, called at my office this morning by appointment. He said that he had been instructed to call in order to discuss a proposal which his Government had under consideration for the establishment of a centralized British purchasing agency in this country. He explained that his Government was, at the present time, engaged in purchasing not only arms, ammunition and implements of war but also other manufactured goods and a variety of raw materials in preparation for a possible war; that, in making these purchases, his Government was, at present, acting through a number of Government Departments and a number of agents in this country who acted more or less independently; and that his Government was of the opinion that a centralized purchasing agency would be more efficient from the British point of view and more convenient to this Government than the present unorganized system of purchases but that his Government did not wish to proceed with the carrying out of this project until it had been ascertained that this Government would have no objection to such action.

I told Mr. Mallet that there was certainly no legal objection to the setting up of a purchasing agency in this country by his Government; that I could not perceive any objection on the grounds of policy but that before giving him a definite answer I would wish to consult my colleagues and superiors. I mentioned incidentally that other foreign governments were already making purchases in this country through purchasing agencies in New York. I added that his Government might wish to bear in mind, in connection with this project, the possibility that if there were any publicity concerning it while neutrality legislation was under consideration in Congress the project might well be subjected to misrepresentation and thus cause the Administration difficulty in its endeavor to have the Neutrality Act³¹ amended.

Mr. Mallet said that he realized the force of what I had said concerning the inadvisability of publicity in regard to this matter at this time and that care would be taken to prevent such publicity. He said that the first step which his Government proposed to take was to send someone to this country to look into the situation and to report upon

³¹ Neutrality Act of 1935 as amended May 1, 1937; 50 Stat. 121.

the type of organization which should be set up. Whoever was sent over to make this preliminary investigation would probably wish to confer with the Assistant Secretary of War³² in order to ascertain what munitions could probably be purchased by the British Government without dislocating in any way the procurement program of this Government. He asked me to ascertain whether Colonel Johnson would be willing to confer with whomever the British Government might send to make this preliminary investigation.

After consulting Mr. Hickerson³³ of EU, who, in turn, consulted Mr. Dunn,³⁴ and after calling upon the Assistant Secretary of War and reporting what Mr. Mallet had said to me, I called Mr. Mallet by telephone this afternoon; told him that we could perceive no objection to the proposal which he had outlined, provided that there were no publicity which might cause embarrassment during the discussion of the neutrality legislation, and told him that Colonel Johnson would be glad to discuss the matter with whomever the British Government might send to this country. I added that Colonel Johnson expected to be out of town during the last two weeks of July.

JOSEPH C. GREEN

841.24/85

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Chief of the Division of Controls (Green)

[WASHINGTON,] July 31, 1939.

Sir Owen Chalkley, Commercial Counselor of the British Embassy, called at my office this afternoon by appointment, bringing Lord Riverdale with him.

Lord Riverdale talked in general terms of his mission to investigate and report to his Government on the most efficient means to establish a centralized British purchasing agency in this country. The only specific question which he raised was the question of the registration of such a purchasing agency under the provisions of section 5 of the Neutrality Act, requiring the registration of exporters of arms, ammunition and implements of war. He said that the purchasing agency would probably take the form of a corporation and would function very much as Amtorg³⁵ functions. When I informed him that Amtorg was registered as an exporter of arms and obtained export licenses from the Department he stated that the purchasing

³² Col. Louis Johnson.

³³ John D. Hickerson, Assistant Chief of the Division of European Affairs.

³⁴ James C. Dunn, Adviser on Political Relations.

³⁵ Amtorg Trading Corporation, official purchasing agency in the United States of the Soviet Union, New York, N. Y.

agency which he expected eventually to set up would undoubtedly apply for a certificate of registration.

After a brief conversation I took Sir Owen Chalkley and Lord Riverdale to the office of the Assistant Secretary of War. I presented them to Colonel Johnson and left them in his office.

JOSEPH C. GREEN

841.24/109

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Chief of the Division of European Affairs (Moffat)

[WASHINGTON,] September 25, 1939.

Sir Owen Chalkley, Commercial Counselor of the British Embassy, and Mr. G. H. Pinsent, Financial Counselor of the British Embassy, called this afternoon by appointment on Mr. Green, Chief of the Division of Controls, and Mr. Moffat, Chief of the Division of European Affairs.

Sir Owen Chalkley referred to the recent visit of Lord Riverdale, who came to the United States early in August to examine the practicabilities of setting up a purchasing agency *ad hoc* in the United States, in the event that Great Britain became involved in war, rather than making use of J. P. Morgan and Company, as was done in the Great War.

Lord Riverdale had had a series of satisfactory conversations with the Departments of State, War, Navy, Treasury, et cetera.

A week or so ago the British Ambassador³⁶ had called on Assistant Secretary of War Johnson to formally convey to him the thanks of the British Government for the assistance he had rendered. The Ambassador further told the Assistant Secretary of War that a British purchasing mission was now en route to Canada, and that some or all of its members would soon be coming to the United States to set up an office. The Ambassador had told Colonel Johnson that they did not wish anything resembling the Amtorg. Colonel Johnson had reported this to the President, who had sent back word that he agreed, and made a counter suggestion that an office somewhat along the lines of that of the Australian Trade Commissioner might satisfy all concerned.

The purpose of the call of Sir Owen Chalkley and Mr. Pinsent was to inquire whether the Department of State saw any objection to their proceeding along these lines. The title would probably be that of "United Kingdom Purchasing Commission", although this had not been finally worked out.

³⁶ Marquess of Lothian.

They then asked Mr. Green what were the necessary formalities with regard to registration. Mr. Green replied that it would be necessary for them to comply with the provisions of Part II of the regulations recently issued by the Secretary in regard to the registration of agents of foreign principals and the notification of agents of foreign governments.³⁷ He pointed out that compliance with these provisions implied merely a notification of the names, addresses, and function of any agents of foreign governments, whether aliens or citizens, functioning within our jurisdiction.

The next point raised by Sir Owen Chalkley and Mr. Pinsent was that of setting up in New York an office of the British Ministry of Shipping (Sir Ashley Sparks will undoubtedly be the Comptroller). With the formation of this new Ministry the control of all British merchant shipping will be taken away from its owners and vested in the British Government. The idea is to set up in New York a British "Comptroller of Shipping" who would probably take over the local employees of the major British ship lines. His task would comprise the despatching and routing of all outgoing British ships, supervision of their cargoes, determining the priority of cargoes, et cetera. Sir Owen Chalkley and Mr. Pinsent inquired whether the creation of such an office was agreeable to the American Government. Mr. Moffat replied that he wished to consult the Legal Adviser, Mr. Berle³⁸ and others before giving a final opinion. (Mr. Moffat, for instance, feels that the British should undertake in advance to assure us that the ships would still be regarded as private ships and would not claim any legal immunities by virtue of their being run by the British Government.)

The next question to arise was the form of registration of such an office if set up. In this respect Mr. Green stated that the requirements of law would be identical with those which he had just explained in respect to the office of a British Purchasing Commissioner.

One final question arose. Mr. Pinsent inquired whether ways and means might be explored with the Treasury whereby, on the basis of reciprocity, British civil servants or officers sent over from the United Kingdom might be exempt from the payment of income tax, social security taxes, et cetera. They would not seek such privileges for American employees. They stated that this was not a pressing question, but one which they would wish to bring up when the offices were established. Mr. Moffat said he would refer the matter to the competent officials in the hope that they might give the question at least preliminary examination.

PIERREPONT MOFFAT

³⁷ See 4 *Federal Register* 3940-3944.

³⁸ Adolf A. Berle, Jr., Assistant Secretary of State.

841.24/101

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Chief of the Division of Controls (Green)

[WASHINGTON,] October 12, 1939.

Sir Owen Chalkley, Commercial Counselor of the British Embassy, called at my Office this afternoon by appointment, bringing with him Colonel John Henry Maitland Greenly who has been designated to head the British Purchasing Commission which will be set up in New York if and when legislation approximating the Pittman neutrality bill³⁹ is enacted. Colonel Greenly asked me a number of questions in regard to the provisions of the present neutrality act, in regard to the provisions of the Pittman bill, and in regard to problems of various kinds which may confront him if and when he establishes a purchasing agency in New York.

I gave Colonel Greenly the information he requested in so far as the questions which he asked made definite answers possible.

I gathered the impression that Colonel Greenly had called rather with the idea of establishing friendly relations with a view to the future than with a view to dealing with any specific questions at this time.

 JOSEPH C. GREEN

841.24/100 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, October 17, 1939—10 a. m.
[Received October 17—7:15 a. m.]

2487. Personal for the President. With reference to enclosure No. 1 to my letter of October 4, 1939,⁴⁰ I now have the text of the agreement which Monnet⁴¹ concluded in London for the coordination of French-British economic activities during the war covering shipping, air production and supply raw materials and munitions, oil and food.

Monnet was informed by the British Government that you had indicated to Lothian that you considered a British mission preferable to a purchasing corporation. The question will be decided in Paris tonight or tomorrow. Because of [the fact that?] the pooling of resources by the French and British Governments achieved agreement, the French Government is inclined to believe that it would be preferable to make purchases in the United States through a single joint Franco-British mission.

³⁹ For Pittman Neutrality Bill, see *Congressional Record*, vol. 184, p. 2923.

⁴⁰ Not found in Department files.

⁴¹ Jean Monnet, French financier.

My opinion is that a joint Franco-British mission would be the most efficient mechanism.

Question 1. Do you agree?

I assume from Morgenthau's⁴² talk with St. Quentin⁴³ on September 13, 1939, that such a joint mission would be able to find the same sort of cooperation in Washington that was accorded last winter to Monnet.

Question 2. Is this assumption correct?

BULLITT

841.24/100: Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Bullitt)

WASHINGTON, October 18, 1939—5 p. m.

1260. Your 2487, October 17, 10 a. m. The President requests me to let you know that his answer is yes to both of the questions contained in your telegram.

HULL

841.24/105: Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Bullitt)

WASHINGTON, November 10, 1939—6 p. m.

1378. Your 2694, November 8, 6 p. m.⁴⁴ The President asks me to let you know that in his judgment the problem presented in this country is that both the British and French will be undertaking to make purchases in the United States at the same time that our own Government finds it necessary to make similar purchases. He believes that while the British and French Governments should have separate purchasing agencies, nevertheless, satisfactory and precise plans should be made by those two Governments providing for continuing contact and coordination between the responsible heads of the British and French purchasing agencies in order to provide for a satisfactory synchronizing of the purchases made by those two agencies and likewise, and more important, for effective synchronization with the purchases to be undertaken by our own Treasury Department.

HULL

⁴² Henry Morgenthau, Jr., Secretary of the Treasury.

⁴³ Count de Saint-Quentin, French Ambassador in the United States.

⁴⁴ Not printed.

841.24/108 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, November 11, 1939—4 p. m.

[Received 4:15 p. m.]

2730. Your 1378, November 10, 6 p. m. In view of the fact that the French Government based its position during the complicated negotiations with regard to this question on the position taken in the Department's telegram 1260, October 18, 5 p. m., you may imagine the surprise and embarrassment with which was received that change in our Government's position of which neither the French Government nor myself had the slightest previous knowledge.

I shall attempt to diminish the impression produced that the change in our position is due to the desire of Sir John Simon⁴⁵ to avoid complete collaboration with France and to have the economic and financial as well as the human resources of France exhausted before Great Britain reaches a stage of considerable difficulty. This impression is dangerous since it reinforces the propaganda with which both the German and Soviet Governments are flooding France to the effect that France is merely the victim of Great Britain in this war.

BULLITT

740.0011 European War 1939/1056 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, November 18, 1939.

[Received 8:25 a. m.]

2396. The Supreme War Council held a meeting in London yesterday and the British and French Prime Ministers⁴⁶ later issued the following joint statement on combined economic measures:

"With a view to making full use of the experience gained in the years 1914-1918, the British and French Governments decided from the outset of the war to coordinate in the fullest possible manner the economic war effort of the two countries. Immediate steps were taken at the outbreak of war with this object in view.

In pursuance of decisions reached by Mr. Chamberlain and M. Daladier at the last meeting of the Supreme War Council the arrangements already put into effect by the two Governments have now been

⁴⁵ British Chancellor of the Exchequer.

⁴⁶ Neville Chamberlain, British Prime Minister; Édouard Daladier, French President of the Council of Ministers and Minister for National Defense.

strengthened and completed in such a way as to ensure common action in the following fields:

Air.
Munitions and raw materials.
Oil.
Food.
Shipping.
Economic Warfare.

The new measures adopted by the two Governments will provide for the best use in the common interest of the resources of both countries in raw materials, means of production, tonnage, etc. They will also provide for the equal distribution between them of any limitations, should circumstances render necessary a reduction of the programmes of imports.

The two countries will in future draw up their import programmes jointly and will avoid competition in purchases which they have to make abroad in carrying out those programmes.

The execution of these tasks has been entrusted to permanent Anglo-French executive committees, under an Anglo-French co-ordinating committee, which are being set up immediately.

The agreements reached, which can if required be extended to other fields, afford further evidence of the determination of the two countries to coordinate their war efforts to the fullest possible extent. By this means arrangements have been carried into effect two months after the beginning of hostilities for the organization of a common action by the two countries, which was only achieved during the last conflict at the end of the third year of the war".

KENNEDY

841.24/121 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, November 18, 1939—1 p. m.
[Received November 18—11:20 a. m.]

2783. Jean Monnet has been appointed by the French and British Governments head of the entire joint French-British organization for cooperation during the war which was announced last night. His main office will be in London.

I have reported so fully by letters and telegrams on this subject during the past months that little remains to be added. The single point which has not yet been cleared up is that of the mechanism for purchases in the United States.

In accordance with the opinions expressed in your number 1378, November 10, 6 p. m., the British and French are now considering tentatively an arrangement whereby synchronization between the British and French purchasing missions and synchronization with our own Government should be handled through a joint Franco-

British board of which the chairman would be Arthur Purvis, Director General of Purchases of the British mission in the United States; and the vice chairman the head of the French Purchasing Mission for distribution.

Since Monnet is to be head of the entire organization in London both the French and British Governments consider it fitting that the head of the organization in the United States should be a British subject. Daladier however is most anxious to know whether Purvis will be in the highest degree *persona grata* to our Government before giving his consent to this arrangement. Daladier has requested me to find out urgently and ultra-confidentially if Purvis is a person who will receive the same sort of cooperation that was accorded to Monnet last winter—for which Daladier continues to be deeply grateful.

I hope that you will be able to let me have an entirely confidential reply to this inquiry of Daladier's as soon as possible since no decision with regard to the purchasing agencies in the United States will be made until I have received your reply.⁴⁷

Monnet will leave Paris for London tomorrow to set up the joint organization and probably will visit the United States early in December for brief conversations.

BULLITT

841.24/132 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, November 25, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received 7:50 p. m.]

2828. For the President and the Secretary. Daladier requested me this afternoon to transmit the following written message to you:

“Paris, November 25, 1939.

The general arrangements between France and England for the coordination of the economic war effort of the two countries have been completed.

The two Governments have agreed to appoint as President of the Committee for Coordination in London Monsieur Jean Monnet whom you know.

They have decided to create an Anglo-French Purchasing Board in the United States in order to avoid all competition in French and British purchases and to permit synchronization of these purchases with those of the American administration.

The two Governments have agreed that the President of the Anglo-French Purchasing Board should be Mr. Arthur Purvis.

This organization is the result of the common desire of Mr. Chamberlain and myself that the French and British purchases in the

⁴⁷ The Department informed the Ambassador in France in telegram No. 1417, November 20, 6 p. m., that it approved the appointment of Mr. Purvis (851.24/106).

United States should be placed and executed in such a manner that they should be synchronized with those of the American administration and that the American Government should have constant information with regard to them and should insofar as possible accord its cooperation.

I thank you for the assurances which you were kind enough to give me through your Ambassador in Paris that the same sort of cooperation which was given by your administration and in particular by the Procurement Division of the Treasury Department to the mission which was headed by Monsieur Jean Monnet last spring for the purchase of airplanes might be given for the collectivity of French-British purchases. I wish to express to you the determination of Mr. Chamberlain and myself to see insofar as possible the same method applied to the French-British purchases to be made by the Anglo-French Purchasing Board.

I am very happy that like Mr. Chamberlain and myself you consider that cooperation with the American administration is the only method which will permit a solution of these problems and I propose to arrange with the British Government that Mr. Purvis who will be in Washington Monday evening November 27th shall receive the necessary orders in this sense."

BULLITT

841.24/163

*Aide-Mémoire Communicated by the British Ambassador to the
Department of State, November 30, 1939*

The British and French Governments have decided upon the closest coordination of their economic war measures. For this purpose they have set up a Coordinating Committee in London under the chairmanship of M. Jean Monnet and have appointed an Anglo-French Purchasing Board in the United States, of which Mr. Arthur B. Purvis will be Chairman and M. Bloch-Lainé Vice-Chairman. The Board will coordinate the activities of the British and French Purchasing Commissions in the United States.

This Board has been instructed to establish and maintain the closest contact with the American Administration in order to keep the Administration informed of its purchasing activities, with the object of avoiding any unnecessary disturbance of American economy.

The Governments of Great Britain and France are glad to learn through the American Ambassador in Paris that this view is shared by the United States Government. We should therefore be glad to be informed as to the method whereby the United States Government desires contact to be established between itself and the joint Purchasing Board.

841.24/162

*The Department of State to the British Embassy*⁴⁸

MEMORANDUM

[WASHINGTON,] December 4, 1939.

In discussion with the Under Secretary on November 30, the British Ambassador inquired as to the manner in which contact should be established between the Anglo-French Purchasing Board in the United States and the authorities of the United States Government to avoid any unnecessary disturbance to the American economy. This Government plans to set up in the very near future an informal committee made up of representatives of the Treasury, War and Navy Departments, which committee will report directly to the President through his Administrative Assistant, Mr. McReynolds. When established, this committee will be glad to discuss with the Anglo-French Purchasing Mission any questions which involve interference with the purchases to be made by the Government of the United States in connection with its preparedness program, any questions which involve priorities, and any questions cognate to the question of fair prices and which thus affect the internal economy of the United States.

841.24/172

The British Ambassador (Lothian) to the Secretary of State

No. 7

His Majesty's Ambassador presents his compliments to the Secretary of State and has the honour to acknowledge the Secretary's communication of January 3, 1940,⁴⁹ stating that a committee of representatives of the Treasury, War and Navy Departments has now been established as the agency through which the Anglo-French Purchasing Board might deal with the United States Government and that the Director of Procurement of the Treasury Department has been designated chairman of the committee.

In thanking Mr. Cordell Hull for this communication Lord Lothian desires to state that he will have much pleasure in informing His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom of the appointment of this committee and that he has requested Mr. Arthur B. Purvis, the chairman of the Anglo-French Purchasing Board, to place himself in communication with the Director of Procurement.

WASHINGTON, January 6, 1940.

⁴⁸ Handed to the Commercial Counselor of the British Embassy on December 5 by Mr. Feis, Economic Adviser of the Department, under instructions of Under Secretary of State Welles; an almost identical memorandum was handed to the French Counselor of Embassy on the same date.

⁴⁹ Not printed.

VIII. EVACUATION OF THE AMERICAN EMBASSY STAFF FROM POLAND AND MAINTENANCE OF DIPLOMATIC CONTACT WITH THE POLISH GOVERNMENT; RETENTION OF THE AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL IN WARSAW

[For correspondence, see volume II, under Poland.]

IX. INFORMAL REPRESENTATIONS BY THE UNITED STATES TO THE RUMANIAN GOVERNMENT TO SECURE THE RELEASE OF EX-PRESIDENT MOSCICKI OF POLAND

[For correspondence, see volume II, under Poland.]

X. PROTECTION BY THE UNITED STATES OF INTERESTS OF BELLIGERENT POWERS

[With the outbreak of war in Europe in 1939, the United States acceded to the request of France, the United Kingdom, and the British Dominions to assume the protection of their interests in Germany. As the war extended in 1940, the protection of the interests of other Allied Powers was assumed and the field of protection was extended to other countries and areas under Axis control. The duties performed by the United States on behalf of the Allied belligerents were those normally assumed by a protecting government, the most important as the war developed coming to be in connection with the welfare of prisoners of war. The protection of French prisoners in Germany was assumed by the Vichy Government in November 1940, and when the United States entered the war in December 1941, the protection of belligerent interests by the United States was for the most part turned over to the Swiss Government.

Since the activity of the United States as a protecting power was that of an agent of the countries whose interests it represented and involved only to a slight degree the foreign policy of the United States itself, the correspondence regarding protection of interests is not here printed. Information on this subject may be found in Department of State Publication No. 2693, *Protection of Foreign Interests, a Study in Diplomatic and Consular Practice*, by William McHenry Franklin (Washington Government Printing Office, 1946). For a list of belligerent interests protected by the United States in World War II, see *ibid.*, appendix IV, page 261.]

REPATRIATION OF AMERICANS AND OTHERS FROM BELLIGERENT COUNTRIES

I. EMERGENCY MEASURES FOR THE PROTECTION AND REPATRIATION OF AMERICAN CITIZENS ABROAD UPON THE OUTBREAK OF WAR

300.11 General Program/209a

*The Secretary of State to All American Diplomatic Officers and
Certain Consular Officers in Europe and the Near East*¹

WASHINGTON, March 21, 1939.

SIRS: On September 19, 1938 the Department sent to certain Chiefs of Mission in Europe a strictly confidential memorandum² outlining administrative steps the Department was prepared to take in the event of a European war, and containing instructions regarding parallel steps to be taken in the field. The passing of the crisis which was developing at that time rendered it unnecessary to take the action therein proposed.

Further study has been given to the matter and the Department's emergency plans have been expanded and developed as outlined in the appended memorandum. This memorandum is sent you at this time for your strictly confidential information and guidance and that you may make your plans for immediate action along the lines indicated should the occasion arise. Suggestions for improvements in the plan will be welcomed.

The procedure indicated shall not be put into effect except upon the receipt of specific instructions from the Department.

The unnumbered circular instruction of September 19, 1938, to certain offices is hereby canceled.

Very truly yours,

For the Secretary of State:
G. S. MESSERSMITH

¹ Sent to the consular officers at Algiers, Algeria; Batavia, Netherlands Indies; Beirut, Syria; Danzig; Gibraltar; Hong Kong; Jerusalem, Palestine; Malta; Shanghai, China; Singapore, Straits Settlements; Tallinn, Estonia; and Tunis, Tunisia.

² Not printed.

[Enclosure]

Memorandum by the Secretary of State

[WASHINGTON,] March 21, 1939.

The following is for the strictly confidential information of certain Chiefs of Mission and Consular Officers and for repetition in their discretion to Consular Officers when and to whom it may be deemed applicable. Consultation regarding this matter should be confined to your immediate collaborators and every precaution must be taken to prevent its becoming known to any others, as that could result in the very confusion it is designed to avert.

Prerequisite for the efficient operation of an emergency plan without confusion or contradictory efforts as between different countries is uniformity of procedure and centralized control. For this reason the following proposals are developed around the central idea of devising in advance the machinery for meeting all foreseeable situations, but requiring that it shall not be put into operation anywhere without the advance approval of the Department. The Department must of course, rely to a very large extent on the advice of officers in the field as to when such approval should be given and will be prepared to take immediate action on such advice. The retention of such control in the Department does not, therefore, reflect any lack of confidence in the ability of field officers to judge the depth of any crisis that may develop, but is a measure of obvious administrative expediency.

It will be observed that to insure coordination and uniformity of action within countries, a large measure of control is centered in the mission and that the Department will look to it for recommendations as to action to be taken at any particular post within the country to which the mission is accredited.

As a further measure of coordination, the Legation at Bern is designated as clearing house for instructions and despatches as further specified in paragraph 40 below.

Retention of control within each country by the mission is a vital element in this plan. Missions will naturally make full use of the advice and assistance of representatives of other departments, but must make it clear to them that they are acting under orders of the Chief of Mission. This is particularly true with regard to the evacuation of the employees and families of attachés and to arrangements for the protection or evacuation of American citizens generally.

Any necessary interdepartmental arrangements will be made in Washington under the guidance of the Department of State.

I. OFFICE ORGANIZATION AND PERSONNEL

1. In the event a general war should break out in Europe, it will be necessary on account of the already heavy pressure on the Department that there shall be created in the Department a division to handle questions of whereabouts, welfare, relief and transportation of American citizens in the war zone; protection of American property; and, as they arise, questions relating to war prisoners, representation of foreign interests, and the like. It is the Department's belief that in our missions in the war zone and in consulates in a few cities other than the capitals where in the judgment of the Chief of Mission such action is desirable, similar sections should be established.

2. For handling relief, et cetera, of American citizens and protection of American property for the first emergency period, it may be necessary in a very few cases to have additional temporary quarters, and the Department will act promptly on any telegraphic requests for such authorization. The advantages in administration of conducting the work in present quarters so far as practicable are obvious and it would be of primary importance to avoid any appearance of the existence of two government establishments conducting this work with the regular establishment having appellate jurisdiction. The Chief of Mission or principal consular officer will be responsible for the conduct of the work, but a qualified Foreign Service officer should be placed in immediate charge of it with such clerical and other assistance as the circumstances at each post may require.

3. The organization set up shall function as a separate section of the mission or consular office of which it is a part and shall be responsible directly to the officer in charge in such manner as he shall direct, except that funds will be allotted to the mission or consulate as such to be accounted for by the regular accountable officer. Separate files should be maintained with cross references when applicable to the regular registration, passport and general files. An essential for speedy functioning without duplication and confusion will be a central card index, alphabetically arranged by names of individuals interviewed or assisted, on which will be recorded all pertinent data as to citizenship, passport, address, names and addresses of relatives or friends in the United States, funds expended, reference to all correspondence concerning that person, and final disposition of the case.

4. The name of every American citizen calling at or communicating with the office by mail, telegraph or telephone should be entered in the card index, even though his immediate business may have no connection with welfare or relief matters. This will prevent waste of time by the welfare section in endeavoring to reply to inquiries from the United States regarding the whereabouts of individuals with whom other sections of the office may be in contact.

5. The experience of the Department in recent crises has demonstrated the importance of building a welfare section around such a central card index. Since all welfare and relief correspondence must be entered in the index it acts as a bottle neck. Therefore for large scale operations it may be necessary to divide the index into sections (as for instance A to L and M to Z, or by geographical areas) with one person in charge of and responsible for each section. The office should be so organized that all incoming and outgoing correspondence regarding welfare and relief cases passes the card index for notation. Cards should not be removed from the index, but if for any reason it becomes necessary to do so a dummy should be inserted in the proper place showing the name on the original card and indicating where that card may be found.

6. So far as possible such emergency sections should be staffed with personnel from the regular establishments whose normal activities are terminated or reduced by war conditions, for example invoice and visa clerks. However, volunteer American assistance on a dollar a year basis may be accepted to be replaced gradually by paid employees as development or prolongation of the emergency may dictate. Care should be taken that emergency employees do not have access to the regular work of the mission or consulate in which they may not appropriately participate.

7. When necessary to engage non-American personnel at a mission they should be carried on a separate consular pay roll.

8. Allotments for rent of quarters and furniture, local transportation, communication services, pay of employees, et cetera, can be made in response to telegraphic requests within the limit of funds available or to be made available. Local purchases of stationery and supplies from current allotments are authorized without prior reference to the Department.

II. PROTECTION AND EVACUATION OF EMPLOYEES AND FAMILIES

9. It is deemed desirable that principal officers in cities likely to be objects of attack from the ground or from the air keep in mind the possibility of having to evacuate their offices. They should, therefore, fix upon emergency locations outside the probable area of attack to which essential functions of the office could be transferred on short notice. It is not deemed necessary that premises actually be rented at this time or that definite commitments be entered into. It is desired, however, that officers ascertain where such emergency quarters could be obtained. If and when an officer concludes that the time has arrived to move he should telegraph the Department for authority, stating the terms of the lease, amount to be paid, address, telegraph and telephone connections available, et cetera. The Department will be prepared to act promptly on such recommendations.

10. Gas masks in sufficient quantity to supply all members of the staff and the families of American employees have been sent to a number of offices and arrangements are now being made to furnish them at certain other posts.

11. In this connection it should clearly be understood that the United States Government does not undertake to provide gas masks for general distribution to American citizens abroad. In those communities where the public is required by law to provide itself with masks it is expected that American residents will comply; and in those where the ownership of a mask is dictated by common prudence Americans may properly be expected to supply themselves. The Department understands that masks can be purchased at a reasonable price in many localities and that their sale is not restricted to citizens of the country. The Department therefore has confined itself to providing masks for Government employees only. It may be remarked in this connection that any other policy would be impracticable, both because of the cost and because stocks available from the Army are not unlimited.

12. The Department is prepared to supply or make special allotments for the purchase of emergency supplies for the protection of personnel and property, where this has not already been done, such as first aid kits, fire extinguishers, sand bags, flags, et cetera, and requisitions or requests for allotments should be submitted without delay. The Department cannot, however, for legal reasons, allot Government funds for structural alterations to rented premises designed to strengthen them against fire or explosion. It will consider such alterations to Government-owned buildings including the construction of bomb-proof shelters, as Chiefs of Mission may recommend, but for budgetary reasons it can give no assurance of immediate approval at this time.

13. When in the judgment of a Chief of Mission a situation has arisen rendering it desirable that women employees and the families of officers and employees of any office within his jurisdiction be evacuated to places of safety, the Department will be prepared, upon recommendation by the Chief of Mission, to authorize such travel expenses within the provisions of the Travel Regulations. While remaining at places of safety away from the regular posts of duty per diem in lieu of subsistence will be authorized at the rate of \$6 for employees and wives of employees; \$5 for children fourteen years of age and over (but under 21); and \$3 for children under fourteen. Per diem allowances may be paid directly to the persons in respect of whom they are granted or, in the case of wives and children, to the husband and father as may be most convenient for all concerned. Such allowances will terminate on the date the recipients return to the post of duty or at such other time as the Department may direct.

14. Separate drafts should be drawn and separate accounts rendered for such travel and per diem allowances, bearing reference to this paragraph and to the "Authorization Number" which will be furnished when authority for the travel is granted by the Department.

For administrative and budgetary reasons it is essential that such evacuation of families or employees shall not be ordered or approved by Chiefs of Mission or principal consular officers without the advance specific approval of the Department. Accounts for such travel performed without the Department's approval will be disallowed.

15. Employees and families of representatives of other Departments may be evacuated under the same conditions applying to Department of State personnel, unless otherwise ordered at the time. The Department understands that only a few departments have appropriated funds available for such travel. To avoid discriminatory treatment, therefore, the Department will assume the cost involved for all, on a uniform basis and make the necessary adjustments with the various departments in Washington.

16. In lieu of evacuation to places of safety, the Department will, on recommendation of the Chief of Mission, consider transfers or temporary details to other offices—not in a danger zone—for women employees.

17. Evacuation at Government expense under the foregoing conditions should not be to the United States without specific prior authority from the Department; but may be to nearby neutral countries if the Chief of Mission so recommends. In that event, the Chief of Mission should first consult with the Chief of Mission in the country to which the evacuation is proposed, and those through which it might be necessary to pass in transit.

III. RELIEF, PROTECTION AND EVACUATION OF AMERICAN CITIZENS

18. In response to Information Series No. 113 of August 31, 1936 (Strictly Confidential)* most offices have submitted carefully prepared emergency programs for the protection and evacuation of American citizens. It is now recommended that these be better coordinated, and to that end all consulates should forward copies of their plans to the Supervising Consulate General or to the Mission and make such modifications as the Mission may suggest. Further more, Missions should exchange information between themselves as to their plans and coordinate them, to prevent, in case of an emergency, unwitting interference or confusion in executing them. Offices which have not prepared plans should do so without delay. Modifications in individual and collective plans should be reported to the Department.

* Not printed.

19. With regard to plans for evacuation to the United States, it will be realized, in fact the experience of September 1938 demonstrated, that sufficient steamship accommodations for a mass movement of passengers across the Atlantic cannot be expected to be immediately available. The Department, in cooperation with other government agencies, is taking all possible preliminary steps with a view to expanding shipping facilities on short notice in case of an emergency. Further and more detailed instruction in this regard will be issued at a later date. It will be inevitable, however, that the execution of such plans will take time, and in case of a sudden emergency the demand for accommodations will rise at first more rapidly than it can be met. Evacuation plans, therefore, should look to moving people from centers of danger to more sheltered or safe places where they could remain in relative security until ships should be available to transport them to the United States. To this end it would be well for each mission and consulate to survey available accommodations in hotels, boarding houses, private homes or even public institutions in readily accessible small towns and resorts at a safe distance from large centers of population, industrial areas and military concentrations. It is emphasized that such surveys, the development of emergency plans generally, and inter-mission consultations on the subject must be made discreetly and every precaution must be taken to prevent the fact that such steps are being taken from becoming public knowledge. The importance of keeping these matters confidential is obvious.

20. Funds will be made available to missions for expenditure by them and by consulates under their jurisdiction for the relief and evacuation of American citizens. Advances to individuals should in all cases be against promissory notes reading:

“For value received, I hereby promise to pay on demand to the Treasurer of the United States, Washington, D. C., the sum of \$_____ advanced to me or expended in my behalf by the American _____ (Ambassador or Consul or et cetera) at _____; this payment to be credited to the fund for the relief of American citizens in Europe.”

Notes will be sent to the Department with the beneficiary's receipts.

21. Such loans are to be made only as a last resort. It is a basic principle that those Americans having accessible funds in the United States or elsewhere should not be granted relief from government funds. Furthermore, it is not intended that government money should be used to assist Americans who are in the employ of organizations in the United States or whose friends or families are in a position to supply them. If such persons are unable to communicate with the United States their names and American addresses and a statement of their needs may be telegraphed to the Department, which will

endeavor to obtain financial assistance from their relatives, friends or employers. Telegrams of this nature may cover one or many individual cases and are properly chargeable to the Government. Messages and telegraphic remittances from the United States will be charged to interested party as should be subsequent messages sent through your office after contact has been established.

22. In the case of Americans who are obviously destitute advances may be made on the basis of notes, even though eventual collection may be problematical.

IV. REPRESENTATION OF FOREIGN INTERESTS

23. It is to be expected that the United States will be asked to assume charge of the interests of countries at war. Such request should not be agreed to without the prior approval of the Department. When such approval has been granted a complete inventory of the property, archives, et cetera, taken over must be made and the Department must be informed of the exact date on which your responsibility commences (see Foreign Service Regulations, part 2, Section 453 and notes).

24. Where this Government assumes charge of the interests of foreign governments it is desired that our missions and consulates take over the premises occupied by the governments concerned and wherever practicable continue the employment of clerical and custodial employees. A qualified diplomatic or consular officer of our Government should be placed in charge and have responsibility under the Chief of Mission or principal consular officer for handling questions of representation.

25. You may take custody of any funds turned over by the office of which you are assuming charge to be expended and accounted for for rent of quarters, salaries of personnel and other purposes directly connected with representation of that country's interests. If additional funds should be required you should telegraph the Department. It is expected that arrangements will be made with the foreign governments concerned to reimburse the United States for all expenditures in their behalf but in the beginning the Department will endeavor to finance such expenditures.

26. You may expend for the relief of nationals of the country whose interests you assume any funds turned over for that purpose by its departing representative in the manner stated by him in writing so far as that is for legitimate relief and not in violation of local law or regulation.

27. If in your judgment additional relief funds are required telegraph the Department but assume no obligations until authorized.

28. Receipts and expenditures of funds turned over by representatives of foreign governments should be entered on the appropriate cash book form in the regular accounts under "Trust Funds".

V. ACCOUNTS

29. In the event of war or the severance of normal international communications it will be impracticable for offices cut off from direct communication with the District Accounting and Disbursing Office to request cash advances from and render accounts through that office. All Chiefs of Mission and principal consular officers should therefore obtain and keep on hand an adequate supply of blank drafts and accounting forms to enable them if necessary to render their accounts directly to the Department. The requisite forms are:

Form No. 222	Account current
No. 1095	Summary Statement of Disbursements and Collections by Appropriation Limitations
No. 275	and
275A,	Large Size, Payroll for Personal Services
No. 314	and
314A,	Large Size, Pay voucher for Allowance for Living Quarters, Rent, Heat and Light
No. 332,	
333	and
334,	entitled "Disbursing Funds—Cash Record and Schedule"
	"Collections (other than Trust Funds) Record and Schedule" and "Trust Funds—Record and Schedule"
No. 90	Exchange voucher
No. 207	Fee Stamp Account
No. 101	and
101a,	Record of Fees

Voucher forms Nos. 326, 326A, 286, 286a, 1034, 1034a, 1012d, et cetera
Other forms which have been prescribed for use in connection with the rendition of accounts which are required by the regulations such as form No. 250 Schedule of Telegrams Foreign Service, and which may or may not now be in use depending upon the needs of the particular office.

30. Officers requiring any of the foregoing forms should requisition them without delay, marking the requisition *Special* and forwarding it in an envelope addressed to the Division of Foreign Service Administration.

31. It will clearly be understood that no office will revert to the draft system without the prior approval of the Department. Recommendations for such approval should be submitted by telegraph by Chiefs of Mission. When approval is granted, the office will proceed in accordance with the following provisions of the Foreign Service

Regulations, which have been approved and will be issued to the field as soon as they can be mimeographed and distributed :

Section V-54 Note 6 (b) provides :

"(b) In the event of warlike conditions, catastrophe, complete breakdown of mailing facilities, or other existing conditions which disrupt the mails to such an extent that it is impossible to obtain funds for disbursement from and render accounts to the district accounting and disbursing officer, the officer in charge may draw drafts to obtain funds necessary for the payment of authorized salaries, allowances, and expenses, rendering accounts therefor direct to the Department.

"Should such necessity arise and if it is impracticable to return the balance of the cash advance to the district accounting and disbursing officer, it shall be converted into dollars and forwarded to the Department immediately the change in procedure becomes necessary. The forwarding despatch shall contain sufficient data to identify the funds.

"Accounts for partial periods shall be closed out and entirely separate accounts rendered for all periods, monthly or fractional, during which recourse is, of necessity, had to the draft system. The final account for funds advanced by the district accounting and disbursing officer shall be sent to that officer if possible. If it is not possible to do so the final account shall be transmitted to the Department.

"The Department and the district accounting and disbursing office shall be informed immediately by telegraph in case any officer finds it necessary to make the change in accounting procedure hereby outlined. In the event drafts are drawn for salaries and expenses, the accounting instructions governing the rendition of accounts outside of fiscal districts shall apply, and an extra copy of the account current shall be sent to the Department with the account in order that it may be forwarded to the district accounting and disbursing officer for his records."

32. In case return to the draft system is authorized, the unexpended balances of all cash advances received from the district accounting and disbursing officer shall immediately be forwarded to the Department in the form of a separate bill of exchange for deposit in the Treasury.

33. All fees and other official collections which have been taken up in the accounts of the district accounting and disbursing officer and which have not been remitted to him, if any, shall likewise be forwarded to the Department in the form of a separate bill of exchange.

34. All fees and other collections which have not been accounted for to the district accounting and disbursing officer shall be taken up in the regular accounts of the office together with the collections subsequently made during the same accounting period while operating under the draft system and remitted at the close of such period.

35. Remittances may be made in the form of official drafts of the office or commercial bills of exchange. If remittances are made by drafts of consular or diplomatic officers the following procedure,

which will be required by the new Foreign Service Regulations, should be followed:

1. All collections and other moneys which are required to be remitted for deposit into the Treasury shall, so far as possible, be used for disbursement by cashing therefrom the officer's official drafts drawn on the Secretary of State for necessary funds. The transaction shall be supported by an exchange voucher (Form No. 92) prepared over the signature of the officer, showing that the draft was cashed from moneys on hand; the rate of exchange; the amounts in foreign and/or United States currency; and the date of the transaction. The bank's selling rate for sight drafts on New York prevailing on the date of the transaction shall be used for converting such drafts to their equivalents in foreign currencies. When drafts are cashed for United States currency the transaction shall be made at par.

2. Moneys on hand not required for disbursement should be remitted by purchasing a commercial bill of exchange payable to the Treasurer of the United States which should be forwarded to the Department for deposit in the Treasury, due precaution being taken to issue separate drafts or to obtain separate bills of exchange for unexpended balances of cash advances, or collections, as explained above. In every case despatches forwarding remittances should show complete information regarding the transactions.

36. When funds are allotted by the Department for any of the purposes discussed above, it will be essential that expenditures therefrom be charged in your accounts to the appropriations indicated in the allotments.

37. When funds are allotted under an "Authorization Number" separate drafts should be drawn with the authorization number indicated in the margin and separate accounts covering expenditures therefrom should be submitted direct to the Department. It is particularly important that expenditures under an authorization number not appear in the regular accounts.

38. When instructions are received to draw separate drafts against deposits made by relatives or friends in the United States and to pay the proceeds to individuals, the drafts will indicate in the margin, the name of the beneficiary and the date of the Department's instruction, and the beneficiary's receipt should be taken on Form 1034 and the latter be submitted direct to the Department together with the exchange voucher. These items, as distinguished from authorization number drafts, will be shown on the appropriate cash book form submitted through the regular accounting channel.

39. Reference to accounting matters will also be found above in numbered paragraphs 3, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 18 and 26.

VI. GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

40. To facilitate coordination of the activities of offices in different countries in meeting an emergency situation, and to insure rapid dis-

semination, circular telegraphic instructions from the Department regarding relief, protection of foreign interests, and other administrative matters of general application related to the emergency will be sent to the Legation at Bern for repetition to interested offices in Europe. Individual administrative instructions to particular offices which may be of general interest will be repeated to Bern; and similar telegrams to the Department of which missions in countries with which the sending office has no direct contact should be informed should likewise be repeated to Bern. Thus the Legation in Switzerland will be a clearing house for advice to be given to Americans, statements of policy, instructions for meeting unforeseen situations as they arise, et cetera.

41. Routine nonconfidential telegrams relating to welfare, whereabouts, and representation of foreign interests should be sent in clear language or in Gray code only when a material saving in cost is involved. The Gray code is not considered confidential, and any American or alien employees may encode and decode messages in it.

42. All such messages should begin with the word "Route" as identification for special routing and handling in the Department. The Department will use the same identifying word for messages to the field, to facilitate routing to the special divisions described above.

43. It is essential that expenses be kept to the minimum consistent with efficient service. Until the Congress has had an opportunity to make the special appropriations that undoubtedly will be required in the event of a major disturbance the funds available to the Department for executing the foregoing plans will be strictly limited.

44. For the same reason it will not be practicable to make allotments for unspecified emergency expenses to be incurred by officers in their discretion. The Department will endeavor to grant all approved specific requests without delay. The maximum availability of limited resources can only be assured by retaining close control in the Department and avoiding accumulation of unexpended balances in the hands of field officers.

45. In the interest of economy and clarity, reference in telegraphic correspondence to any feature of the above-described plans should be by paragraph number.

195.6/212

*The Secretary of State to All American Diplomatic and Consular
Officers*

Diplomatic Serial No. 3047

WASHINGTON, March 28, 1939.

SIRS: For the purpose of authorizing emergency carriage of an increased number of passengers in American vessels from troubled

foreign areas, letters have been exchanged between the Department of State and the Department of Commerce under dates of February 21, 1939 and March 10, 1939,⁴ respectively, and consultations have taken place between officers of the two Departments. The letter of March 10, 1939 from the Department of Commerce reads in part as follows:

"In event of an emergency in any foreign country which necessitates the rapid evacuation of American citizens, the Secretary of State is authorized, upon his finding that such an emergency exists, to instruct United States consular officers that they may issue to American passenger and cargo vessels consular certificates amending the certificates of inspection of said vessels permitting the carriage of an increased number of persons by any such vessel on a specific voyage after a survey by the master and chief engineer of the vessel as to the vessel's ability to carry the proposed number of persons, and provided that the vessel is equipped with sufficient buoyant equipment, provisions, and medical supplies to care for all persons on board. This procedure is authorized on condition that in each case when in an emergency such consular certificate is issued, the circumstances shall be reported immediately to the Secretary of Commerce who reserves the right to make appropriate regulations in a particular case if deemed necessary for safety."

Form No. 338, Emergency Consular Certificate, to be used in amending the certificates of inspection (Title 46, U. S. C. A. sec. 451) of American vessels to permit the carriage of an increased number of persons has been established and a sample copy is enclosed.⁵ Additional copies will be supplied on requisition. In case of emergency they may be prepared on the typewriter. You are cautioned, however, not to issue any such Emergency Consular Certificates except under express instructions from the Department in each instance, which instructions may be requested by telegraph, naming the vessel and her owners. When the Secretary of State has determined that such an emergency exists and has authorized the issuance of the Emergency Consular Certificate to any such vessel for a specific voyage, the officer to whom the instruction is sent must obtain the following before issuing the Emergency Consular Certificate: (1) a survey by the master and chief engineer of the vessel to determine the number of persons that may be carried with prudence and safety and (2) a sworn statement by the master and by the chief engineer, as provided in the Emergency Consular Certificate, that the lifesaving equipment on board is sufficient, adequate, and readily available in case of emergency to care for all of the proposed number of persons to be carried, and that the ship's provisions and medical supplies are sufficient to care for all persons to be carried on the particular voyage. Appropriate additional safety requirements may be requested by the Department in particular cases when deemed to be necessary.

⁴ Neither printed.

⁵ Not printed.

It should be noted that the excerpt from the Commerce Department's letter dated March 10, 1939, quoted above, limits the number of additional persons which may be carried to the amount of buoyant equipment the vessel may have on board or may procure for the specific voyage. Buoyant equipment shall be considered to be lifeboats, life rafts, life floats and buoyant apparatus (small rafts). Buoyant equipment does not include life buoys or life preservers. No additional ring buoys or life buoys would be necessary but it is possible that additional life preservers would be required. *All vessels to which the Emergency Consular Certificate is issued should have a life preserver for each and every person on board in addition to the buoyant equipment.*

For your guidance two examples are set out below of the potential carrying capacities of American vessels of different types which may be employed in an emergency :

(1) An American ocean *passenger* vessel is equipped with a sufficient number of lifeboats to accommodate at one time all of the persons, including passengers and crew, that are permitted to be carried by the vessel's certificate of inspection. In addition, small life rafts called buoyant apparatus are provided to accommodate at least 25% of the persons (passengers and crew) set forth in the ship's certificate of inspection. There is also provided a life preserver for each person on board, plus an additional 10% of that number which are of a type suitable for children. Therefore, a passenger vessel permitted to carry, say, 750 passengers and 250 persons in the crew, or a total of 1,000 persons, has accommodations in lifeboats for 1,000 persons, and on buoyant apparatus for 250 persons, so that if the vessel had booked to capacity and had a full complement of crew, no additional persons would be permitted on the basis of lifeboats, but 250 additional persons may be carried due to the fact that such a vessel would be equipped with accommodations in buoyant apparatus for that number. Should it be desired to evacuate more than 250 persons in this case, it would be necessary to provide additional lifeboats, life rafts or buoyant apparatus. Should this same vessel be equipped with only 1,000 life preservers, and 250 additional persons were to be embarked, it would be necessary to procure 250 additional life preservers.

(2) Should an American *cargo* vessel be pressed into service it, too, would be limited to the amount of lifeboats and buoyant apparatus (small rafts) that it would have on board during its voyage. American cargo vessels have lifeboats on board sufficient in number to accommodate double the number of persons set forth in their certificates of inspection. A cargo vessel with a crew of 48 and 2 persons in addition to the crew, or a total of 50 permitted by its certificate of inspection, has accommodations in lifeboats for 100 persons, and if it is only desired to evacuate not to exceed 50, the vessel would have ample buoyant equipment but in all probability would have to procure an additional 50 life preservers.

The United States is a party to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, signed at London on May 31, 1929.⁶ Chapter

⁶ Department of State Treaty Series No. 910, or 50 Stat. 1121. For correspondence, see *Foreign Relations*, 1929, vol. 1, pp. 368 ff.

II relating to the construction of vessels, and Chapter III relating to the lifesaving appliances on vessels, apply only to passenger ships. Article 2 of the Convention contains the following provision:

“3(d) A ship is a passenger ship if it carries more than 12 passengers.”

Under its provisions, unless there is a recognized exception, a vessel about to depart from a port with more than twelve passengers on board would be considered a passenger vessel and therefore subject to the provisions of the Convention applicable to passenger vessels. If, however, in an extraordinary emergency it seemed to be necessary to authorize certain cargo vessels to carry more than twelve passengers, the Department might base such an authorization on the second paragraph of Article 3 of the Convention (Underlining⁷ and insert between brackets added):

“Persons who are on board a ship by reason of *force majeure* or in consequence of the *obligation laid upon the master* [presumably by a superior authority such as a government] to carry shipwrecked or *other persons* shall not be taken into account for the purpose of ascertaining the application to a ship of any provisions of the present Convention.”

Emergency Consular Certificates should be made out in quadruplicate, one copy to be retained in the Consulate, one copy to be given to the master of the vessel, and two copies to be forwarded to the Department, one of which is for the Secretary of Commerce.

Very truly yours,

For the Secretary of State:
G. S. MESSERSMITH

340.1115/36: Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, August 22, 1939—noon.

[Received August 22—9:43 a. m.]

1538. In view of the evidence accumulating hourly which indicates that Hitler has decided to attack Poland in the immediate future, I have this morning sent the following telegram to all American consular officers in France.

“Circular. For your own information and guidance but not for publication: If Americans ask you for advice you should advise them to return to the United States unless they have important reasons to remain in Europe.”

I have not yet issued any public warning to Americans. I should be glad if you would inform me immediately whether or not you wish me to issue such a warning or whether or not you intend to issue from the Department a general warning to all Americans in Europe.

BULLITT

⁷ Printed in italics.

340.1115/36 : Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Bullitt)

WASHINGTON, August 22, 1939—8 p. m.

637. Your 1538, August 22, noon. Your circular to consular offices in France is approved.

With regard to the return of Americans now in Europe, we would prefer that each chief of mission issue such cautionary advice as in his judgment seems warranted. You are therefore authorized to use your best judgment in the matter of a public warning to Americans now in France.

With regard to travelers still in America, I am considering stating to the press tomorrow that in view of the present uncertain conditions in Europe and the difficulties which in the event of an emergency would arise in securing passage home, the Department of State recommends to all American citizens who are contemplating travel to Europe at the present time to consider the advisability of a postponement of their trip unless undertaken for impelling reasons.⁸

WELLES

340.1115/43d : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Bullitt)*⁹

WASHINGTON, August 24, 1939—7 p. m.

By reference to Diplomatic Serial No. 3047 of March 28, 1939 and Department's Circular Instruction dated March 21, 1939 please advise urgent (1) best estimate of number of Americans who may desire to return; (2) best analysis on total distribution of passengers by ports of embarkation, and (3) names of ports and first dates passengers will be available and number of passengers by specified dates.

HULL

340.1115/37 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Bullitt)*¹⁰

WASHINGTON, August 25, 1939—noon.

650. Your 1559, August 23, 7 p. m.¹¹ This Department and appropriate agencies of our Government have continuously been giving at

⁸ For statement to the press, August 23, 1939, see Department of State *Bulletin*, August 26, 1939, p. 162.

⁹ The same telegram was sent, August 24, 7 p. m., to the Chargé in Germany, the Ambassador in Italy, the Minister in Norway, and the Consul at Alexandria, Egypt.

¹⁰ The same telegram was sent, August 25, noon, to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom (No. 693) and to the Minister in Switzerland (No. 50). Telegram No. 50 included the request that copy be sent by mail to offices in Europe.

¹¹ Not printed; the Ambassador in France asked for information as to plans formulated for the evacuation of Americans from Europe.

tention to the steps this Government may take to facilitate the return of American citizens now in Europe as part of the general problem requiring our attention and growing out of European developments. The President is aware of the instructions which have been sent to our establishments abroad with respect to the arrangements to be made in case of emergency and has approved these and the plan for repatriation.

There is agreement that Naval vessels should not be used for repatriation except as they may be helpful for collecting small groups in the Mediterranean area for transportation to places where they can move to safe ports of embarkation. We are in constant touch with the Navy on this aspect of the problem.

With particular respect to the actual transportation of Americans desiring to return from Europe, the plans evolved by this Government contemplate the use of merchant shipping under the American flag and that such repatriation shall be at the expense of the Americans involved except when it is proved to the satisfaction of the consular officer that funds are not available to the individual or must be advanced on a promissory note (see paragraph 21, Circular instruction of March 21, 1939). There is agreement that it is not desirable at this stage to take any measures for the commandeering of vessels, although diversion in certain cases of American vessels from regular ports of call will be practiced when necessary. You will appreciate that it is considered essential in the public interest that the American flag services to various parts of the world should be maintained for obvious reasons. It is therefore intended to use American flag ships now in service for repatriation purposes and to put under charter for temporary periods by existing private lines some vessels which may be found available for this service, and if it becomes essential.

It will of course not be possible to bring back all of the Americans in Europe as rapidly as they will wish to return. It has always been envisaged that the Americans in Europe in case of emergency should be advised to leave metropolitan centers for as safe places as may be found and at which places they can await availability of transportation (see paragraph 19, circular instruction of March 21, 1939).

It will be recalled that until the issue of a proclamation of neutrality by this Government, and until 90 days after the date of such issue, there is no prohibition on the return of Americans to this country on merchant vessels of belligerent countries.

The Department, the Maritime Commission and the Navy are working in close cooperation on this matter and are in constant touch with the private shipping interests concerned. All agencies of our Government are giving continuous attention to the measures which may be

taken by this Government to provide facilities for the Americans in Europe to return as rapidly as the facilities available will permit.

Any information you may wish with regard to specific aspects of the problem, we will be glad to furnish.

HULL

300.11 General Program/274a : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Minister in Switzerland (Harrison)

WASHINGTON, August 26, 1939—7 p. m.

52. From telegrams received from some offices in Europe the Department fears that the provisions of paragraphs 20 and 21 of the circular instruction of March 21, 1939 restricting the use of official funds to advances against promissory notes in certain exceptional circumstances such as when bank and communication facilities are not available, have been misinterpreted. There is no intention to and no provision for departing from the well established procedure of this Government in the matter of repatriation. While this Government has been and is continuing to make every effort to assist private shipping to provide transportation facilities and the organization of the Department at home and abroad is available for the transmission of messages and remittances of funds, the primary responsibility for financing their subsistence and movements rests on individual American citizens abroad or on their relatives and friends in this country.

The Department is prepared to communicate promptly to relatives and friends in this country requests for funds transmitted through our offices abroad and to make the remittances through the same channel.

The provision for advances of official funds against promissory notes is as stated in the circular of March 21, 1939 to be used as a last resort only.

The foregoing procedure is essential because of existing limitations on the use of appropriated funds available to the Department. Therefore chiefs of missions and consular officers should restrict requests for funds to be advanced to American citizens to the requirements of those who it is established have no funds and for whom the Department is unable to obtain any from friends and relatives here, and for similar emergencies.

Repeat to all missions.

HULL

124.02/1217a

The Secretary of State to All American Diplomatic and Consular Officers

Diplomatic Serial No. 3122

WASHINGTON, August 28, 1939.

SIRS: Officers have from time to time requisitioned extra large size American flags for possible display on roofs of buildings in case of war. The Department does not have these large flags in stock and the cost of obtaining any great number of them is prohibitive.

The War Department says experience has demonstrated that the display of such flags has not proven very satisfactory. It suggests that large size letters such as U. S. A., for instance, seven feet in height, the width in a one to seven ratio to the height, painted on horizontal surfaces in chrome yellow on a black background, are more clearly visible from the air.

Very truly yours,

For the Secretary of State:
G. S. MESSERSMITH

138 Emergency Program/9 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Minister in Switzerland (Harrison)

WASHINGTON, August 30, 1939—8 p. m.

55. In view of the uncertain state of affairs in Europe, the Department deems it advisable to instruct its officers abroad to take every possible precaution to assure that the importance of American passports as definitely identifying and establishing the citizenship of the persons to whom they are issued must be in no way diminished or impaired. In addition to the function of identifying and establishing the citizenship of persons to whom they are issued, passports request on the part of this Government that officials of foreign governments permit persons holding them to travel or reside in their territories and give them all lawful aid and protection. By maintaining undiminished and unimpaired the prestige of American passports under any conditions, foreign officials will be less apt to molest or inconvenience persons bearing them and more apt to respect such documents and to extend to the bearers thereof the recognition and consideration which should be accorded to bona fide American citizens under international comity. You are therefore instructed that the existence of disturbed conditions in Europe must not be considered in any way as justification for the relaxation of existing practices in the matter of issuing passports, and the provisions of Chapter X, Part II of the Foreign Service Regulations are in no wise modified.

Advise all offices in Europe by mail.

HULL

340.1015/A : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Minister in Switzerland (Harrison)

WASHINGTON, August 31, 1939—8 p. m.

56. For all Missions. Department is receiving requests from diplomatic representatives of the other American republics for advice and assistance to their nationals in Europe desirous of returning to this continent. Because of the increasingly close and friendly relations maintained with the other American governments, the Department is desirous of doing everything possible to be of assistance to them and their citizens during the present situation and accordingly will appreciate your cooperation with representatives and private citizens of those countries who may apply to you, consistent of course with your obligations to American nationals.

HULL

811.111 Quota/2272 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy)

WASHINGTON, September 1, 1939—10 a. m.

746. Your 1331, August 31, 3 p. m.¹² In view of the need for steamship accommodations for American citizens and in order that the Embassy staff may devote its attention to the needs of Americans in England, consuls are authorized to suspend the issuance of quota immigration visas during September so long as emergency continues.

HULL

340.1015/B : Circular telegram

The Secretary of State to All American Diplomatic Representatives in the American Republics

WASHINGTON, September 1, 1939—6 p. m.

You may in your discretion inform the appropriate authorities of the Government to which you are accredited that the diplomatic missions of this Government in Europe have been instructed to do everything possible to be of assistance to citizens of the American republics who desire to return to this continent, in cooperation of course with the diplomatic representatives in Europe of those countries.

You may explain informally that this Government does not intend to despatch naval vessels to Europe to evacuate American citizens but

¹² Not printed.

that it is doing everything possible to insure continued passenger service by American flag commercial vessels. In addition, our diplomatic representatives in Europe are working in close cooperation with American and other passenger lines in the interests of as rapid and orderly evacuation as possible.

HULL

340.1015/2 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, September 2, 1939—9 p. m.

[Received September 2—7 p. m.]

1745. Personal for the President and the Secretary. The Ambassadors and Ministers of nearly all the Latin American countries approached me individually today with the following information: The Government of the United States had informed the Government of Colombia, Cuba, et cetera, et cetera, that the Ambassadors of the United States in London and Paris would do everything possible to provide transportation for their nationals to their homes.

I shall be most happy to be of any help possible to Latin Americans; but I have [no?] transportation available for the thousands of Americans now stranded in France to say nothing of transportation for thousands of Latin Americans. I assume that if the Department has made such a promise to the Latin American Governments it has also provided the means to make possible the fulfillment of its promise.

But your telegram No. 716, undated,¹³ gives no indication that you have provided any means whatsoever beyond the ordinary liners.

Your statements to the Latin American countries have been taken so seriously that the Cuban Minister said to me today that he understood that the American Government intended to provide this transportation free of charge but desired to be sure whether or not Cubans stranded in France would have to pay for passages.

I believe that nothing could produce a worse effect in South America than failure of the Government of the United States to provide ships for the repatriation of Latin Americans as well as Americans in view of the promises made.

The Americans here are becoming impatient because we cannot make any definite statements. I can give wise advice. What they want, however, is not advice but ships. For example, Senator Reynolds, of North Carolina remarked today that the Government of the United States had found it possible to use the taxpayers' money to

¹³ Dated September 1, 1939, 10 p. m., not printed; it stated that naval vessels should not be used for trans-Atlantic evacuation, and that passenger movement can and should be handled by merchant shipping (340.1115/328).

provide a Government vessel for the personal use of the Secretary of the Treasury and his family, and he would like to know what provision the Government of the United States intended to make for him. He added that he was entirely ready to pay for his passage home but he felt our Government must provide ships at once.

France and England almost certainly will be at war with Germany within 48 hours at the outside. Americans stranded here may be killed. I venture to suggest that you will have a political scandal of the utmost magnitude unless you can announce within this period that you have made arrangements for specific ships to arrive at specific ports in France and England at specific dates.

I understand that there are a large number of ships available which are engaged in making pleasure cruises. I believe that these ships should be sent at once to Europe to remove stranded Americans and Latin Americans. I may add that President Quezon of the Philippines has cabled me personally asking me to provide transportation immediately for 29 Filipinos. I trust that you will be able to take immediate action.

BULLITT

340.1115/493 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, September 3, 1939—11 a. m.
[Received September 3—5:30 a. m.]

1392. For the President, the Secretary, and the Maritime Commission. In radio bulletin No. 204¹⁴ I note the paragraph allegedly based on a report from the Embassy at London stating that passenger accommodations available from Great Britain to the United States exceed the demand. Please refer me to the cable or letter that contained this information. This bulletin also states that between September 1st and October 4th scheduled westbound sailings of American vessels have a capacity of about 9,000 passengers. I presume that these sailings are from all ports. We of this Embassy are vitally concerned about the number available for the United Kingdom, as we feel that we can use a substantial portion of these accommodations ourselves. In addition to that, as Ambassador, I refuse to accept the responsibility of waiting for sailings as late as October 4th to get people out of England. After all there is a war on, and it is quite conceivable that England will be bombed. If so, it is probable that Americans will be killed, because there is no place in England where we can store these people and promise them immunity. Therefore,

¹⁴Department of State Radio Bulletin No. 204, dated September 1, 1939, p. 5.

regardless of the nominal expense to the Government, I consider it my obligation and duty to urge strongly that ships be dispatched at once to England regardless of the inconvenience that may be caused to the steamship lines in America, because, after all, there is a great possibility that the lives of Americans are at stake.

I understand one other argument has been raised to indicate that there are more accommodations available than there are passengers to take them and in support of this claim it is said that the *Manhattan* went out carrying 148 fewer passengers than she could have taken. May I point out that the London office of the United States Lines informed me that the *Manhattan* carried 450 more people than she ever carried before in spite of the fact that when she sailed there still remained a glimmer of peace in the air. The only way they could have put these 148 people on the ship was to put them in rooms with married couples, and the married couples refused to agree to this procedure. I don't want American shipping upset and I feel very badly for all those people who are going to wait on the docks for ships to take them on trips to the West Indies and Mexico, but I am thoroughly convinced that it is much more important for the American Government to get ships here as soon as possible and get these people home.

KENNEDY

340.1015/2 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Bullitt)*¹⁵

WASHINGTON, September 3, 1939—7 p. m.

730. Personal for the Ambassador. Your 1745, September 2, 9 p. m. In sending circular No. 56^{15a} I had no intention of instructing our missions to assume the protection of the citizens of Latin American countries in general throughout Europe.

There are many of the countries of Latin America which have no or limited diplomatic and consular representation in Europe. As a matter of continental solidarity, and in furtherance of the Good Neighbor Policy and the purposes of those agreements for cooperation already undertaken among the states of the American hemispheres I desire the representatives of the United States, when requested, to give their unofficial assistance to citizens of countries of these continents in cases where they are not represented by diplomatic and consular officers.

¹⁵ A similar telegram was sent September 5, 5 p. m., to all American diplomatic representatives in the American Republics with reference to Department's circular of September 1, 6 p. m., p. 593.

^{15a} August 31, 8 p. m., p. 593.

Further, I desired as well to suggest by the circular under reference that our diplomatic and consular representatives should hold themselves available for such advice and counsel as they may find they can give to their colleagues from the American Republics in case such advice and counsel is sought and might be useful.

There was no intention on my part that the interests of American citizens be subordinated to those of others.

HULL

340.1115/493 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom
(Kennedy)*¹⁶

WASHINGTON, September 3, 1939—7 p. m.

775. We have given most earnest consideration to your appeals for making available additional ships for repatriation purposes. Again today the appropriate agencies of our Government have been in constant collaboration on this problem with this Department and in consultation with the President.

We hope to be able to advise you tomorrow of the names and dates of sailing of three or four additional vessels it is planned to place in this service under private operation.

In the meantime we want to call your attention again to the advantages, as we see it, of your continuing to impress upon Americans the urgency of leaving the more dangerous urban centers for points of greater security. It is understood that you will, of course, have the addresses to which Americans have gone and that you will notify them as shipping space becomes available. Please impress upon them that with the best will in the world the obtaining of available space will take time and that they should put themselves in positions of safety when they are obliged to wait.

One further matter. Would it not be possible to appeal to Americans who have bought accommodations more than adequate for themselves to waive their rights so as to utilize every berth and accommodate three or four passengers per cabin instead of one couple. A better utilization of space could be accomplished this way.

HULL

¹⁶ The same telegram was sent on September 3 to the Ambassador in France as No. 731.

124.40/A : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Minister in Switzerland (Harrison)

WASHINGTON, September 3, 1939—7 p. m.

60. For distribution to Chiefs of Mission in Europe. The Government of the United States appreciates the situation in which its officers of the Foreign Service may find themselves in belligerent territory because of the probability that this war will bring greater danger from the air than any preceding conflict. The Department confidently expects each officer of the American Government to remain at his post as long as it is possible in view of military operations, or until a local evacuation of civil servants. We realize the risks which may attend this devotion to duty in certain places but are confident in the patriotism and integrity of the American Foreign Service, its officers and employees. It is, of course, expected under existing instructions that you will evacuate, before danger becomes acute, American women clerks, women and children of the families of American personnel.

Repeat to all consular officers in your jurisdiction.

HULL

340.1115/1465 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Chargé in Germany (Kirk)*¹⁷

WASHINGTON, September 7, 1939.

433. Swedish Chargé d'Affaires just telephoned to state that a telegram from his Government declares that the competent Swedish authorities in Denmark, Finland, the Baltic States and Germany have been instructed to visa without delay the passports of American citizens returning to the United States.

HULL

740.00111A Passenger Travel/4 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, September 8, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received September 8—1 : 18 p. m.]

1535. After discussion with the Admiralty I propose to issue, subject to your approval, the following warning to Americans here:

"Ambassador Kennedy feels that it is his duty to warn American citizens taking passage on vessels of belligerent nations that, when

¹⁷The same telegram was sent on September 7 to the Minister in Finland (No. 94), the Minister in Denmark (No. 31), and the Minister in Latvia (No. 61).

such vessels are being convoyed, the opposing belligerent may claim the right to sink them without warning”.

The Admiralty has further suggested that after “the opposing belligerent may” there should be added “irrespective of international law”.

What do you want us to say?

KENNEDY

740.00111A Passenger Travel/4 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom
(Kennedy)*

WASHINGTON, September 8, 1939—5 p. m.

865. Your 1535, September 8, 6 p. m. The text of the warning which you propose to give to Americans is approved but we believe that the suffix suggested by the Admiralty should be left out and these words “in addition to the other statements he has made” should be inserted after word “that” in first line of proposed statement.

HULL

340.1115/2271 : Circular telegram

The Secretary of State to the Minister in Switzerland (Harrison)

WASHINGTON, September 9, 1939—1 p. m.

69. To be repeated to all European Missions. The Department is collaborating in the efforts being made to make available additional accommodations for Americans returning from Europe and such vessels will call presumably at a southwestern French port and a western British port.

However there will doubtless be sailings from the ports of the country to which you are accredited or from the near-by neutral ports of freighters and small vessels of American registry capable of carrying a small number of passengers. You will of course urge citizens desiring repatriation to take advantage of all such opportunities. The Maritime Commission has agreed to communicate with all the operators of commercial vessels asking their officers to report to American Consuls at the ports in Europe at which the vessels touch and offer passenger accommodations to persons desiring repatriation up to maximum legal capacity of the vessel.

HULL

840.1115/1180: Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Minister in Switzerland (Harrison)

WASHINGTON, September 12, 1939—7 p. m

75. Your 99, September 7, 11 a. m.¹⁸ American citizens are not to be considered destitute or last resort cases in the sense that assistance can be given by our Government for repatriation purposes until and unless family, friends or employers in this country have been found to be not in a position to advance funds or have refused to do so through direct or Departmental channels. Our officers abroad cannot be expected to be in a position to determine in many cases whether such Americans are actually destitute in this sense in the same way that the Department is able to do so here. In case of the refusal by friends, relatives or employers to advance funds directly or through this Department, the Department makes an investigation through its own channels of the capacity of the family to supply such funds.

You will appreciate that if such careful investigation is not made in each individual case before funds are advanced to an American citizen for repatriation it is only natural that the families and friends and even employers of Americans now abroad should refuse to transmit funds and endeavor to place the sole responsibility on this Government.

On the other hand our officers abroad are the only ones who can determine whether an American applying for relief is actually in need of funds for temporary subsistence as distinguished from transportation to the United States pending the receipt of funds from relatives, friends or employers or negative result of Department's efforts to obtain them.

You are authorized to advance from such allotments as may be made to you for the purpose minimum sums required for such temporary subsistence against promissory notes as outlined in paragraphs 20, 21 and 22, circular March 21, 1939. The funds available to the Department are quite limited and will remain so until the Congress may appropriate additional sums. Telegraph minimum amount needed for your office on the foregoing basis in order that allotment may be made.

Please repeat this explanation of the Department's policy to all offices.

HULL

¹⁸ Not printed.

340.1115A/C : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Bullitt)*¹⁹

WASHINGTON, September 14, 1939—5 p. m.

920. The Government has endeavored to arrange that additional facilities be made available for the use of American citizens desiring to return to the United States. There have been many legal, technical and administrative difficulties to overcome in arranging all the details necessary to the diversion of vessels from customary routes to emergency voyages, none of which it is necessary to discuss except to remind you that the whole process has been complicated. The difficulties have now been solved to the point where arrangements have been made for the dispatch of five extra ships with a combined maximum capacity of 3520 passengers. Two of these ships have already sailed; other three about to depart. Some will go to English, some to French, ports. The ships and their respective maximum emergency passenger capacities are: *Orizaba*, 450; *Shawnee*, 675; *St. John*, 860; *Iroquois*, 675; *Acadia*, 860.

The ports of call of these ships and probable dates of arrival will be notified to local authorities by master of vessel and to you by separate cable. It is important for you to note that the Government, acting through the Maritime Commission, has notified the operators of these extra ships that they will carry as passengers to America only bona fide American citizens. Bookings may be made through offices of the United States Lines Company.

The vessels named above are in addition to all existing and available American flag regular passenger steamers which are being turned around and despatched as expeditiously as possible.

However, in addition there are various freighters sailing with emergency space for from 18 to 25 passengers each. The owners have advised their representatives to maintain close contact with Consular officers at ports of call to the end that these ships will be immediately available for the use of American citizens, subject to Consular emergency certificate.

It is the belief of the Maritime Commission and of the Department of State that in view of the difficulties encountered and of the partial emergency involved such persons who may secure bookings and who willingly do not sail as booked should be placed at the bottom of the list of applicants for future accommodations. This opinion is reinforced by the recent last arrival of the *Manhattan* with approximately 200 passengers under capacity and the last sailing of the

¹⁹ The same telegram was sent on September 14 to the Minister in Ireland as No. 24. The same telegram with fourth paragraph omitted was sent on the same date to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom as No. 960.

Exochorda from Marseilles for New York with 25 vacant accommodations out of 200 total. The Government will in the future weigh the necessity for making available extra vessels for the use of bona fide American citizens desiring to avail themselves thereof in the light of the extent to which those citizens now avail themselves of the opportunities presented.

HULL

811.111 Quota 51/276 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Bullitt)

WASHINGTON, September 15, 1939—12 p. m.

953. Your 1974, September 14, 7 p. m.²⁰ You may suspend issuance quota immigration visas during as much of September and October as emergency demands of American citizens continue and return allotted numbers you do not propose to issue. Please report by cablegram on immigration situation and submit your recommendation relative thereto toward the close of authorized suspension.

HULL

340.1115A/11b : Circular telegram

The Secretary of State to the Minister in Switzerland (Harrison)

WASHINGTON, September 15, 1939—4 p. m.

78. Repeat to all offices. Refer to paragraphs 20, 21 and 22 of Department's strictly confidential instruction of March 21, 1939. When telegraphing Department for authorization to lend against promissory notes for repatriation purposes, which is defined as transportation from Europe to the United States, as distinguished from temporary bare subsistence which may in appropriate instances include local evacuation from a danger zone to a safer local place, give in your telegrams full names, addresses in United States, dates and places of birth of destitute persons, as well as names and full addresses in United States of relative, friend, employer, et cetera, who might furnish aid, together with indication his relationship to destitute person. Also indicate separately amounts required for repatriation as distinguished from temporary bare subsistence for each person or family unit.

HULL

²⁰ Not printed; it requested authorization given in this telegram.

340.1115/2878 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, September 15, 1939—8 p. m.
[Received September 15—2:45 p. m.]

1668. Your 960, September 14, 5 p. m.²¹ I can quite understand that you have encountered difficulties in your efforts to secure ships to assist in the evacuation of our people. We in turn have encountered difficulties in our efforts to get people to places of safety, to keep track of them and to convince them that the richest Government on earth is doing everything possible to get them out of danger. Thank God, we haven't had any trouble. If we had had, we should have had to do a lot of explaining by this time.

I note that the special vessels are to be limited to American citizens. Vincent Massey²² has requested space on the *Orizaba* for a few injured Canadians from the *Athenia*.²³ I believe that as a courtesy and on humanitarian grounds we should do this. There would not be more than 20 all told and they are prepared to pay the full rate, so that there is no question of a loss either to the United States Lines or the American Government.

I also believe that we should carry non-citizens from the *Athenia* in a few cases where to bar them would mean splitting up families. We have several cases where it would be unthinkable, in my view, to insist upon a rigid application of the ban upon non-citizens. In one instance, we have three American children with a British mother. All are suffering from shock and exposure. Are we to separate an American husband from his British wife? I should like specific instructions on these and similar cases.

Your reference to vessels sailing with less than capacity was dealt with in my cable of September 3. At that time it was said that the *Manhattan* could have carried 148 more. The number has now become 200. May I point out that the *Manhattan* sailed 4 days before the declaration of war, when the demand for space was not nearly so acute as it was later and is, as a matter of fact, now.

I should also like to reiterate what I said on September 3, that the only way to get more people on these boats is to put them in rooms with married couples, a thing to which the couples are apt to object. The *Washington*, as you may know, is carrying 1,758 passengers this trip which is about 600 more than her normal capacity. They are sleeping four and six to a room and on cots in the public rooms. Local

²¹ See footnote 19, p. 601.

²² High Commissioner for Canada in the United Kingdom.

²³ See vol. II, section entitled "Investigation Concerning the Responsibility for the Sinking of the British SS *Athenia* . . ." under United Kingdom.

officials of the Line maintain that they put on this ship every person who could possibly be accommodated. With 1,500 people standing outside the office begging for space I refuse to believe that there was any dearth of passengers for this vessel.

With regard to the special vessels, I do not believe that there is any doubt about filling them, even though the war will be a month old by the time the last of these vessels has cleared for home. Of course, while we have been waiting for these vessels several thousand people have been taken off by the regular services. I am inclined to think that you are overestimating the carrying capacity of these ships. I am familiar with the *Acadia* and the *St. John* and I must say that I feel sorry for any 860 people compelled to cross the Atlantic in October on ships like these. The fact that two of the special ships have to put into the Azores for fuel is an illuminating commentary on their suitability for this trade.

KENNEDY

340.1115A/3 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, September 16, 1939—1 p. m.

[Received September 16—10:45 a. m.]

2000. Your 920, September 14, 5 p. m. I am, of course, exceedingly grateful for the effort the Department is making to provide emergency shipping for the repatriation of American citizens urgently desiring to leave the scene of war for the United States. I believe I understand the difficulties you have had to face.

I have noted attentively the words in the last paragraph of the Department's telegram under reference with regard to the last west-bound sailing of the *Manhattan* "with approximately 200 passengers under capacity". That ship sailed from Havre on September 1st before war had actually been declared. The manager of the United States Lines in France sold for that sailing every bed which had been allotted his office. It seems to me that we should not accept a statement that this ship sailed with approximately 200 passengers under capacity as indicative of a lack of demand for space at that time. It is also not clear what the author of that statement regards as the capacity of the ship and whether he is referring to a theoretical or a practical capacity. We do know that the ship sailed from Southampton with 450 passengers more than it had ever carried before; that theoretically it would have been possible to wedge more passengers on board by process of placing strangers in cabins with married couples mixing men and women indiscriminately and insisting that the 20 Congressmen on board accept strangers in their cabins.

I am told [no?] practical steamship authority ever hopes to fill a vessel to its theoretical capacity either as regards passengers or cargo. There is always the possibility of the last minute failures to arrive because of illness, rail connections, et cetera. We do know that the next sailing of the lines the *Washington* carried 1753 passengers with a theoretical capacity of 1780.

I hope, therefore, that the Department will not conclude from the statement in question which was undoubtedly made by some well-meaning person that the thousands of nervous Americans then awaiting sailing disdained even a cot in one of the public rooms of the *Manhattan*.

The same paragraph also contains a reference to the last westbound sailing of the *Exchorda* with 25 vacant places. I am informed by the Consulate at Marseille that the *Exchorda* sailed with 175 passengers. The office at Marseille booked passengers for all places allotted by the company to that office. It is understood that two passengers failed to make connections and were left behind. The Genoa office of the American Export Lines, it is understood, controls the booking of space and can undoubtedly explain why the theoretical passenger capacity of the vessel was not attained.

The Department's telegram under reference makes no mention of provisions to be made for Latin Americans. I should be grateful for the Department's further advice as to what I should now say to my Latin American colleagues, all of whom, to my great embarrassment, have been and are calling me daily for specific information as to when ships to evacuate their nationals will arrive.

BULLITT

340.1115A/11g: Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom
(Kennedy)*

WASHINGTON, September 16, 1939—8 p. m.

998. Your 1668, September 15, 8 p. m. Department understands you have had many difficulties and we are satisfied that you have handled them exceedingly well and with great ability.

On the other hand the Department knows that you appreciate that we also have difficulties and that the best interests of our American citizens abroad are going to be furthered by an understanding on the part of each of the difficulties of the other and a complete desire to cooperate to the best interests of all concerned.

Your telegram raises the question whether other than American citizens can travel on these extra vessels. The American Government

is limited in the partial emergency which the President has declared to the extent that authority has not been granted to it to do more than has been authorized by law.

The statute relating to the situation reads:

“. . . whenever the President shall find that a state of emergency exists endangering the lives of American citizens in any foreign country, he may, etc. . . .”²⁴

The President's Proclamation²⁵ reads:

“. . . by virtue of and pursuant to the authority vested in me by the above-quoted statutory provisions, and in order to meet such emergency and make funds available for the protection of American citizens in foreign countries, I hereby, etc. . . .”

Consequently the extra shipping which we provided had to be for the use of American citizens.

Department feels that it is without authority to accede to the suggestion of Mr. Massey for 20 Canadians. We regretfully take this position. We have every sympathy and under normal circumstances would be very glad indeed to comply with any suggestion of similar import. However, in addition to the lack of authority there is the further fact that the persons in question are of a belligerent nationality. Their presence aboard a ship of the American flag under the present circumstances, which also contemplates that the ship is on a run specifically arranged by the United States Government and under special authority of the law and Proclamation of the President, might by possible implication jeopardize the lives of American citizens on board that ship. I am sure you will appreciate the implications and that Mr. Massey will understand them if you bring them to his attention. This is entirely aside from the question of authority, which also lies as a predicate for Department's decision. As to their offer to pay full fare, the question arises as to whether that number of American citizens would not be displaced and as to whether we have the right to consent. Our decision must, under the circumstances, be in the negative.

You also raise the question of the separation of families. This is quite different, for the reason that Department has, under its regular legislative authority, assumed the right to be of assistance to the families of American citizens even though some members of the family are not of American citizenship. Under those circumstances you are advised that where one member of a family is an American citizen they have the right to travel on these specially diverted ships and

²⁴ Department of State Appropriation Act, 1940, approved June 29, 1939; 53 Stat. 890.

²⁵ Reference is to the President's Executive Order No. 8246, dated September 8, 1939, 4 *Federal Register* 3863.

that they may be accompanied by members of their family who are not American citizens if the latter have visas.

HULL

340.1115A/8 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, September 17, 1939—1 p. m.
[Received September 17—9:44 a. m.]

2016. Waterman's 13 of September 16, 10 a. m.²⁶ regarding enemy aliens included in the crews of American ships. I have informed Waterman as follows:

"The Embassy has no intention of intervening in behalf of enemy aliens included in the crews of American ships and the Department has been so informed. I desire that you take no action in this respect without prior consultation with the Embassy."

BULLITT

340.1115A/14 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, September 18, 1939—6 p. m.
[Received September 18—5:17 p. m.]

2031. Your 920, September 14, 5 p. m. United States Lines representative advises that he is encountering difficulty booking *Shawnee* to capacity with American citizens due to doubt on the part of some as to the safety of trans-Atlantic travel under present conditions in such a small vessel and their preference to await the availability of larger vessels established in the trans-Atlantic run.

We understand from the Department's instruction that booking is to be limited to American citizens but the United States Lines' London office informs us that exceptions may be made in favor of close relatives of American citizens such as wives and minor children of foreign nationality.

The Paris office of the United States Lines would like authorization to book foreigners in such meritorious cases and also Latin Americans on the *Shawnee*.

I recommend that the Paris representative of the United States Lines be permitted to use his discretion in booking such passengers.

²⁶ Not printed; Henry S. Waterman, Consul at Bordeaux, had reported that French authorities intended to remove enemy nationals from crews of American ships (340.1115A/2).

I ask you urgently to approve this recommendation. The Latin American diplomats in Paris are now calling up this mission daily and announcing that they consider it shameful that the Government of the United States should hold out hopes to their Governments which we are unable to fulfill. I am certain that our prestige in South America is suffering severely.

The Latin American diplomats in Paris are considering an appeal to the Italian Government to provide them with ships for their nationals since the Government of the United States has been unable to fulfill the hopes raised.

I request especially immediate permission to have booked on the *Shawnee* certain Latin Americans that the Ambassadors of Brazil and the Argentine Republic and the Colombian Minister and other diplomats state are intimate friends of their respective chiefs of state.

BULLITT

340.1115A/3 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Bullitt)

WASHINGTON, September 18, 1939—7 p. m.

982. Personal from the Secretary for the Ambassador. Please refer to final paragraph of your 2000, September 16, 1 P. M. Our telegram circular 56 to Berne²⁷ was despatched with the hope that such cooperation between our missions would contribute to the building of the good neighbor spirit. It was quickly apparent that the scope of our possible assistance was misconstrued in certain places and we have done what we could to clarify the limitations under which our officers must perform their functions.

We cannot send ships for citizens of other nations; we cannot even accept nationals of other countries on diverted ships for which we are assuming responsibility for eventual operating losses.

I realize the burden that this circular has placed on you at a time when you are carrying through a trying task so successfully, and hope that you will do your utmost to realize the purpose of our original circular, difficult as the situation may be for you.

I append a list of references which together will give you a full picture of how we envisage the activities of our officers abroad in this connection.

To Berne, 56, August 31, 8 P. M. Circular.

To Berne, 71, September 9, 3 P. M. Circular.²⁸

Your 1745, September 2, and 1805, September 6, 3 P. M.²⁹ and my 730, September 3, 7 P. M.

HULL

²⁷ August 31, 8 p. m., p. 593.

²⁸ Not printed.

²⁹ Telegram No. 1805 not printed.

340.1115A/24 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, September 19, 1939—noon.
 [Received September 19—9 a. m.]

2048. Your 982, September 18, 7 p. m. I take your telegram under reference to mean that you have given appropriate instructions to the United States Lines.

BULLITT

340.1115A/34a : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Bullitt)

WASHINGTON, September 19, 1939—7 p. m.

993. Your 2048, September 19, noon. United States Lines understands that diverted ships may carry aliens only when refusal might mean separation of American families. This measure does not apply to ordinary runs of United States Lines.

HULL

340.1115A/34b : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Minister in Norway (Harriman)*³⁰

WASHINGTON, September 19, 1939—7 p. m.

39. The Department will appreciate your advising approximately as correctly as possible the number of bona fide American citizens in Norway who desire to secure transportation facilities to the United States. We will also appreciate your estimate as to whether the passenger steamship facilities under neutral flags are adequate. You are requested not to make known that this inquiry has been addressed to you and to make your own estimate discreetly.

HULL

340.1115A/46 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, September 21, 1939—2 p. m.
 [Received September 21—1 p. m.]

2085. Your 982, September 18, 7 p. m.; my 2048, September 19, noon, and your 993, September 19, 7 p. m. I realize that the question of ships for repatriation is one for action by the Department and not for action by this mission and I shall refrain from further suggestions.

³⁰ The same, *mutatis mutandis*, as No. 41, September 19, 7 p. m., to the Minister in Denmark.

Our part of the task of repatriation has been to get Americans to zones of little danger in western France ready to embark. This task now has been accomplished except in the case of those who do not have enough money to leave Paris and other points of danger.

We shall be able to complete this task as soon as you supply funds to us for this purpose.

I regret that I am obliged to make a final reference to your problem of supplying ships and making rules for their use; but I feel you should know that the Paris office of the United States Lines seems to have received no instructions from New York in the sense of your 993, September 19, 7 p. m. and that numerous Ambassadors and Ministers of Latin American countries, full of gratitude, have been able to arrange for passages for their most prominent nationals. On the consequences of an order to cancel the tickets already sold to Latin Americans, and in their hands, many of which are too expensive for American citizens here to buy, I refrain from comment.

BULLITT

340.1115A/46: Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Bullitt)*³¹

WASHINGTON, September 24, 1939—1 p. m.

1049. Your 2031, September 18, 6 p. m. Your 2085, September 21, 2 p. m. (Section 2).³² First regarding your 2085, Section 2. Department is unable to understand this message unless it is viewed in the light of a possible misunderstanding or misapprehension on your part.

The regular passenger service of the United States Lines Company has not been restricted to American citizens only. The agents of that Line in Paris are reported to understand that fact. Through the Maritime Commission we have requested United States Lines Company in New York to confirm that fact to their Paris agents and in addition to direct those agents to be at your disposal in facilitating arrangements for any Ambassador or Minister of an American Republic in Paris for the purpose of offering them for the use of their nationals such accommodations for New York as may be available on the regular passenger ships. The thought has never occurred to Department to exclude the persons under reference from travel on those regular passenger ships. Our 993 was intended to make that clear. Consequently there could not develop the denial of passenger facilities for those persons—unless the ship was sold out—nor can there be any question of cancellation of tickets.

³¹ Telegram No. 1050, September 25, 1939, to the Ambassador in France, instructed that telegram No. 1049 be repeated to the American Consul at Marseille.

³² i. e., the last paragraph of the telegram.

However, the specially directed ships are in a different category. Use of the funds to defray the expense of those voyages was limited by Congressional Act to:

“A state of emergency . . . endangering the lives of American citizens in any foreign country.”

and was called into being by Presidential proclamation ³³ in the words:

“By virtue of and pursuant to the authority vested in me by the above-quoted statutory provisions”.

So that by law we have been limited to use those funds for American citizens only. But that applies only to the specially diverted ships and does not apply and never did apply to the regular passenger vessels of the United States Lines.

Department is very glad you have exercised your good offices in favor of the Ambassadors, Ministers and prominent citizens of South American Republics and is pleased to note they are grateful. Department hopes the agent of the United States Lines in Paris can be of additional service to you in that regard.

Second, your 2031. The only exception permissible to the necessary ruling that American citizens only are to use the diverted ships is that for humanitarian reasons families are not to be separated, so that if one member of a family is an American citizen and entitled to travel on one of those vessels that citizen may be accompanied by one or more members of the immediate family who are not American citizens.

This ruling applies to the *Shawnee*. It does not apply to regular passenger vessels under operation of the United States Lines. Consequently no foreigners other than members of the immediate family of an American citizen can be carried on the *Shawnee* or aboard the *St. John* which also has left for a French port.

We regret that for legal reasons there is a lack of authority to comply with your recommendation in regard to the *Shawnee* and *St. John*. There are no limitations upon the sale of passenger accommodations on the other vessels such as the *Washington* and *Manhattan*. Consequently, considering the larger size of the vessels in the regular run, there would seem to be no reason why the persons mentioned in your 2031, Section 3, cannot be gradually accommodated aboard them and with probably greater comfort to the passengers.

Department requests that you try to bring about a proper understanding of this whole question on the part of the Ambassadors of Brazil and of Argentina and on the part of any other Chief of Mission who may have had a misapprehension of the conditions pertain-

³³ Reference is to the President's Executive Order No. 8246, dated September 8, 1939, 4 *Federal Register* 3863.

ing to travel on these diverted ships and that you explain the reasons therefor.

HULL

340.1115A/58: Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, September 25, 1939.

[Received September 25—4:01 p. m.]

2164. Your 1049, September 24, 1 p. m. Orders have not been received by the Paris representative of the United States Lines to refuse to carry Latin Americans or other aliens on the *Shawnee*. The *Shawnee* therefore will sail tomorrow noon with approximately 350 passengers instead of the theoretical complement stated by you of 720. The *Shawnee* will leave behind approximately 100 prominent Latin Americans who now hold tickets, and will leave behind several hundred Americans who would be glad to sail on this vessel if they had the funds with which to purchase high priced tickets.

It is difficult for me to believe that the Act of Congress in question was intended to forbid the removal of citizens of other countries. (A service for which they would pay in full) if their removal could be made incidental to the removal of Americans.

The office of the United States Lines in Bordeaux has just telephoned to us that it anticipates serious rioting when the Latin Americans who hold tickets are refused permission to board the *Shawnee*.

I do not misunderstand or misapprehend. I disagree.

BULLITT

340.1115A/58: Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Bullitt)

WASHINGTON, September 25, 1939—7 p. m.

1058. Your 2164, September 25. From your telegram it appears that the representatives of the United States Lines in France have sold tickets to some 100 Latin Americans contrary to the instructions issued to them that on these special vessels only American citizens can and should be carried.

In view of your statement that the number of Americans who have taken passage will not fill the complement of the vessel and in view of this obligation incurred by the United States Lines through the sold tickets to some 100 Latin Americans contrary to the instructions to permit on this particular voyage of the *Shawnee* that such tickets be honored to the extent that space may be available not desired or availed of by American citizens.

This action with respect to the *Shawnee* is being authorized only because of the considerations advanced and will not be considered as a precedent and will not apply to the other four vessels under this arrangement.

You are requested to inform the United States Lines representatives in France of the foregoing. This same information is being transmitted to the United States Lines here through the Maritime Commission.

HULL

340.1115A/59 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, September 26, 1939—5:30 p. m.

1830. We have just been informed by the United States Lines that the *Iroquois* and the *Acadia* which we understood were scheduled to go to France, instead will be put into United Kingdom ports. We are naturally glad to get these ships but I think that I should point out some of the difficulties with which we are going to be confronted in filling them. In the first place, we find travelers extremely reluctant to take passage on small, unknown vessels which they associate with the coastwise trade. We have plenty of people who are still waiting for accommodations to the United States but they will not book on a 6,000-ton boat until they are scared to death. Being scared half to death apparently is not sufficient incentive to get people onto a boat which they consider to be uncomfortable and perhaps unsafe. We are going to try very hard to fill these ships, and I believe that we shall, but I want to call your attention to two possibilities which we might fall back upon in case of need. One is to reduce the price; the other is to take Latin Americans in cases where this will not deprive citizens of an opportunity to get home. The price angle becomes increasingly important. People who can afford to book the more expensive accommodations are pretty well out of the way. (Those who are not out of the way are not interested in vessels like the *Iroquois*.) Many of those who now remain are limited to third and tourist class fares, and the longer they remain the worse off they become. If we are unable to get the fares that have been set for the *Iroquois* and *Acadia* I believe that it would be wise to consider a drastic reduction for those who are unable to pay the present rate and might easily cost the Government much more if they are not taken out right away. We have nearly 100 Latin Americans who have registered at the Embassy for assistance in securing passage home. The majority of these people can pay the *Iroquois* and *Acadia* rates. In view of our good neighbor policy, and in further view of your instructions to help Latin Americans

whenever we can, would it not be wise to let them have any accommodations that may not be taken by Americans? It certainly would be much better, from every standpoint, to carry these people than to let the ships return with empty berths. This applies, with even greater force, to alien members of families in which there are American citizens. In this connection, I must reiterate what I said in my 1668 cable of September 15, that some of these ships will not carry the numbers set forth in the Department's 960, September 14.^{32a} Thus the *Orizaba* which was listed as having a capacity of 450, was considered by local officials of the United States Lines and by Consul General Erhardt to be comfortably filled when she had taken on 352 passengers. The *Iroquois* apparently will carry about 675, as scheduled, but we are informed that the 860 listed for the *Acadia* is 200 more than can practicably be accommodated on this vessel. Many of the people asked to travel on these ships are outspoken in their criticism of what they consider overcrowding and in their determination to risk bombing rather than a late season crossing of the north Atlantic in a crowded small vessel.

KENNEDY

340.1115A/59 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom
(Kennedy)*

WASHINGTON, September 27, 1939—3 p. m.

1086. Your 1830, September 26, 5:30 P. M.

First. It was always intended to send the *Iroquois* to a British port for repatriation service. The *Acadia* is not proceeding to England. She is sailing for Bordeaux, and if she has a full complement of passengers there, will proceed directly to the United States. If she is not loaded to reasonable capacity out of Bordeaux, she may go to a Channel port provided there will be enough passengers there to justify the call under the circumstances then existing. Operators of *Acadia* are so instructed by Maritime Commission and you will be advised by operators' agents in London of space if any remaining after Bordeaux for passengers from England.

These vessels have been certified by the United States Maritime Commission as seaworthy and sufficient in every respect to travel on the North Atlantic run at this season of the year. The maximum capacities of 675 and 860 respectively compare with their normal of 623 and 815 respectively. In each case it is understood that the conditions would be crowded and that for practical reasons it might be possible to utilize less than the maximum capacity. However, we are

^{32a} See footnote 19, p. 601.

again today advised by the Maritime Commission that the *Acadia* can easily accommodate 800 persons and can carry 860. These vessels were dispatched to fill an emergency. We have understood several thousands of Americans were in England desiring an opportunity in an emergency to return to the United States. The service offered is the best available and has been furnished with the expectation and in the belief that citizens desiring to return safely to America would be glad to avail themselves of safe, American flag vessels even if the passengers were somewhat crowded.

Second. We have already advised you of the legal reasons which underlie our inability to agree to the principle that others than American citizens can travel to the United States on these vessels. There are various other ships under the United States flag plying between English ports and the United States upon which persons of the nationalities to which you refer may obtain passage. However, the use of the specially diverted ships has been limited as explained to you for legal reasons which underlie the policy of the United States and it might prove very embarrassing to the United States if you should hold out to the persons you mention the hope that they can obtain accommodations on these vessels. For your confidential information, the Department was faced with an emergency situation at Bordeaux involving the same principle, and an exception had to be made in that case because of unauthorized commitments. However, the Department does not feel that it is authorized to expend these funds on that account, and you are definitely requested not to make any such commitment or to hold out that thought. If it were not for the fact that they could be accommodated on other ships, Department might consider asking the Congress for authority to take some steps in those circumstances, but that contingency does not arise.

Third. You mention that the cost of travel on these vessels is in some cases prohibitive. Of course you will realize these vessels are being dispatched at a considerable expense to the Government. The price of passage is not fixed by the Government but has been adopted by the operators at the same rate as the regular conference rates governing the North Atlantic run for similar passenger facilities. As you are aware, arrangements already exist for assisting persons with insufficient funds for passage money to obtain funds from this country. Without going into details here, your attention is called to our No. 75, September 12, 7 P. M., Circular to Bern. When names and addresses of persons desiring assistance from relatives and friends are telegraphed to the Department, it is in a position to contact the relatives or friends without delay and transmit funds deposited by them to you for payment to the citizens concerned. Steamship company agents ought to be glad to receive passenger dollar checks on American banks

from persons known to have sufficient resources. In case they are not known to be persons with sufficient resources, the procedure outlined above should be followed. In every case persons assisted in this manner must be bona fide American citizens.

HULL

340.1115A/85b : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Minister in Switzerland (Harrison)

WASHINGTON, September 29, 1939—2 p. m.

90. Repeat to all offices. Refer to paragraphs 20, 21 and 22 of Department's strictly confidential instruction of March 21, 1939, and to circular telegrams to Bern Nos. 52, of August 26; 55, of August 30; 75, of September 12; and 78, of September 15.

Every precaution must be exercised that loans against promissory notes be made only to destitute persons whose American citizenship has been established. The basic instruction of March 21, 1939 and subsequent interpretative instructions should be consulted carefully and the policy laid down therein scrupulously followed. Officers in the field should endeavor to establish in advance the citizenship of destitute persons requesting loans. Documentary proof should be required and when telegraphing the Department for authorization to make loans for repatriation give full data required by circular telegram 78 of September 15 to Bern and in addition thereto indicate what documentary proof of citizenship has been submitted to you, such as passport, giving the date, number and place issuance thereof, registration record, naming office where registered and when, or other proof. If no documentary proof available give references in United States who may have such proof and date and place of birth as well as length of foreign residence.

HULL

340.1115A/84a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Bullitt)*³⁴

WASHINGTON, September 30, 1939—8 p. m.

1124. This Government arranged to dispatch five ships to European ports, the *Orizaba*, *Shawnee*, *Iroquois*, *St. John* and *Acadia*. These vessels were certified by the Maritime Commission as safe, seaworthy and proper vessels for the trans-Atlantic run at this season.

This Government has relied on its sources of information which reported the presence of many thousands of its citizens in Europe and

³⁴ The same telegram was sent on September 30 to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom as No. 1132.

on the statements of our officers of the dangers to which those citizens were subjected, of the difficulties which they were encountering, of their desires to return and of the urgency of the situation.

This Government was concerned for the welfare of those citizens and was actuated by a desire to be of assistance to them with the end that additional passenger facilities be provided facilitating departure from a situation in which their lives might be endangered and to return home. It was impelled to take action in the premises even though in undertaking this work it was a question as to whether Government might be exceeding the strict confines of its duty to some of its citizens in Europe. It will be recalled that many of them had no compelling reason for their presence there and that for weeks and even months before the emergency actually arose they were, or should have been, conscious of the possibility that they were unnecessarily risking danger. Nevertheless, under the circumstances now reviewed and because of the reported emergency, the vessels named were dispatched to England and to France at great expense to this Government. These vessels have a combined emergency passenger capacity of 3520, or about twice the emergency capacity of the *Manhattan*, for instance.

In telegrams to the Department, it has noted statements questioning the suitability of those vessels for the repatriation service in which they are engaged. In reporting on Americans desiring repatriation some of our establishments have stated that there was doubt on the part of some as to the safety of trans-Atlantic travel under present conditions in such a small vessel and that others were reluctant to take passage on small unknown vessels they associate with the coastwise trade and that many people asked to travel on these ships were outspoken in their criticism of what they consider overcrowding. It was also reported that persons desiring repatriation prefer to await the availability of larger vessels but that they would not disdain "even a cot" in one of the public rooms of the *Manhattan*.

There was no thought that these vessels were luxury liners, and they were not dispatched on a pleasure cruise. They were sent on what we understood was the grim business of getting American citizens out of a war zone and affording them a safe passage to the United States.

In the light of the foregoing we must now consider subsequent developments. The *Orizaba* brought home from England and Ireland 352 passengers with a maximum capacity of 450. The *Shawnee* left France with considerably less than 400 American citizens although she had a maximum emergency capacity of 675. The Maritime Commission now reports that the agents of the operators state they are having such difficulty in booking passage for Americans on these vessels that they request authority to book aliens for the United States on the

Iroquois, *St. John* and *Acadia*. To this we are unable to assent for the reason that these vessels are, and from the beginning were, intended exclusively for American citizens, the extra cost of operation being paid out of funds appropriated by the Congress for the protection in an emergency of American citizens in a foreign country.

The three vessels just named have maximum passenger capacities respectively of 675, 869 and 869, or a total of 2395. If they are utilized to their full capacity, the number of Americans remaining in Europe will be decreased by that amount, and the expense to Government for these vessels will be considerably decreased. But if these vessels sail for home with passenger lists as much under their maximum capacities as has been the case with those which have already sailed, the Department will be reluctantly forced to conclude either that the emergency is not as great in the minds of many of our citizens as it has been led to believe, and as it has believed it to be, or that its citizens there desire a degree of luxury which the Department as a steward of the Government's interests must consider inconsequential as compared with the danger to life. The natural sequence is that there would seem to be substantial basis for the thought that there is no pressing need for this Government to furnish additional special passenger facilities.

Considering the whole matter in the light of our past actions and in the light of circumstances since developed, the Department has come to the conclusion that the time has come to readjust its policy to the situation as it now presents itself.

Consequently, you are advised that the *Acadia* may be the last vessel to be specially diverted to call at European ports for repatriation services of American citizens and that we shall depend on the regular vessels now engaged in the North Atlantic passenger service under their rapid turn-around for the repatriation of those Americans still remaining in Europe.

The operators of the *Acadia* are instructed to take as many American citizens as passengers from France as may desire to avail themselves of that ship. If there is a reasonable quantity of accommodations unoccupied after leaving Bordeaux, the vessel is to proceed to an English port to load American passengers there and proceed to New York. If she shall have a load of passengers approximating capacity, she may proceed directly to New York from Bordeaux. The operators have been requested to instruct their agents to keep you advised. Identic telegram to London.

HULL

340.1115A/74: Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom
(Kennedy)*³⁵

WASHINGTON, September 30, 1939—9 p. m.

1131. Statements have appeared in a part of the press critical of the action of steamship companies in the sale of passages, alleging discrimination against American citizens in favor of aliens. Several statements have now been made privately and communicated to the Department by responsible persons, two of whom are members of the Senate and another a responsible person well known to the Department to the effect that discrimination has been practiced by persons in the offices of the United States Lines Company in Europe, particularly in England, against American citizens; that preference has been given in specific instances to aliens who have in certain cases actually been given accommodations aboard ship which had been engaged by or held for American citizens; that a certain amount of "crookedness" has been practiced by employees of the United States Lines Company in accepting money to give preferential accommodations to certain aliens at the expense of Americans; and other allegations along this line.

Very confidentially you are informed that we have reason to believe that several persons unfriendly to the administration may use such information which has come to them as a basis for attack despite their realization that these vessels are all privately operated vessels and that this Government has nothing to do with the sale of passage nor with the determination of who and in what order persons shall be given passage on American or other steamers. The only exception is the five diverted vessels which are also privately operated on which the Government has been obliged to restrict the sale of passage to American citizens without, however, exercising any determination as to what persons shall receive passage.

This Government is of the opinion that its various agencies here and its offices abroad have used due diligence in endeavoring to make transportation facilities available to American citizens abroad. Whatever adverse criticism may be made with regard to the sale of passages is of interest to this Government to the degree that appropriate investigation thereof must be made. You are therefore instructed to telegraph at your earliest convenience information as to the facts in order to enable this Department and the Maritime Commission to answer any statements which might be made which would reflect adversely upon its part in the conduct of the repatriation problem or from which might arise presumptions of negligence on the part of

³⁵ The same telegram was sent September 30, 9 p. m., to the Ambassador in France as No. 1125.

its officers abroad in their attention to the interests of American citizens in the emergency.

The Department realizes that the United States Lines Company is a private organization but nevertheless will appreciate your expression of opinion and any statement of fact which may be helpful to it here. The Department has no facts at present in its possession and the foregoing should not be taken as a criticism of the United States Lines Company.

Identic telegram being sent to Paris.

HULL

811.111 Quota/2272 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy)

WASHINGTON, October 2, 1939—11 p. m.

1139. Your 1331, August 31, 3 p. m.³⁶ The Department would appreciate receiving your recommendation with respect to desirability or need for continuing suspension of issuance of quota immigration visas into October.

HULL

811.111 Quota/2280 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, October 3, 1939—4 p. m.
[Received October 3—11:25 a. m.]

1911. Department's 1139, October 2, 11 p. m. Since all Americans who have expressed the desire to leave England have been substantially evacuated, and since the emergency section of the Embassy created in accordance with the Department's strictly confidential instruction of March 21, 1939 is being reduced with a consequent availability of staff and office quarters for other Embassy purposes, arrangements have already been completed to begin the issuance of quota immigration visas on October 16. Unless war conditions worsen an average of 1,000 quota visa applicants will receive appointments each month.

KENNEDY

³⁶ Not printed.

340.1115A/100 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, October 3, 1939—8 p. m.

[Received October 3—6: 15 p. m.]

1912. Your 1131, September 30. We have been looking into the charges of alleged discrimination against American citizens on American vessels and we are inclined to believe that there is no basis for this accusation.

It has been the policy of this Embassy and of the United States Lines throughout the present crisis to give preference to American citizens on all vessels leaving United Kingdom ports. Some aliens have sailed, it is true, but generally speaking they were special cases or the accommodations involved were not desired by citizens.

Of the aliens who have secured passage on American vessels during the past 6 weeks some were members of families in which there were American citizens. In keeping with the Department's traditional policy we have not resorted to the extreme of splitting families. Some had come from the United States and possessed reentry permits. Some were servants accompanying citizens. There were also several doctors and nurses required to look after infants and elderly and sick persons.

A number of aliens secured passage to America by taking space turned down by Americans. Even at the height of the demand for space there were generally a few accommodations which for one reason or another could not be sold to citizens. These were placed at the disposal of aliens and in the majority of instances accepted. This situation will, I believe, account for practically all of those aliens not falling in the classes previously enumerated.

The belief of some persons that their reservations were switched to others arises from the fact that, at the beginning of the emergency, all regular sailings were cancelled and ticket holders were ordered to rebook. This was done for two reasons. One was that, no semblance of a schedule could be maintained. The other was that the only way to fill each vessel to her capacity was to scrap all reservations and start over again. It sometimes happened that when a ticket holder came back to rebook he found that his particular cabin had been assigned to some one else. This might lead him to believe that some preference had been shown. He would of course be especially annoyed if the new holder of the space happened to be an alien.

We at the Embassy have done everything possible to reduce the flow of aliens to America. As you are aware quota immigration visas have not been issued since September 4, which has kept here more than 1000 aliens who would ordinarily have been traveling to America. Al-

though we have been under great pressure to intercede with the United States Lines on behalf of various individual aliens, we have interested ourselves only in the cases of Lord Beaverbrook, Madam Quo, the wife of the Chinese Ambassador to Great Britain, and Lady Nuffield. In each case there was a very urgent reason for our interest. The situation with regard to Madam Quo was that she was taking a sick child to America, while Lady Nuffield was ill and was being taken to America by her physician.

I doubt if there is anything to the charge of crookedness, at least so far as the personnel of the United States Lines with which we have any contact is concerned. It may be that an agent here and there would descend to accepting a bribe in return for preferential treatment, but we are strongly of the opinion that nothing of this sort exists among the staff of the line itself. Local officials are very disturbed by this charge and have promised to make an exhaustive investigation if we can supply details of any money that may have been paid over to an agent or to a member of the staff. I might say that of the 12,000 to 15,000 people who have passed through the Embassy thus far only one has complained of having to pay anyone for the privilege of purchasing a ticket. This charge did not involve an American line.

The man who made it moreover admitted that payment was made to a hotel porter and that he could not be sure the money went to any steamship line. Out of the thousands of persons who have been trying to get to America, some in a condition of near hysteria, it would be unnatural if some of them had not offered to pay more than the face value of a ticket. It would be even more unnatural if, here and there, an occasional offer had not been accepted. All in all, however, I am of the opinion that this charge of crookedness on the part of the ship line personnel will be very difficult to sustain. However, let's have the specific charges. There is no sense in our trying to be specific in answering hazy insinuations.

KENNEDY

740.00111A Passenger Travel/24a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom
(Kennedy)*

WASHINGTON, October 3, 1939—9 p. m.

1150. Following statement given to the press on October second:

"On September 5, 1939, I issued regulations regarding travel by American citizens on vessels of belligerent countries,"³⁷ in accordance

³⁷ Department of State *Bulletin*, September 9, 1939, p. 219.

with provisions of the Joint Resolution of Congress approved May 1, 1937.³⁸

I stated that travel on vessels of France, Germany, Poland, or the United Kingdom, India, Australia and New Zealand (vessels of the Union of South Africa were added by regulation of September 9, and those of Canada on September 11) in the North Atlantic Ocean, east of 30 degrees west and north of 30 degrees north or on or over other waters adjacent to Europe or over the continent of Europe or adjacent islands would not be permitted except when specifically authorized by the Secretary of State in each case.

The Joint Resolution contains a proviso excepting, for a period of 90 days, from the prohibition on travel by American citizens on a vessel of a belligerent state citizens returning from a foreign state to the United States.

While under international law American citizens have a perfect right to travel on belligerent vessels, and while under our statute they may travel on such vessels en route from a foreign country to the United States for an additional period of 60 days from October 5, I regard such travel as dangerous considering the character of the warfare that is now in progress.

I, therefore, call upon all American citizens, in their own interest and in the interest of their Government, to refrain from exercising the right which they have in this respect. This Government has gone to considerable trouble and expense to make available to American citizens in belligerent countries American vessels for their return to the United States and fortunately most of them who have desired to return have been accommodated. It is therefore to be hoped that those who may still be in foreign countries and who desire to return to the United States will travel on American vessels or other neutral vessels and thus avoid the danger inherent in traveling on vessels of belligerent countries within the areas specified above.”

Repeat to Consuls in England and to Embassy, Paris, for repetition to Consuls in France.

HULL

340.1115A/76 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Bullitt)

WASHINGTON, October 4, 1939—1 p. m.

1150. Your 2257, September 30, noon, Section 2, last three paragraphs, and 2274, October 2, 2 p. m.³⁹ Your request for a block allotment for the repatriation of “several hundred” destitute Americans has had our careful consideration. You will recall that in a number of instructions and as recently as its no. 1061 of September 25⁴⁰ the Department emphasized that each case for which funds are to be advanced on promissory notes for transportation must be submitted to the Depart-

³⁸ 50 Stat. 121.

³⁹ Neither printed.

⁴⁰ Not printed.

ment for investigation. This procedure is a settled policy of the Department which it must apply generally and which has been most carefully considered.

You have been authorized to grant subsistence to such as in your judgment need it until you hear from the Department after telegraphing the name of the person desiring repatriation and the names of possible relatives or friends in this country who may furnish funds so that the Department can contact them to secure the financial aid necessary for the individuals concerned. This also enables the Department to investigate the citizenship of the person as bona fide citizenship is a prerequisite to entry into the United States for the persons you mention. The Department realizes that some of these persons are in rightful possession of valid passports and the question of citizenship does not in such cases arise.

The Department is under the obligation, before authorizing the use of public funds for repatriation purposes in a particular case, to determine, through investigation here, whether the relatives or friends are in a position to forward the funds necessary for such repatriation. In view of the developments in the situation the Department does not feel that it has the authority to grant lump-sum allotments for the coverage *en masse* of persons among whom there may be many who have dual nationality or whose claims to citizenship are clouded or against whom a presumption of expatriation may be raised or who may be claiming a lack of funds or non-availability of funds in this country when proper investigation would show that such resources exist.

When you are advised a person is not a bona fide citizen the allowance for maintenance should cease. You will be instructed as to the Department's decision in each case.

The Department must keep in mind not only the situation in France but that in Great Britain, in the Scandinavian countries, and in other places and must follow uniform practice. For your confidential information, there are a number of persons whom the Department does not consider bona fide citizens and who are and may be attempting to gain admission into this country after having absented themselves over a considerable period and have avoided all their obligations to this Government. Under these circumstances the Department has a definite responsibility, and it is to carry through this responsibility that such definite instructions have been sent to the field officers. We are prepared to investigate any case on your inquiry as quickly as the circumstances permit, but we cannot give a blanket allotment to cover the repatriation of the persons you mention.

HULL

740.00112 European War 1939/224 : Telegram

The Naval Attaché in Germany (Schrader) to the Navy Department

BERLIN, October 4, 1939—3 p. m.

[Received 4:35 p. m.]

0004. Following is a paraphrase of note handed me personally by Grand Admiral Raeder⁴¹ for which I signed receipt:

American S. S. *Iroquois* sailed from Irish port with United States passengers 2 October will be sunk off the East coast of the United States under *Athenia* circumstances for apparent purpose of arousing anti-German feeling. Reply my specific question Raeder stated that his source of information in neutral Ireland very reliable. Chief of Staff suggested that if safe arrival closely inspect ship for explosives. If this information is true I believe it warrants risking the possibility of this code being compromised.

[SCHRADER]

340.1115A/129 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy)*⁴²

WASHINGTON, October 5, 1939—4 p. m.

1164. The Government has decided that the repatriation problem has been solved to the point where the use of the five specially diverted ships is no longer necessary for that purpose. Two have already been released to their owners and the *Iroquois*, *St. John* and *Acadia* will be released upon their return to the United States. The regular passenger liners in the North Atlantic service will continue to make a turn-around as quickly as possible and will be available for the carriage of passengers to the United States from English, French and Irish ports.

HULL

340.1115A/123 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, October 5, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received 8:06 p. m.]

2334. Your 1125, September 30, 9 p. m.⁴³ I have made a careful investigation of the conduct of the United States Lines organization

⁴¹ Chief of the German Navy.⁴² The same telegram was sent on October 5 to the Ambassador in France as No. 1166, and to the Minister in Ireland as No. 33.⁴³ See footnote 35, p. 619.

in France in connection with the repatriation of American citizens during the present crisis.

The Embassy and the Consulates at Le Havre and Bordeaux have remained in close touch with the company's representatives and the thousands of American citizens desiring repatriation.

Not a single well founded complaint has been received during the entire crisis either by me or by members of my staff or the staffs at Havre and Bordeaux that officials or employees of the lines were practicing discrimination in favor of aliens as against Americans nor has a single specific case of such discrimination been brought to our attention. The Embassy repeatedly emphasized to the local management of the company that every preference should be given to American citizens; but the company's own policy was clearly to that effect and such action would in all likelihood have been taken without our urging.

BULLITT

740.000112 European War 1939/229

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, October 6, 1939—1 a. m.

[Received October 5—7:11 p. m.]

1945. Following from Naval Person.⁴⁴

Regarding your telephone call: *Iroquois* is probably 1,000 miles west of Ireland. Presume you could not meet her before 50 meridian. There remains about 1,000 miles in which outrage might be committed. U-boat danger inconceivable in these broad waters. Only method can be time bombs planted Queenstown. We think this not impossible. I am convinced full exposure of all facts known to United States Government including sources of information, especially if official, only way of frustrating plot. Action seems urgent. Presume you have warned *Iroquois* to search ship.⁴⁵

KENNEDY

⁴⁴ Code designation for Winston Churchill, British First Lord of the Admiralty.

⁴⁵ A White House press release issued October 5, 1939, stated that a Coast Guard vessel and several Navy ships would meet the *Iroquois* at sea and accompany her to an American port and that the captain of the *Iroquois* had been asked to make a careful search for probable explosives on board his ship. See Department of State *Bulletin*, October 21, 1939, p. 407.

740.00112 European War 1939/248 : Telegram

The Minister in Ireland (Cudahy) to the Secretary of State

DUBLIN, October 7, 1939—noon.
[Received October 7—7:20 a. m.]

38. Irish Government disturbed about press reports that Admiral Raeder gave Ireland as foundation for *Iroquois* statement. Request prompt investigation and reply by mail as officials exercised at insinuation that Ireland could be source for such a statement.

CUDAHY

740.00112 European War 1939/296

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Secretary of State (Berle)

[WASHINGTON,] October 9, 1939.

The Irish Minister ⁴⁶ came in to see me, at his own request. He had previously indicated the object of his visit to Mr. Hickerson,⁴⁷ namely, the concern of his government over press reports emanating from the United States which stated that Admiral Raeder had ascribed his news of the proposed sinking of the *Iroquois* to Irish sources. The Irish government was interested in learning whether this was the fact.

As agreed with Mr. Hickerson and Mr. Moffat,⁴⁸ prior to the Minister's call, I stated that the report was true. I gave him the substance of the cablegram received from Berlin, in the course of which it was reported that Admiral Raeder, in response to a direct question from our Naval Attaché, said that the report came from an Irish neutral source which was worthy of confidence. I stated that I gave him this information in confidence for one reason only. When the report had been given out at the White House, no mention of the fact that the source was alleged by Admiral Raeder to be Irish had been made. This was because we were not sure how seriously the warning should be taken; and naturally did not wish to bracket the Irish source with a report which might prove to be merely a propaganda or similar device.

The Minister thanked me and said that he was trying to find out the exact nature of the source in question. I suggested that the proper place to inquire would be Berlin; we had no knowledge other than the statement of Admiral Raeder. The Minister agreed that this was so; though he noted that since the *Iroquois* sailed from Ireland, it would be entirely natural that reports of this kind would be ascribed to Irish sources.

⁴⁶ Robert Brennan.

⁴⁷ John D. Hickerson, Assistant Chief, Division of European Affairs.

⁴⁸ J. Pierrepont Moffat, Chief, Division of European Affairs.

I said that while we could not fairly evaluate the importance of the report, we were not very much impressed with it, though of course we had taken measures to guard the vessel.

The Minister then had a few moment's conversation regarding the German "peace offensive". He said in his judgment peace ought to be made at once, recognizing the conquest of Poland and not boggling much about existing settlements. I was careful to make no comment, and confined myself to observing that European statesmen in these days faced a tremendous responsibility.

A. A. BERLE, JR.

340.1115A/195a : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Chargé in Germany (Kirk)

WASHINGTON, October 13, 1939—8 p. m.

709. The cessation of hostilities in Poland⁴⁹ has raised a number of questions concerning American citizens, and friends and relatives of American citizens residing in that portion of Poland occupied by the German forces.

The Department desires that you approach the appropriate German authorities and discuss with them the following questions:

1. Are the German authorities prepared to facilitate whereabouts and welfare inquiries in respect to American citizens now in occupied Poland?
2. Are the German authorities prepared to facilitate the transmission of funds to American citizens now in occupied Poland?
3. Are the German authorities prepared to assist in the repatriation of American citizens now residing in Poland? This question is of course intimately associated with question 2.
4. Are the German authorities prepared to cooperate in protection of interests, inquiries, transmission of funds, et cetera, with the American Consulate General in Warsaw?
5. Are the German authorities disposed to facilitate whereabouts and welfare inquiries concerning non-American friends and relatives of American citizens who may now be in that portion of Poland occupied by the German forces?

It is not believed that any new assignment commissions will be necessary for the consular officers at Warsaw. Any action now taken for the protection of American citizens and their property in Poland is not to be interpreted as recognition of the validity of transfer of such territory to German sovereignty.

Please cable the result of your conversation concerning these matters including any suggestions for the most satisfactory accomplishment of the services above mentioned for American citizens.

HULL

⁴⁹ See pp. 402-477.

340.1115A/196: Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, October 20, 1939—10 a. m.

[Received 2: 17 p. m.]

1776. Department's 709, October 13, 8 p. m. Competent Foreign Office officials have supplied orally the following answers to the five questions listed in the telegram under acknowledgment.

1. Yes, in principle.

2. At present it is not possible to send funds directly from the United States to Poland. No banks are operating there although they may reopen in two or three weeks. However in principle there is no objection to sending funds into Poland and the suggestion was made that funds received in the Embassy for distribution to American citizens in Poland might be sent in cash, either dollars or reichsmarks, to the Foreign Office which would by channels available to it, but not to foreigners, transmit the funds to the American consular representative at Warsaw. The American Consul once in possession of funds for distribution should have access to the German civilian authorities who would doubtless cooperate with him in distributing the monies in question. Communication in Poland, however, is not easy as no postal service aside from the army service is functioning and railway traffic has not been altogether reopened. The transmission of funds or other valuables out of Poland is not permitted even into Germany. Civilians in general, even Germans, are not permitted to go to Warsaw at the present time but civilians can go to other Polish cities. The establishment of a United States official courier service in Poland to distribute funds to Americans there would, however, not be viewed with favor by the German authorities.

3. There is no objection to American citizens now in Poland leaving the German occupied area and the Germans will assist them to go.

4. The answer is yes. The German authorities will cooperate, although in regard to inquiries the possibility of readily obtaining information in view of the absence of postal service and the changes of population resulting from military operations in Poland is remote.

5. The Germans cannot undertake to facilitate whereabouts and welfare inquiries concerning non-American friends and relatives of American citizens. Such work might involve inquiries concerning Poles all over the country and concerning people who would in many cases have abandoned their ordinary places of residence. Moreover, in the German view, inquiries in regard to Polish citizens should prop-

erly be made through the power protecting Polish interests, which is the Swedish Legation in Berlin.⁵⁰

It was stated, however, that in special cases such as, for instance, inquiries regarding some highly placed [non-American?] in Poland from an American of prominence could be brought to the attention of the German Foreign Office which would endeavor to obtain the information desired.

In view of the foregoing I believe that such funds or inquiries as the Department may care to send in relation to Americans or American interests in German occupied Poland may most effectively be sent to this Embassy for communication to the American consular officers at Warsaw through the medium of the German Foreign Office. The Embassy will endeavor to ascertain when direct communication between Warsaw and the United States is reestablished in order that the Department may be duly informed of the possibility of addressing the American Consular Office at Warsaw without any unnecessary intervention of this Mission.

KIRK

125.0040/22a : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy)

WASHINGTON, October 23, 1939—6 p. m.

1278. Your 2022, October 13.⁵¹ Repeat following to Bern for distribution.⁵²

1. Pending revised regulations to meet new conditions, the following amendments to paragraphs 13, 15, 16, and 17, of the circular instruction of March 21, 1939, will be effective from November 1, 1939 until further notice.

2. Per diem allowances will not be granted (except in those individual cases where Department has given specific prior approval) to the following:

A. Alien employees and their dependents. Per diem allowances now drawn without Department's specific approval by alien employees or their dependents will be terminated not later than October 31, when such alien employees should be instructed to return to duty or resign.

B. American employees. Those now receiving per diem allowance should be instructed to return to duty or, if their services are not re-

⁵⁰ In telegram No. 2386, December 17, 2 p. m., the Chargé in Germany reported that in the future such inquiries should be directed to the German Red Cross (340.1115A/332).

⁵¹ Not printed.

⁵² Repeated to Bern by London, October 24, 1939.

quired, you should report their names to the Department for assignment elsewhere or recall to the United States.

3. Under no circumstances may per diem be paid to families of officers or American employees in cases where officer or employee resides with family at place of safety.

4. The rates of per diem specified in paragraph 13 are canceled and the following are established:

A. For wives of officers and American employees: \$3.

B. For minor children of officers and American employees: \$1.50.

In no case shall the per diem allowance to dependents exceed \$150 a month for any family and in no case shall it exceed 50 percent of the official compensation (defined as basic salary, rent allowance and cost of living allowance) of the officer or employee.

5. Under no circumstances shall travel expenses or per diem be paid to temporary employees or their dependents.

6. The instruction of March 21 as amended by the foregoing paragraphs applies equally to the personnel and families of other Departments, except that the repatriation of such personnel and families is not chargeable to State Department funds.

HULL

340.1115/8157 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, November 5, 1939—noon.

[Received 2:35 p. m.]

867. My telegram No. 817, October 27, 5 p. m.⁵³ When the Soviet postal and telegraph authorities refused to accept for transmission letters and telegrams addressed by the Embassy to American citizens in Soviet occupied Poland, and even returned to the Embassy letters which had been previously accepted for transmission, I began to send letters to these persons through the medium of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs with the request that the letters be transmitted through such Soviet Government channels as may be available to the Commissariat. The Embassy received a note from the Commissariat last evening returning these letters and stating that the Commissariat has no means of transmitting the Embassy's letters to American citizens in the above mentioned area.

An official of the Commissariat stated orally this morning that the Embassy's requests for information concerning the welfare and whereabouts of American citizens in western White Russia and western Ukraine will be acted on by the Commissariat and that telegrams

⁵³ Not printed.

and letters from the Embassy to these Americans will be accepted for transmission by the Soviet postal and telegraph authorities as soon as "conditions have been stabilized and normal communication has been restored".

Since I feel that we should not continue to permit ourselves to be denied the right to communicate with Americans in Soviet-occupied Poland, a condition which has now existed for a month and a half, I am today requesting the Commissariat for permission to have Ward⁵⁴ proceed to that area on November 9 (immediately after the Soviet November holidays) for the purpose of determining the whereabouts and welfare of American citizens. I am not certain that this permission will be granted without some delay as I am still awaiting permission from the Soviet authorities to have Ward travel to Pomorzany in connection with the recovery of Ambassador Biddle's effects.

STEINHARDT

195.6/369b : Telegram

*The Acting Secretary of State to the Minister in Switzerland
(Harrison)*

WASHINGTON, November 14, 1939—7 p. m.

120. Referring to Diplomatic Serial 3047 of March 28, 1939, the Department desires to reduce to a minimum the issuance of emergency consular certificates to American vessels. You are requested to inform consular officers that such certificates are not to be issued in the future without specific authorization from the Department in each case, as provided in the instruction referred to, and unless the consular officer concerned can recommend their issuance on the basis of necessity for the evacuation of American citizens.

Repeat to London, Paris, Brussels, The Hague, Copenhagen, Oslo, Stockholm, Rome, Athens and Ankara.

WELLES

340.1115A/283 : Telegram

The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Thurston) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, November 25, 1939—2 p. m.

[Received November 25—10:43 a. m.]

940. Since the despatch of the Embassy's telegram No. 888 dated November 13, 4 p. m.,⁵⁵ three additional notes have been addressed to the Foreign Office requesting permission for an officer of the Embassy to proceed to Soviet occupied Poland for the purpose of rendering

⁵⁴ Angus I. Ward, Consul and Second Secretary, Chief of the Consular Section of the American Embassy in the Soviet Union.

⁵⁵ Not printed.

assistance to American citizens in that area. These notes have been supplemented by numerous telephone calls and today by a further personal visit by Mr. Ward to the Foreign Office. No reply has been made to any of the Embassy's written communications.

In the meantime acting upon the assurance of the Foreign Office that the establishment of postal and telegraphic communication with Soviet occupied Poland afforded all facilities to the Embassy for communication with Americans there, numerous letters and telegrams have been addressed to all American citizens in that area whose whereabouts are known. While the Embassy has received letters and telegrams from some of these persons, no replies have been received to any of the Embassy's communications to them, and even in the event that such replies should be received, the Embassy would be unable to remit travel funds in such cases as might be necessary.

In response to the pressing oral representations made this morning the Foreign Office denied that its inactivity was to be construed as constituting a refusal for the permission desired, and Mr. Ward was assured that such would "soon" be granted. We have at the moment information indicating that Americans requesting our assistance are located at 52 different places in Soviet occupied Poland and we have pending moreover the question of Ambassador Biddle's property (which incidentally according to a report he has received has been looted by Soviet armed forces).

The Embassy will renew its representations more insistently within a few days and will telegraph the results.

THURSTON

340.1115A/293a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the Soviet Union
(Steinhardt)*

WASHINGTON, November 28, 1939—7 p. m.

251. Is there any method by which money may be sent from the United States to persons in Soviet-occupied Poland? Reply (a) with regard to American citizens, and (b) Soviet citizens.

HULL

340.1115A/293 : Telegram

The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Thurston) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, November 29, 1939—11 a. m.

[Received November 29—9:45 a. m.]

958. Embassy's telegram 926, November 22 [21], noon⁵⁶ and 940 November 25, 2 p. m.

⁵⁶ Not printed.

1. The Embassy is beginning to receive postal cards acknowledging delivery of its double registered letters to addressees in Soviet-occupied Poland. Ten of these cards covering letters to American citizens have been received.

2. An official of the Foreign Office informed the Embassy this morning that American citizens in the above-mentioned area may obtain Soviet exit visas by applying therefor at their present place of residence which obviates the need for their awaiting in Moscow the issuance of exit visas. The same official stated that: "Some time will elapse before a favorable reply will be received to the Embassy's request for permission to send a member of its staff to western Ukraine and western White Russia."

THURSTON

340.1115A/317a : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Minister in Switzerland (Harrison)

WASHINGTON, November 30, 1939—9 a. m.

124. Repeat to all offices. Reference paragraphs 20 to 22 of memorandum accompanying confidential circular instruction of March 21, 1939. Department has generously exercised the authority and the funds made available to it by the President for purposes of repatriation of American citizens desiring to return to the United States during the emergency from dangerous areas. The Government has discharged its duty to its citizens abroad and has rendered them every facility for their return and will continue to afford them every facility of our agencies abroad so far as concerns their protection and also in contacting their friends and relatives here for the purpose of obtaining from them funds for transmission to pay for their return. It has been decided to cease the practice of authorizing loans as of December 4, 1939, co-terminus with ending of the 90-day period of unrestricted travel allowed citizens by the President's Proclamation issued under the provisions of the Neutrality Act in force at the time of the Proclamation.⁵⁷ Exception will be made for meritorious cases which have been presented to Department for consideration prior to date stated. Accordingly, do not submit any cases after that date.

Referring Department's circular telegram No. 75 of September 12, 7 p. m., to Bern, you should discontinue advances for subsistence on December 4 except to citizens whose cases have been presented to Department prior to that date and are awaiting Department's reply.

HULL

⁵⁷ See Department of State *Bulletin*, September 9, 1939, p. 219.

340.1115A/320: Telegram

The Minister in Sweden (Sterling) to the Secretary of State

STOCKHOLM, December 6, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received December 6—4 p. m.]

267. In view of alarming rumors regarding Sweden's future, now flying about, the question has come up as to giving advice at once to all Americans especially women and children in Sweden to evacuate. Personally it is felt that this action would be premature in the circumstances. This afternoon, however, I sought the views of Boheman, the Secretary General of the Foreign Office and a good friend of the Legation. He definitely confirmed my opinion, said there was nothing in the present situation which would warrant it. It is true he stated that the German press had attacked Sandler⁵⁸ but no demands of any nature had been received from Germany which might be considered a prelude to aggressive action; and the Russian danger was not immediate. He agreed with me that the time for sending out such notices could properly be timed with the Stockholm evacuation of Swedish women and children no date for which has been fixed.

Asked as to any decision of the Government to give military aid to Finland Boheman said that as the matter now stands no official assistance will be given which did not mean, however, that volunteers for the Finnish Army were not being allowed to go to Finland or that arms, ammunition and supplies were not being sold to Finland by private firms. He characterized Sweden's position in respect to the Russo-Finnish conflict⁵⁹ as "nonintervention with intervention, similar to Italy's action in the recent Spanish Civil War". The Government continues to be gravely concerned over the seriousness of the whole situation.

STERLING

340.1115A/326: Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, December 8, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received December 8—2: 40 p. m.]

1048. Department's telegram number 251, November 28, 7 p. m. In reply to its repeated inquiries the Embassy was informed orally this morning by the Peoples Commissariat for Foreign Affairs that funds may be sent to persons either of Soviet or foreign nationality

⁵⁸ Rickard J. Sandler, Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs.⁵⁹ See pp. 952 ff.

in Soviet-occupied Poland provided such funds are remitted to the payee through the medium of the Bank for Foreign Trade of the U. S. S. R. which bank will have payment effected through the appropriate local branch of the State Bank of the U. S. S. R. Such remittances will be paid to the payee in Soviet currency at the official rate of exchange. Inasmuch as Soviet currency may not be taken out of the Soviet Union the official making the foregoing statement was requested to make some arrangement whereby American citizens receiving remittances for living and travel expenses may be permitted to receive funds in dollars or otherwise so that they may be in possession of needed funds beyond the Soviet frontier. He stated that he would present the Embassy's request to the competent authorities.

STEINHARDT

340.1115A/339 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, December 28, 1939—3 p. m.
[Received December 28—10:21 a. m.]

1146. Following telegram has been sent Bucharest:

Your December 18, 7 p. m. The Soviet Government is insisting upon receiving confirmation from the Rumanian Legation in Moscow of the arrangement outlined in your telegram under reference in regard to the admission into Rumania of American citizen[s] at present in Soviet-occupied Poland without Rumanian visas. I will greatly appreciate your doing everything possible to expedite the despatch of an instruction to Rumanian Legation here to confirm to the Soviet Government the above arrangement, if possible today, as the matter is extremely urgent. A Secretary of this Embassy has been for some time in Lwow awaiting the permission of the Soviet Government to evacuate a considerable number of American citizens from this region. The evacuation is now only contingent on the telegram from the Rumanian Foreign Office to its Legation here referred to above.

STEINHARDT

340.1115A/342 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, December 31, 1939.
[Received December 31—10:50 a. m.]

1162. Following telegram has been sent to American Consul Ward at Lwow:

"The necessary confirmation having been received this morning from Bucharest, the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs is today in-

structing Volkov⁶⁰ to start issuing exit visas. Apparently the Rumanian Government has made arrangements for the arrival at the frontier of only one group. It will therefore be necessary for you to assemble all of the evacuees and send them to the frontier in a single group, telegraphing the Embassy, for transmission to our Legation in Bucharest, the names, passport numbers, point of entry into Rumania and approximate date. Insofar as concerns individuals who cannot be included in this single group it will be necessary for them either to proceed to Moscow to obtain Rumanian visas or send their passports to the Embassy for that purpose. I suggest after the departure of the group you return to Moscow as soon as you have been able to obtain all available information with respect to any other American citizens within the occupied area and have taken such action with respect to Biddle's property⁶¹ as the circumstances permit.["]

STEINHARDT

II. EFFORTS OF THE UNITED STATES TO SECURE THE REPATRIATION OF CIVILIAN ENEMY ALIENS IN BELLIGERENT COUNTRIES

362.4115/1 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Chargé in Germany (Kirk)

WASHINGTON, September 9, 1939—10 p. m.

463. Following from London.

"Following note (No. K11258/11258/218) dated September 5, just received from the Foreign Office:

"It appears from appeals for assistance now being received in this Department that a number of British subjects remain stranded in Germany for various reasons such as ill-health, lack of transport, etc. It is urgently desired to ascertain what the attitude of the German Government is towards these persons and in particular whether and under what conditions they will be allowed to leave. I shall be most grateful to Your Excellency if you will be so good as to cause inquiries to be made through the United States Embassy in Berlin on these points.

I should indicate for your information the attitude of His Majesty's Government towards German civilians who are still in this country and who desire to return to Germany. Such individuals are, generally speaking, permitted to leave freely through ports which have been designated. They will not be required to obtain any written permit to leave before September 9th and it is proposed after that date to issue permits freely so that normally no obstacle will be placed in the way of German citizens desiring to leave.

⁶⁰ Vasily Alexeyevich Valkov, Head of American Section in the Soviet Foreign Office.

⁶¹ On February 5, 1940, the Soviet Commissariat for Foreign Affairs notified the American Ambassador in the Soviet Union that he could take possession of Ambassador Biddle's effects, but because of many delays by the Soviet Foreign Office they were not shipped from Moscow until June 24, 1940.

In the meantime it would be greatly appreciated if the United States Embassy in Berlin would use their good offices to facilitate the departure of British subjects in distress in Germany. Should it appear that there are some who are free to leave but who lack the necessary funds I should be grateful if the United States Embassy in Berlin would defray against repayment by His Majesty's Government the minimum cost of their journey, with hand luggage only, to the nearest town in neutral territory where a British Consul resides and obtain in respect of each in advance a receipt embodying an undertaking to repay on demand by His Majesty's Government.

A list of British subjects known to be in Germany and desirous of leaving will be furnished in the near future but in the meantime it will enable progress to be made if the general attitude of the German Government can be ascertained. I should add that the attitude of the German Government as ascertained by the United States Ambassador in Berlin may be taken into consideration in determining the future policy of His Majesty's Government towards German citizens in this country.

British subjects with relatives in Germany are being advised not to approach your Embassy direct and I take leave to suggest that any who may do so should be informed that their applications should in the first instance be addressed to this Department.' ”

Charge expenditures to Contingent Expenses, Foreign Service, with reference to this telegram on each voucher in order that the Department may claim reimbursement from the British Government.

HULL

740.00115 European War 1939/11 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, September 12, 1939.

[Received September 12—1:40 a. m.]

From Brussels: 22, September 12, 2 a. m.

From Berlin.

“19, September 11, 9 p. m. Inform Foreign Office and repeat to Department, referring to Department's 463, September 9th to this Embassy. Following is a translation of a memorandum dated today just received from German Foreign Office following the submission by this Embassy of a memorandum containing the pertinent portions of the British Foreign Office note K 11258-11258-218 dated September 5:

“The German Government in its special measures against British subjects has been governed solely by the attitude of the British Government towards German citizens. According to reliable information, the authorities of the British Colonies have taken steps to intern German citizens. The German Government is, however, ready in principle to allow British subjects to leave Germany on the basis of reciprocity. It should be hereby understood that free departure will be rendered possible also to German citizens who are residing in British India, the British Colonies and Protectorates as well as in the Mandated Territories,

and that German citizens will not be detained when they return from enemy countries to Germany on board neutral ships. As soon as the German Government receives assurances in this respect, it will permit British subjects to depart from Germany.

I urgently request immediate reply for communication to the German Foreign Office as the process of rounding up British subjects has started this afternoon. Kirk."

Wilson
KENNEDY

302.4115/5 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, September 15, 1939.

[Received September 15—3:50 p. m.]

From Brussels: 33, September 15, 10 a. m.

From Berlin.

30, September 14, 5 p. m. Notify Foreign Office. Repeat to Department. My 25, September 13, noon. Embassy advised orally by Foreign Office that in respect of nationals of British Dominions the German people will govern its treatment of these nationals according to the treatment given German nationals in the Dominions. If assurances are given that German nationals in the Dominions would be allowed to depart and further that such nationals would not be taken from neutral ships after departure the German Government would allow Dominion nationals to depart from Germany.

The Embassy is not aware of any cases of internment of Dominion nationals to date. Kirk. Wilson.

Am informing Foreign Office.

KENNEDY

740.00115 European War 1939/23 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, September 17, 1939.

[Received September 17—12:20 p. m.]

Following from Berlin.

"33, September 16, noon. Notify Foreign Office. Repeat to the Department. Reference your telegram No. 4, September 13, 4 p. m. German Foreign Office to which I communicated its substance by memorandum has orally observed that text of British alien enemy registration law is not informative as to actual British procedure respecting German citizens now in British territory. In order that further consideration may be given by German authorities to the possible revocation of existing internment order affecting British subjects of military age, the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs would

like to have precise information on the following points: (1) Does the British Government propose to permit the departure of Germans from the United Kingdom and also from British colonies, protectorates and mandated areas on condition of reciprocity, and if so, (2) what is the procedure by which German citizens may be enabled to leave British territory. As regards status of nationals of Dominions in Germany see my 30. In the interest of the British subjects now interned, I urge a prompt decision and telegraphic reply. Kirk."

Am advising Foreign Office.

KENNEDY

740.00115 European War 1939/28: Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, September 23, 1939—8 p. m.
[Received September 23—2:50 p. m.]

From Brussels: 48, September 23, 10 a. m.

From Berlin.

42, September 22, 5 p. m. Notify Foreign Office. Repeat to Department. An official of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs informed a member of this Embassy that the treatment of German nationals including consular officers in Egypt which the Germans consider had been provoked by British intervention [apparent omission] Egyptian authorities had brought about internment of certain British subjects in Germany. Previously there had been no German intention to intern British subjects in this country but upon receipt from Egypt of word regarding action taken by the Egyptian authorities against German nationals the attitude of the German officials had changed. The official read excerpts from a memorandum regarding acts committed in Egypt against German citizens stating that the German Legation at Cairo had been surrounded by police and that German citizens attempting to enter the premises had been arrested to the number of about 90. Of these only 17 were still under detention but this number included 2 German consular officers who had been imprisoned or interned. Moreover the premises of the Deutsche bank in Cairo had been invaded and the employees arrested and similar actions had taken place in the German Archaeological Institute. A German building had been damaged and German citizens had been badly treated during their confinement.

The official said that treatment similar to that accorded German citizens in Egypt had according to information received from Iraq occurred in that country although neither the Iraq people nor Government had been interested in placing restrictions on German citizens or their property. Somewhat similar word had been received from the Straits Settlements and India.

The official then inquired if it might be possible for the British Government to give assurances that all German citizens in the British Empire might be allowed to depart on or after a specified day and if they would receive guarantees that they would not be hindered from

returning to Germany or some neutral country contiguous to Germany. The official said that if some date were not fixed, the question of who was to make the initial move toward repatriating the citizens of the other party might drag on indefinitely and accordingly, it was important that a definite day should be determined for the departure of the citizens of Germany in British territory and for the departure of British subjects from German territory. The Germans wished assurances not only that Germans in the United Kingdom would be allowed to depart but that Germans in Egypt, Iraq, India, the Straits Settlements and other parts of the British Empire would also be allowed to regain their country without hindrance. The official added that if the British authorities in individual cases could give special reasons for refusing to allow a given German to depart from their territory such action would not endanger the plan for the repatriation of the nationals of the respective countries but intimated that a proposal for an exchange of Germans for an equal number of British would meet with opposition.

Should appreciate the views of the British Government on the foregoing matter as soon as possible, with reference to my telegram No. 33, September 16, noon. Kirk. Davies.

Am advising Foreign Office.

KENNEDY

740.00115 European War 1939/28 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Bullitt) ⁶²

WASHINGTON, September 29, 1939—5 p. m.

1107. Attention is called to the message of the Embassy at Berlin to the British Foreign Office transmitted from the Embassy as no. 42 Sept. 22, 5 p. m. The message raises the question of treatment of civilian enemy aliens.

During the years 1914–18 nearly all belligerents adopted the rigorous expedient of internment of such enemy aliens, at least of adult males. This treatment meant widespread and seemingly unnecessary suffering to thousands of innocent persons. It evolved in the initial stages of the great war and developed into a general practice as a consequence of reprisals.

As yet the Department is not aware that any of the belligerents have made a general practice of interning civilian enemy aliens, but there are indications that the practice which was followed 25 years ago, of the institution of internment as reprisal for alleged analogous acts by the enemy, is now in the process of development.

It will be remembered that for the past 80 years there has grown gradually among civilized states, the conviction that there must be no retaliation against prisoners of war and that this conviction

⁶² The same telegram was sent to Berlin as No. 605, September 29, 5 p. m., and to London as No. 1115, September 29, 6 p. m.

received international sanction in the Convention of Geneva of 1929.⁶³ It was argued that it was unjust to punish these unfortunates for acts over which they had no jurisdiction and for which they could not conceivably be held responsible. The same reasoning would seem to apply to civil enemy aliens unfortunate enough to be caught under enemy jurisdiction at the outbreak of war. Just as the nations have abandoned the idea that prisoners of war are hostages for the good behavior of the enemy, so the same idea in respect to civilians might be upheld.

While there is still time and before this practice comes into being, this Government earnestly hopes that the belligerent governments will give thought to means of avoiding this harshness to civilians, perhaps by mutual release for repatriation through neutral countries of adult males under parole not to bear arms, such paroles to be reported to the enemy government or governments through the Powers representing their interests in enemy countries.

It is obvious that belligerents may feel it essential to maintain surveillance and some restriction upon the acts of civilian enemy aliens, but it is to be hoped that such necessary measures will not be carried to the extreme of internment *en masse* for the war's duration.

You are requested to bring the matter to the attention of the appropriate authorities, explain orally that Berlin, Paris, London have received identical instructions, express the hope that, as the desired result may well depend upon immediate reciprocal agreement, the government to which you are accredited will indicate its views as promptly as possible in order that this Government may effect a mutual exchange of assurances.

HULL

740.00115 European War 1939/55 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Bullitt)

WASHINGTON, October 19, 1939—2 p. m.

1272. Department's 1107, September 29, 5 p.m. There is repeated for your information telegram No. 1727, October 16, 5 p. m. from Berlin.

"Following is translation of memorandum dated October 14 received from Foreign Office in reply to representations made by Embassy on the basis of Department's instruction under reference.

The German Government has noted with particular interest the contents of the *aide-mémoire* concerning the treatment in belligerent countries of civil persons of enemy nationality which was delivered by the Chargé d'Affaires of the United States of America

⁶³ *Foreign Relations*, 1929, vol. I, p. 336.

on October 2 last. It fully shares the point of view set out in the *aide-mémoire* and thanks the Government of the United States of America for its efforts to alleviate the lot of enemy aliens in belligerent states by opening up to them the possibility of repatriation insofar as they may desire it. The German Government is for its part prepared on condition of reciprocity, to agree to the proposals to this end made in the *aide-mémoire*. It suggests, however, that the repatriation of many males of enemy nationality should be made dependent not on individual declarations of such persons but that the interested states should reciprocally assume the obligation not to call these persons to arms.

In this connection, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reminds the Embassy of the United States of America, in relation to its memorandum of September 11 last concerning British civilians, that it was stated in a memorandum of the same day—R 21604—that the German Government agreed on condition of reciprocity to permit in principle the departure from Germany of British civilians. The Foreign Office went on to say that this was on the assumption that free departure should also be made possible for those German nationals sojourning in British India, the British colonies and protectorates, as well as in mandated territories, and that German nationals should not be detained if they returned to Germany from enemy territory aboard neutral ships. As soon as the German Government should receive assent in the sense, it would permit British subjects to leave Germany. Up to the present the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has received no reply to this.

Furthermore the Ministry of Foreign Affairs informed the International Committee of the Red Cross on September 28th last as follows:

'On Germany's part enemy civilians who desire to return to their country will in principle not be prevented from doing so in case their home country accords reciprocity. This applies under the same conditions also for civil persons subject to military service. It would be especially welcome on Germany's part if German civilians who are interned in the tropics might be able to return home if they so desire. There is also no objection to entering into a mutual engagement that repatriated persons who are liable to military service will not be used for military purposes.'

The Foreign Office looks forward to a further communication on the part of the Embassy of the United States of America concerning the attitude of the governments of the other belligerent states.

In connection with the foregoing a Foreign Office official has stated orally and informally that while the German Government would prefer that enemy aliens be released on the parole of their respective governments that they would not be given military employment including administrative work in military offices but excluding hospital work, the German Government would not insist upon this point, and consequently would consider release on individual parole only rather than jeopardize the entire proposal relating to mutual release and repatriation of interned persons. These considerations, the Foreign Office official added, had been submitted to the International Red Cross.

The memorandum from the German Foreign Office of September 11—R 21,604—which is mentioned in the second paragraph of the

memorandum quoted above was transmitted to the American Embassy in London via Brussels by telegraph, triple priority, No. 19, September 11, 9 p. m. for the information of British Foreign Office and to be repeated to the Department.

This message not repeated to American Embassy London."

You are requested to bring this matter promptly to the attention of the appropriate authorities of the Foreign Office, leaving with them a memorandum giving the text of the note from the German Government of October 14, and to renew the expression of the hope of the United States Government that a means may be found for accomplishing the purpose contained in its suggestion.

Please air mail code text to London as Department's No. 1248 with reference to London Embassy's No. 1115, September 29, 6 p. m.⁶⁴

HULL

740.00115 European War 1939/28 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Chargé in Germany (Kirk)

WASHINGTON, November 8, 1939—7 p. m.

845. Department's 605, September 29, 5 p. m.⁶⁴ Department hopes that the delay experienced in receiving favorable responses from the British and French Governments will not militate against the eventual success of the movement proposed. While Department is aware that the government to which you are accredited made a prompt and satisfactory response and that the other two governments concerned have not given a definite answer, it is in receipt of advices which indicate that the delay on the part of the other two governments has been caused largely by the widespread geographical distribution of the authorities the British Government desired to consult and whose agreement they desired to obtain in order that the definite reply might be all-inclusive and comprehensive.

Department has reason to believe that a favorable reply will be forthcoming in the near future and is advising you for your confidential information and for your guidance in case the subject may be broached to you there. Department is very much interested in the success of the movement and trusts that the delays incident to a widespread consultation will not jeopardize its success nor will be used to justify any action which would violate the spirit of the prospective engagement, thereby endangering its success.

HULL

⁶⁴ See footnote 62, p. 641.

740.00115 European War 1939/139 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, November 18, 1939—1 p. m.

[Received November 18—12:48 p. m.]

2782. Department's 1409, November 17, 5 p. m.⁶⁵ Foreign Office's note of November 12 reads in translation as follows:

"In its *aide-mémoire* number 2128 of October 3, 1939, the American Embassy informed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the point of view of the Department of State on the treatment to be accorded enemy civilians interned at the outbreak of war or during hostilities.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has the honor to inform the American Embassy that the suggestions of the American Government have been studied with the greatest care by the French Government, which pays tribute to the generous initiative of President Roosevelt and which is entirely in agreement with the humanitarian considerations which make it desirable, insofar as possible, to effect the repatriation of civilians.

Consequently the Ministry has already advised the American Embassy by a note of October 25, 1939, that it is favorably disposed to an exchange, on the basis of strict reciprocity, involving women and children under 15 years of age.

Anxious to demonstrate its good will and its desire to meet, insofar as circumstances permit, the wish expressed by the American Government, the French Government is prepared to complete in the following manner the proposals which have already been communicated to the Embassy and on which the German Government does not appear yet to have taken a stand: The contemplated exchange might also include children 15 and 16 years of age, men over 65 and cripples and the incurably sick whatever their age.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs would be much obliged were the Embassy at Paris to bring the foregoing to the knowledge of the Washington Government and if it sees fit inform the German Government."

BULLITT

740.00115 European War 1939/145 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, November 21, 1939—9 a. m.

[Received 11:20 a. m.]

2093. Department's 845, November 8, 7 p. m. In view of the protracted delay in obtaining responses from the British and French Governments to the Department's proposal relating to the treatment of civilian enemy aliens in belligerent countries, I took the occasion to

⁶⁵ Not printed.

discuss the matter informally at the Foreign Office in the sense of the first paragraph of the Department's telegram under reference and expressed the hope that the German authorities would not misunderstand the delay in obtaining the views of the other interested Governments. Note was taken on this statement.

I desire to point out, however, that this continued delay in endeavoring to reach some solution of the problem of civilian enemy aliens is of particular importance to the Embassy in connection with the matter of the relief of destitute British and French nationals in Germany.

This question has become more acute throughout Germany as personal funds are exhausted and as practically no private remittances have come through and will no doubt be accentuated by the assumption of British and French interests in Polish territory occupied by German forces. When the Embassy and Consulates in Germany undertook this assistance it was envisaged as a temporary and emergency measure which would presumably lapse within a short period either through the internment or release of civilians or through arrangements whereby enemy aliens unable to depart from Germany might receive private remittances from their families or friends. If relief to French and British nationals is to be indefinitely continued it would appear that a more comprehensive mechanism for this purpose must be established with additional personnel. If American officials are to carry on relief this Embassy and no doubt certain Consulates will inevitably require an expanded staff. The expense of this would, it is assumed, have to be borne by the British and French Governments and arrangements made regularly to receive relief allotments. An alternative plan might be to turn over relief to some organization such as the International Red Cross but this no doubt would require some time to establish throughout Germany and Poland.

In these circumstances the Department may desire to advise the British and French Governments that unless the principal belligerents agree in the near future to a reciprocal release of civilians a more comprehensive relief establishment must be set up by the Embassy. Furthermore, the longer the delay the more difficult it may be to obtain a general agreement for an exchange of civilians as the Embassy is in receipt of various complaints from both sides respecting the arrest and confinement of their civilians which in turn leads to retaliatory action. Efforts are being made in each case to minimize these incidents and wherever possible to obtain release of persons so confined in Germany in the spirit of the prospective engagements but such efforts will become increasingly difficult in the face of continued delay in obtaining replies to the Department's proposal.

KIRK

740.00115 European War 1939/152 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, November 25, 1939—10 a. m.

[Received 12:50 p. m.]

2135. Department's 936, November 22, 6 p. m.⁶⁶ I am now in receipt of telegrams from American Embassy, Paris to the Department, 2761, November 15, 5 p. m.⁶⁶ and 2782, November 18, 1 p. m. and have noted the additional recommendations by the French Government in regard to the matter of the exchange on the basis of reciprocity of women and children which is already under consideration by the German authorities. In view of the fact, however, that the Department states in its 936, November 22, 6 p. m. that upon the receipt of a reply from the British Government it proposes to submit for reconsideration to the French Government the entire matter of civilian enemy aliens I shall be [apparent omission] to be informed if the Department desires me to communicate now to the German authorities the additional observations of the French Government relating to the exchange of children up to 16 years of age, men over 65 and cripples and incurables of all ages or if these additional proposals should be withheld pending presentation of the entire question of civilian enemy aliens based upon final decision of British and French Governments.

My 2093, November 21, 9 a. m. repeated today to London and Paris.

KIRK

740.00115 European War 1939/151 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, November 25, 1939—1 p. m.

[Received November 25—8:50 a. m.]

2454. Department's 1478, November 22, 6 p. m.⁶⁶ The following is the text of a Foreign Office Note dated November 24:

"His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs presents his compliments to His Excellency the United States Ambassador and, with reference to the representations made by Mr. Herschel Johnson on the 5th October and to the *aide-mémoire* left by him on the same day regarding the treatment of civilian enemy aliens, has the honour to set forth as follows the views thereon of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom.

2. His Majesty's Government wholeheartedly welcome the intervention of the Department of State in this matter. They believe that their views correspond closely with those held by the Government of

⁶⁶ Not printed.

the United States of America and feel no hesitation in declaring their readiness to adhere to a policy designed to spare innocent persons unnecessary suffering.

3. On receiving the United States Embassy's Notes No. 1235 of the 15th September (Berlin's 29, September 14, 4 p. m.⁶⁷) and No. 1268 of the 25th September (Berlin's 42, September 22, 5 p. m.⁶⁸) His Majesty's Government observed in them with regret the same indications of a policy of reprisals on the part of the German Government which attracted the attention of the Department of State and which show that the Government of the German Reich have deprived of their liberty certain British subjects whom there was originally no intention and presumably at no time any need to intern.

4. While reserving the right to adopt such measures for the restraint of dangerous enemy aliens as may be directly necessary to secure the safety of the State, His Majesty's Government have already adopted and have at present every intention of adhering to the following principles:

(a) His Majesty's Government have decided not to resort to wholesale internment of enemy aliens as was done in the war of 1914-18. That this decision has been given practical effect is proved by the fact that between the 28th August and the 9th September some 2,000 Germans sailed from United Kingdom ports. Since the 9th September when it became necessary for such aliens to obtain exit permits before they could leave, about 100 applications for exit permits had been received in the United Kingdom and are now under consideration. Of the 74,000 persons in the United Kingdom over the age of 16 who are registered as German citizens, at the end of October fewer than 600 were interned, while of the many thousands of German citizens at liberty no restriction has so far been placed other than the requirement to register with the police and obtain a permit if they wish to travel more than 5 miles from their registered place of residence.

(b) His Majesty's Government have set up over 100 tribunals presided over by independent persons with legal experience to consider the case of each enemy alien on its individual merits. No one will be expelled against his will unless such action can be justified by reasons of national security, while none will be kept in internment unless his release or departure is, on grounds of past or potential future activities, likely to prejudice external or internal security or unless he possesses qualifications which render him of special value for warlike purposes.

(c) In the United Kingdom plans have already been made to review at an early date the precautionary measures taken at the outbreak of war for the control of certain dangerous enemy aliens, and His Majesty's Government propose to relax that control where it is no longer necessary. Arrangements have also

⁶⁷ Not printed; this telegram reported initial steps of internment of British nationals as result of reports of internment and detention of German nationals in various parts of the British Empire (740.00115 European War 1939/18).

⁶⁸ See telegram of September 23, 8 p. m., from the Ambassador in the United Kingdom, p. 640.

been made which will enable each enemy alien under restraint to submit an appeal to the competent authority whose decision will be based on the merits of the individual case, and in no way on any action of the enemy over which the individual in question has had or can have no control. An Appeals Advisory Committee has been set up by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, presided over by two distinguished jurists, to which the competent authority will refer appeals for release from internment made by interned enemy aliens. His Majesty's Government and the Government of India formally bind themselves to take no reprisals on individual enemy aliens for acts for which they cannot be held responsible.

5. In the Colonial Empire similar reviews have been made or are contemplated, and the general principles set out in the preceding paragraphs are being followed. It will be appreciated, however, that in a few dependencies special circumstances may exist which may necessitate the imposition of a somewhat stricter measure of control than would be required in others.

6. As regards India it will be appreciated that special circumstances affecting internal and external security have necessitated greater caution in the application of this policy than in the United Kingdom. The Government of India have, however, also accepted the general principles set out above in determining their policy towards German nationals in India. In pursuance of these principles a special committee which was set up in September is considering the case of every person temporarily detained on its individual merits, and had already by the end of October ordered or recommended the release of 160; every alien whose internment is recommended by the Committee will be granted a right of appeal to the competent authority which will be decided on its merits.

7. His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom are prepared to permit the authorities in charge of German interests in the United Kingdom and British Colonies to inspect and report freely on the conditions in which those enemy aliens who cannot be set free are interned, and the Government of India are equally prepared to permit such inspections in India. The competent authority has already entered into arrangements with international voluntary organisations in the United Kingdom to make provision for physical and mental recreation in the internment camps as well as for occupational employment and spiritual ministrations.

8. His Majesty's Government will be glad to learn that the Government of the German Reich are prepared to adopt and give effect to similar principles and they will be glad to receive as detailed information as it may be possible to obtain of the position of civilian British subjects in Germany."

The foregoing has been repeated to Paris for its information with the suggestion that it not be communicated to the French Government pending the receipt of further instructions from the Department. It has not been repeated to Berlin.

KENNEDY

740.00115 European War 1939/152 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Chargé in Germany (Kirk)

WASHINGTON, November 28, 1939—3 p. m.

972. You 2135, November 25, 10 a. m. Department has just received the reply of the British Government responsive to the proposal contained in Department's 605, September 29, 5 p. m. to Berlin.⁶⁹ It is contained in London's 2454, November 25, 1 p. m. to Department. Department is instructing London to repeat that message to you. The British reply is fortunately not antagonistic to the general principles proposed by the United States Government to the three Governments concerned. Before you present the British reply to the German Government you will please await further instructions from Department which will follow as soon as practical.

However, Department feels that we would not be justified in withholding longer the communication which the French Government requested you to present to the German Government and which is the subject matter of yours under reference. You will consequently please present that communication. Contemporaneously with instructions which will follow to you Department proposes to present the matter for the reconsideration of the French Government in view of the generally favorable attitude of the British Government as regards the principles involved, and you may so state orally to the German Government.

HULL

740.00115 European War 1939/151 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Chargé in Germany (Kirk)

WASHINGTON, November 28, 1939—4 p. m.

973. Reference London's 2454, November 25, 1 p. m. to Department containing text of British note of November 24 which Kennedy has been instructed to repeat to you relative to treatment of civilian enemy aliens.

I) Please hand copy of British note of November 24 to German authorities.

II) Please make oral statement to and leave memorandum with German authorities embodying the following considerations:

A careful reading of the memorandum of the German Government of October 14 and of the British note of November 24 justifies the hope that the conception and policy of the two Governments as to treatment of civilian enemy aliens are so sympathetically responsive to the proposal that there may well be agreement.

⁶⁹ See footnote 62, p. 641.

This consideration leads the Government of the United States to the suggestion that certain principles, common to the two Governments, might be formulated as the basis for complete accord.

a) There shall be no reprisal against civilian enemy aliens for acts for which they have no personal responsibility. This obligation represents the crux of the entire matter. As pointed out in the original memorandum on this subject, a commitment not to use reprisals has been undertaken in respect to prisoners of war under the Geneva Convention and the Government of the United States feels that there is every reason in the name of humanity and civilization for extending such an obligation to civilian enemy aliens as well.

b) There shall be no mass internment of civilian enemy aliens.

c) Any internment shall be made only after careful investigation by responsible authority of the individual case, with the right of any person already interned to present his case for such investigation. If possible machinery for appeal is to be established.

d) In normal practice a civilian enemy alien if he so desires may leave the country where he is residing, having requested and obtained a permit from the responsible authorities.

e) There shall be humane treatment and every proper consideration for the mental and physical health of persons in internment camps. There shall be freedom of inspection of such camps by the agents of the protecting power.

III) The Government of the United States is gratified by the wholesome response of the German Government and of the British Government to approximate agreement on these humanitarian principles intended to avoid unnecessary suffering to civilian enemies and earnestly hopes that with such measure of accord an agreement may be consummated.

IV) This Government is bringing the British note to the attention of the French Government in the hope that the latter may be induced to extend its agreement to categories of civilians in addition to those mentioned in its note of November 12. (Note mentioned Department's 936, November 22, 6 p. m.⁷⁰ should be dated November 12.)

Repeat to Paris and London.

HULL

740.00115 European War 1939/158 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, November 28, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received November 28—2:35 p. m.]

2474. My 2454, November 25, 1 p. m. As the Department will doubtless have observed, the Foreign Office note of November 24

⁷⁰ Telegram No. 936 not printed.

does not specifically answer the Department's original suggestion as to mutual release for repatriation through neutral countries of adult males under parole not to bear arms. This point was discussed informally today with a responsible official of the Foreign Office who emphasized that the British Government is prepared to release all interned enemy subjects except individuals who might be dangerous to it if freed and individuals possessing special qualifications which might assist Germany in prosecuting the war; and that they would be only too happy if the German Government would adopt the same procedure. They are willing to release ablebodied men of military age in all cases where other reasons for their detention do not exist. The official mentioned a War Office opinion to the effect that they were indifferent as to whether men so released were subsequently placed in the German Army. In any event the number would be small. The official said that the Foreign Office would send us another note supplementary to the one of November 24, clearing up these points.

KENNEDY

740.00115 European War 1939/151: Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Bullitt)

WASHINGTON, November 29, 1939—7 p. m.

1458. Reference treatment civilian enemy aliens. London has repeated to you its 2454, November 25, 1 p. m. to the Department. Berlin has been instructed to repeat to you Department's 973, November 28, 4 p. m.

The suggestion contained in the note from the French Government of November 12 (your 2782, November 18, 1 p. m.) has been brought to the attention of the German Government, but time has not permitted an answer.

There would seem to be possibility of an agreement on some of the important principles between the British and German Governments. The French Government has expressed deep sympathy with our original proposal and has expressed itself as desirous to accept that proposal in part. In view of the new situation please reopen the question with the French Government, informing them that their suggestion of November 12 has been brought to the attention of the German Government, but that under the circumstances the Government of the United States earnestly hopes that they will give further consideration to the possibility of adhering to the new developments as set forth in our 973, November 28, 4 p. m. to Berlin.

HULL

740.00115 European War 1939/164 : Telegram

The Chargé in the United Kingdom (Johnson) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, December 1, 1939—6 p. m.
[Received December 1—2: 11 p. m.]

Following from Berlin via Brussels, 250, December 1, 11 a. m.
From Berlin.

236, November 30, 6 p. m. Notify Foreign Office and repeat to Department. In memorandum dated November 28 German Foreign Office has informed Embassy that French and British nationals in territory occupied by Germany will receive substantially the same treatment as enemy aliens in Germany itself. Permission to depart from Germany will be granted such persons only if German nationals in the enemy states are enabled to return to Germany. Kirk.

Wilson
JOHNSON

740.00115 European War 1939/169 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, December 2, 1939—6 p. m.
[Received 8: 45 p. m.]

2209. Department's 973, October [November] 28, 4 p. m. A copy of the British note of November 24 as set forth in telegram No. 2454, November 25, 1 p. m. from the Embassy at London to the Department was given to State Secretary Woermann at the German Foreign Office this morning. At the same time I made an oral statement and left with him a memorandum embodying the points set forth in the Department's telegram under reference. Before I was able to present the British note to the German Foreign Office additional information had been received from London Embassy (as given in its telegram 2474, November 28, 6 p. m. to the Department) relating to the British attitude on release of adult males under parole not to bear arms which I also orally conveyed to the Foreign Office.

In discussing the foregoing I stressed the importance of reaching some agreement on this subject and emphasized the danger inherent in continuing the present uncertain situation and urged upon Woermann the necessity of making an immediate study of the British note with a view to reaching an agreement in which the American Government from humanitarian motives was so deeply interested. He said that he would do so and give me the German Government's views in the near future.

KIRK

740.00115 European War 1939/185 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, December 13, 1939—10 p. m.
[Received December 14—9:08 a. m.]

2971. The representations outlined in the Department's telegram 1458, November 29, 7 p. m., were presented in writing yesterday at the Foreign Office where they were sympathetically received. A copy of the British note of November 24 had been submitted previously.

From a long and extremely frank conversation with the competent Foreign Office official which followed the submission of our note it may be surmised that the French reply, promised within the next 2 weeks, will be along the following lines: ⁷¹

At the outbreak of a war into which France entered with reluctance and which began with a drastic general mobilization (which was true of neither England nor Germany) it was found necessary provisionally to intern some 15,000 enemy aliens of military age. Even though the great majority were as refugees bitter enemies of the Hitler regime a popular uproar would have resulted had these Germans been permitted to continue their normal livelihood while all able-bodied Frenchmen had left home and business to fight Germany.

Since that time 6,000 have been released either for service as volunteers in the French Army or for emigration abroad while few older men have been freed unconditionally. The machinery for sifting the trustworthy refugees from the suspects has been improved and accelerated and discussions are now under way with a view to improving the conditions and deciding the ultimate lot of those whose internment may be expected to continue.

(In this connection and with reference to paragraph 2 (a) of the Department's [973,] November 28, 4 p. m., to Berlin, the French Government has agreed to the proposal of the International Committee of the Red Cross reported in my 2761, November 15, 5 p. m.,⁷² that the provision of the Geneva Convention be extended to interned civilians. (See my despatch No. 5364, December 2.⁷²)

With respect to proposed exchanges the Foreign Office is likewise a priori to extending its suggestions to other categories of civilians. It feels, however, that the categories already proposed should come first and earnestly requests that Kirk press the German Government for a reply. The problem of continued relief to French women and children in Germany and Poland inevitably involving the transfer of foreign exchange to enemy is causing concern to the French Government.

⁷¹ In his telegram No. 3009, December 20, 4 p. m., the Ambassador in France reported the receipt of a French note, dated December 15, substantially as outlined in this telegram (740.00115 European War 1939/192).

⁷² Not printed.

In view of Kirk's telegram 133, November 25, noon,⁷³ concerning the relief problem and the report given by the French Government to the problem of repatriating the categories already proposed (and which constitute the bulk of French civilians in Germany) the Department may wish to urge at Berlin immediate action with respect to persons of non-military status. It should be borne in mind in this connection that virtually all German nationals now in France are refugees whose repatriation would, under the circumstances of their departure from Germany, Czechoslovakia and Austria, be unthinkable.

BULLITT

740.00115 European War 1939/189 : Telegram

The Chargé in the United Kingdom (Johnson) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, December 18, 1939—9 a. m.
[Received December 18—4:40 a. m.]

Following from Berlin via Brussels, 276, December 15, 9 a. m.
From Berlin.

262. Notify Foreign Office. Your 1, December 8, 5 p. m. A Foreign Office communication dated December 12th just received states that the German Government is also prepared to permit the departure from Germany of British subjects now in Germany under 18 years and over 60 years of age provided that reciprocal treatment is granted and that there exists no objection in individual cases from the point of view of security of the State.

It is further stated that clarification is still required as to whether the British assurances apply only to the "mother country" or to "overseas possessions". Should the assurances not apply to "overseas possessions" the German concurrence likewise does not include persons originating from these territories.

With reference to your 92, November 29, 7 p. m., the same German communication also states that the German authorities will permit persons departing for Great Britain to take with them funds in an amount sufficient for the purchase of transportation from their place of residence to the nearest British port and in addition thereto the sum of 30 reichsmarks. The latter amount will be placed at their disposal in foreign exchange. The persons so departing from Germany may take a reasonable amount of baggage with them.

It was furthermore stated orally at the Foreign Office that the favorable reply respecting the release of British women has already been made to London through the Swiss Legation. Please confirm.

Text of memorandum follows by mail. Kirk.

Wilson
JOHNSON

⁷³ Not found in Department files.

NEUTRALITY POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES ¹

I. REVISION OF UNITED STATES NEUTRALITY LEGISLATION

[See also the following releases:

Letter of the Secretary of State to Senator Pittman and Representative Bloom, May 27, 1939, Department of State *Press Releases*, June 3, 1939, p. 475.

Statement by the Secretary of State, July 1, 1939, Department of State *Bulletin*, July 1, 1939, p. 4.

Message from the President to Congress, July 14, 1939, transmitting a statement by the Secretary of State on peace and neutrality, *ibid.*, July 15, 1939, p. 43.

Statement of the Secretary of State at his press conference, July 11, 1939, *ibid.*, p. 47.

Statements released to the press by the White House, July 18, 1939, *ibid.*, July 22, 1939, p. 57.

Statement by the Secretary of State, September 21, 1939, *ibid.*, September 23, 1939, p. 280.

Press release regarding the White House conference on neutrality, September 20, 1939, *ibid.*, p. 281.

Statement by the Secretary of State, November 4, 1939, *ibid.*, November 4, 1939, p. 453.]

811.04418/425

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Chief of the Division of European Affairs (Moffat)

[WASHINGTON,] May 10, 1939.

The French Ambassador called this morning. He said he had been somewhat disturbed by the change of plans with regard to the Secretary's proposed testimony before the Foreign Relations Committee. He asked if I could give him the background of the change for the confidential information of his government.

I replied that I would gladly do so. The Secretary had consulted with Senator Pittman and other friends of the Administration on the Committee and had learned from them that a dispassionate statement of our position would neither help nor hinder our cause. The opposi-

¹ For previous correspondence, see *Foreign Relations*, 1937, vol. I, pp. 868 ff.

tion on the Committee was merely awaiting the Secretary's appearance in order to ask him whether the purpose of the Administration in seeking a change in the present Neutrality Law was to assist the British and French; to what degree the American Government had been in touch with the British and French Governments; what was the position of Japan with relation to (a) the United States, (b) the Axis Powers; and a series of other leading questions that would at once get him onto controversial ground. The Secretary felt that he was on the horns of a dilemma. If he answered such questions he ran the risk of stirring up passions, and possible misunderstandings throughout the country; if he declined to answer the questions he would be accused of lack of frankness and of pursuing a policy of mystery. Furthermore, the Committee had excluded the idea of an executive session. All in all, therefore, he thought it would be wiser, for the moment at least, not to go before the Committee but to continue a series of conferences with individual Senators in an endeavor to persuade them of the justice of our point of view. Should circumstances make it advisable later for the Secretary to testify in person, no doors had been definitely closed.

The Ambassador said that this clarified the situation for him, as he had been somewhat confused by the despatches in the morning's newspapers.

We then got to discussing the European situation. I asked him if he had any further news with regard to the approach by Pope Pius the 12th offering mediation.² The Ambassador said that he had no definite news but that to him it was a foregone conclusion that France would not accept mediation in any dispute or controversy where it was not a question of finding a compromise but a question of all give and no get.

PIERREPONT MOFFAT

711.00111/132

*The British Embassy to the Department of State*³

[WASHINGTON, June 5, 1939.]

Section 7 of the Neutrality Act of May 1st 1937⁴ (Public Resolution No. 27, 75th Congress) runs as follows:—

"Use of American ports as base of supply.
[Here follows the text of section 7.]"

² See telegram No. 897, May 6, 4 p. m., from the Ambassador in France, p. 179.

³ Marginal notation: "Left by Mr. Mallet (with Mr. Moffat). Mr. Mallet requested that it be considered an *oral inquiry*." V. A. L. Mallet was Counselor of the British Embassy.

⁴ 50 Stat. 121.

Section 7 provides in brief that the United States authorities shall have power to demand a bond from any vessel which is suspected of being about to carry "fuel, men, arms, ammunition, implements of war or other supplies to any warship, tender or supply ship of a belligerent state". It is not clear, however, whether it is the intention that this section of the Act should be applied in isolated cases of individual shipments of supplies from United States ports to belligerent vessels or only in cases of repeated shipments, made in such a manner as to constitute the United States port a regular base of supply for the belligerent vessel.

When the similar problem presented itself in 1914-15, the United States authorities took the view, which is that generally supported by International Law, that the duties of a neutral did not require that foreign belligerent warships should be refused all supplies in neutral ports provided that these were limited in nature or quantity to what is permitted by International Law. Nor was a neutral obliged to prevent all sailings of ships from its ports for the purpose of supplying warships at sea. All that was required of a neutral was that it should not allow its ports to become a regular base of supply for belligerents. Or in other words whereas any regular system of supplies to belligerents from a United States port would have been inconsistent with the position of the United States as a neutral, occasional and isolated sailings from United States ports for the same purpose did not conflict with the neutrality of the United States.

That this was the position adopted by the United States authorities at that time is shown by the State Department's memorandum of September 19th, 1914, regarding "Merchant vessels suspected of carrying supplies to belligerent vessels" (see page 44 of the White Book European War 2). In this memorandum it was stated that:

[Here follows the text of memorandum printed in *Foreign Relations*, 1914, Supplement, page 618.]

Furthermore, in March 1915, Congress passed a Resolution (Public Resolution No. 72) which ran as follows:

[Here follows the text, preamble omitted, of the resolution approved March 4, 1915, printed in *Foreign Relations*, 1915, Supplement, page 851.]

It will be seen that this resolution only provided that the United States authorities might withhold clearance from vessels suspected of supplying belligerent ships when such supply would be "in violation of the obligations of the United States as a neutral nation". This limitation clearly meant that clearance would only be refused in those cases in which belligerent ships were suspected of making use of United States ports as a regular base of supply.

There is, however, no similar limiting phrase in Section 7 (a) of the Act of 1937, and it would therefore be appreciated if the exact meaning of this section could be clarified. It is assumed that its intention is merely to prevent the use of the United States ports as regular bases of supply and that it is not contemplated that objection would be taken to occasional sailings.

Section 8 of the Act of May, 1937 runs as follows:—

“Submarines and armed merchant vessels.

[Here follows the text of Section 8.]”

It would be appreciated if the exact meaning of the words “armed merchantmen” could be given. There are in fact two kinds of “armed merchantmen”. The first consists of merchant vessels which are taken over on the outbreak of war by the authorities of their own country for service as naval vessels. In accordance with the provisions of the Hague Convention No. VII of 1907,⁵ such vessels have to receive a commission as war vessels. The Commander must be commissioned as a Naval officer and the crew must be placed under naval discipline. The vessel itself must bear the external marks of a warship of her nation. In fact such a vessel, though they are commonly misnamed “armed merchant cruisers” acquire the status of warships as part of their country’s navy with all the rights and disabilities of warships. There is no differentiation in International Law between the treatment to be accorded to them and to ordinary warships. It is presumed therefore that if the expression “armed merchantmen” in the Act of May 1st, 1932 [1937] means this type of vessel, there is no intention in practice of according to them any treatment different from that which the United States authorities propose to accord to warships in general.

The second type of “armed merchantmen” consists of ordinary merchant vessels which continue to operate as such and are in no sense naval vessels, but which carry a limited armament for purely defensive purposes. In the war of 1914–1918, it was agreed by every country except Germany that such vessels in no way lost their status as merchantmen and that they were entitled to carry arms in self defence. This view was shared by the United States Government. Furthermore, from 1914 to 1918 such ships were allowed to enter the ports of all neutral countries except Holland and were there treated as ordinary merchantmen.

It seems clear that the conditions in which any future war will be carried on may well be such as to make it essential for merchantmen to be armed for purposes of self defence. If, therefore, the Act of 1937 were to be so applied as to exclude such merchant vessels from

⁵ *Foreign Relations*, 1907, pt. 2, p. 1250.

American ports, trade between the United States and belligerents would obviously be seriously handicapped. In fact if American vessels were to be forbidden to enter combat areas near belligerent shores or if exports to belligerents were not permitted to be carried on American vessels, then to exclude armed merchant vessels of the second type would very gravely interfere with trade between the United States and any belligerent nation.

711.00111/132

*Memorandum by the Legal Adviser (Hackworth)*⁶

The Joint Resolution of Congress approved March 4, 1915 (Public No. 72—63d Congress, 38 Stat. 1226) "To empower the President to better enforce and maintain the neutrality of the United States" having to do with the withholding of clearance from any vessel when there was reasonable cause to believe that it was "about to carry fuel, arms, ammunition, men, or supplies to any warship, or tender, or supply ship of a belligerent nation, in violation of the obligations of the United States as a neutral nation" was repealed by Section 11 of the act of Congress approved June 15, 1917 (Public No. 24—65th Congress, 40 Stat. 217, 223). There was incorporated in lieu of the resolution of 1915, Section 1 of Title V of the act of 1917 reading as follows:

"During a war in which the United States is a neutral nation, the President, or any person thereunto authorized by him, may withhold clearance from or to any vessel, domestic or foreign, which is required by law to secure clearance before departing from port or from the jurisdiction of the United States, or, by service of formal notice upon the owner, master, or person in command or having charge of any domestic vessel not required by law to secure clearances before so departing, to forbid its departure from port or from the jurisdiction of the United States, whenever there is reasonable cause to believe that any such vessel, domestic or foreign, whether requiring clearance or not, is about to carry fuel, arms, ammunition, men, supplies, dispatches, or information to any warship, tender, or supply ship of a foreign belligerent nation in violation of the laws, treaties, or obligations of the United States under the law of nations; and it shall thereupon be unlawful for such vessel to depart." (*Ibid.* 221; Title 18, U. S. C. § 31.)

It will be seen that this provision authorizes the President to withhold clearance "whenever there is reasonable cause to believe that any such vessel" is about to do the things forbidden.

⁶ **Marginal notation:** "Handed to Mr. Mallet, of British Embassy, by Mr. Dunn on June 19, 1939, as an oral reply to Mr. Mallet's oral inquiry of June 5, 1939." James Clement Dunn was Adviser on Political Relations.

Section 7 of the Joint Resolution approved May 1, 1937 (Public No. 27—75th Congress, 50 Stat. 121, 126) was designed to strengthen the corresponding provision in the act of June 15, 1917 just quoted. It was designed to cover cases where there exists cause to believe that the vessel is about to do the forbidden acts but there is not available sufficient evidence to justify the withholding of clearance under the act of 1917. In such cases the President may permit the vessel to sail conditioned upon her giving a bond that she will not deliver men or any part of her cargo to any warship, tender, or supply ship of a belligerent state. It will be noted that this provision does not refer to treaties or the law of nations as did the earlier acts. The President is to act, if in his "judgment, such action will serve to maintain peace between the United States and foreign states, or to protect the commercial interests of the United States and its citizens, or to promote the security or neutrality of the United States".

On the question whether it should be applied in isolated cases or only in cases of repeated shipments, attention is called to paragraph (b) reading:

"If the President, or any person thereunto authorized by him, shall find that a vessel, domestic or foreign, in a port of the United States, has previously cleared from a port of the United States during such war and delivered its cargo or any part thereof to a warship, tender, or supply ship of a belligerent state, he may prohibit the departure of such vessel during the duration of the war."

It is not possible to state whether or to what extent the Department's memorandum of September 19, 1914 regarding "Merchant vessels suspected of carrying supplies to belligerent vessels" (Department of State, *Diplomatic Correspondence with Belligerent Governments Relating to Neutral Rights and Commerce* (1915) 43, 44) would be followed in the event of another major war.

Section 8 of the Joint Resolution approved May 1, 1937 (50 Stat. 127) regarding submarines and armed merchant vessels, has to do with merchant vessels which have not been converted into war vessels in the manner contemplated by Hague Convention No. VII. It is designed to apply to merchant vessels whether armed for offensive or for defensive purposes, the theory being that it is often difficult, if not impossible, to draw a line of demarcation between offensive and defensive armaments. It will be noted that the President is given discretion with respect to the restrictions to be placed upon such vessels and that the restrictions are to be imposed only in the event that he shall find that they will "serve to maintain peace between the United States and foreign states, or to protect the commercial interests of the United States and its citizens, or to promote the security of the United States".

811.04418/456a : Circular telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Chiefs of Certain American Diplomatic Missions*⁷

WASHINGTON, July 2, 1939—2 p. m.

As soon as you can conveniently assemble the opinion and reaction of important officials and individuals to the vote in the House of Representatives Friday night on the neutrality legislation⁸ I would like to have a report on the subject together with your own comment and appraisal of the effects of the vote on the policy of the government to which you are accredited and upon the European situation generally.

HULL

811.04418/459 : Telegram

The Minister in the Netherlands (Gordon) to the Secretary of State

THE HAGUE, July 4, 1939—11 a. m.

[Received July 4—11 a. m.]

97. I saw the Prime Minister yesterday morning immediately after the receipt of the Department's circular telegram July 2, 2 p. m. As he had his hands fairly full with trying to form a new Cabinet he was not thoroughly informed as to the action taken by Congress in this matter (the first accurate account of which incidentally only reached the Legation yesterday morning in an article by the London *Times* Washington correspondent). When however I explained to him what had transpired, his first reaction was very definitely one of dismay. A more detailed report of his brief but strong remarks I shall only entrust to the pouch⁹ and needless to say I assured him that any reaction he expressed would remain entirely confidential and would under no circumstances be ascribed to him. Two other high officials and one important and always well informed individual expressed themselves strongly in the same vein.

My own initial comment and appraisal is that the vote will not have any direct or immediate effect on the policy of the Government of the Netherlands but that if not rectified it will constitute a tremendous encouragement and incitation to the dictators and especially to men of the stamp of their Foreign Secretaries who have consistently preached the doctrine of the impotence of democratic organization

⁷ In Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Switzerland.

⁸ H. J. Res. 306 (introduced May 19) as passed by the House of Representatives June 30, 1939, included the embargo clause as section 2; see *Congressional Record*, vol. 84, pt. 8, p. 8514. It was referred to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, July 5, 1939.

⁹ Despatch No. 812, July 5, from the Minister in the Netherlands, not printed.

of government and of the paralyzing effect of the lack of discipline and unity of view inherent therein, and who could scarcely have hoped to find better substantiation of their theories; it is unnecessary to labor the point of the converse adverse effect upon the efforts of the same governments of Europe to prevent a world conflagration.

I shall of course report again when I have assembled additional views but without waiting further I feel sure that such views will be unanimously in line with these set forth above.

GORDON

811.04418/457 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Italy (Phillips) to the Secretary of State

ROME, July 5, 1939—11 a. m.
[Received July 5—9:47 a. m.]

247. Your circular July 2, 2 p. m. I have not heard the matter discussed thus far by any important Italian officials or others nor could I provoke any useful discussion on the subject in view of the extreme reticence observed by Italians generally when speaking with foreign diplomatic representatives in regard to international politics.

However, the responsible press may be accepted as reflecting the official view on matters of this kind. While all newspapers here reported the vote of the House of Representatives as a definite set-back to the President's policy and as having caused much disillusionment in London and Paris only the Turin *Stampa* has to date commented at length on the subject. That newspaper on July 2nd remarked that Bonnet¹⁰ had been too hasty in assuming "he had the United States in the bag" since Congress only a few days after the British royal visit¹¹ had "perhaps irreparably" defeated the amendment desired by the President in neutrality legislation with a view of helping France and England. Opposition to excessive administrative powers and dislike for a venturesome foreign policy had united "in dealing a perhaps decisive blow to Franklin Roosevelt's dictatorial pushing". This set-back, the newspaper added, should not be over-estimated; certainly it did not mean a friendly attitude toward the totalitarian powers. It did however check the plans of the democracies. It was safe to predict that between now and the next elections the United States would be absorbed in the "eternal struggle" between executive and legislature. "International questions will also be agitated in the background but barring most unexpected developments practical policy will consist in avoiding complications and restricting responsibilities.

¹⁰ Georges Bonnet, French Minister for Foreign Affairs.

¹¹ King George VI and Queen Elizabeth had visited the United States, June 7-12, 1939.

The Anglo-French idea of setting forth to war with the open immediate backing of the United States is irremediably compromised".

Gayda in the *Giornale d'Italia* wrote on July 3 that "the United States does not appear, according to the responsible sagacity of a notable portion of its political representatives and people, to be that easy servant and supplier of Franco-British war planes which London and Paris had taken for granted."

In my opinion the action of the House is most unfortunate. The President's recent message to Mussolini¹² made a profound effect in all circles here although it was naturally criticized in the Italian press. The fact however that it was followed by such widespread support in both the Democratic and Republican press throughout the United States left no doubt in the minds of Italians that the country stood unitedly behind the President in his foreign policy. This was of first importance because Italians in high positions had come to believe that the United States was a negligible quantity in international relations because of its divided opinions.

The House vote is now regarded as proof again that the United States need not be taken seriously in the event of war. And yet this is the moment above all moments when the President's prestige should be upheld throughout the world and any weakening of it such as that entailed by the recent action of the House unless corrected may have far reaching and disastrous consequences because undoubtedly it would stiffen the attitude of Germany and Italy against the democracies.

PHILLIPS

811.04418/460: Telegram

The Ambassador in Belgium (Davies) to the Secretary of State

BRUSSELS, July 5, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received July 5—2: 55 p. m.]

85. For the President and Secretary of State: Referring to your telegram of July 2, 2 p. m., the reaction to the vote of the House of Representatives on neutrality legislation among those who were informed here was one of thwarted hope, distress and deep disappointment. The Prime Minister stated that he was deeply disappointed ("*Je suis très déçu*"). During the past 6 weeks many Belgians in official and other circles have of their own initiative inquired of me as to the prospects of the neutrality legislation and have manifested deep concern. Fear has been expressed to me that the action of Congress might be the decisive factor in the next move of the aggressors which is feared to be imminent and that it might be a contributing cause to possible speedy hostilities. There is much confusion as to

¹² *Ante*, p. 130.

just what the situation at home is but to a surprising degree in the cafés and on the streets here the action of Congress was followed and discussed with apprehension. The pathos of the situation here is intense. To my personal knowledge men and particularly women are in deadly fear of war and its horrors to them in a situation where they can do nothing to prevent it themselves.

Generally the feeling here is that in case of war the people do not expect America to join in the war with manpower but they pathetically have a conviction that the American people are fundamentally sympathetic with the attitude of European democracies against aggression and for the settlement of issues by conference and a despairing hope that the American people will render all such assistance as may be possible in a material way short of sending American soldiers. Any action looking to the prevention of possible shipment of arms and munitions which is paid for and delivered in the United States causes intense disappointment. The reaction on the policy of the Belgian Government I think will not be appreciable. They are intent on preserving neutrality; but the failure to repeal the arms embargo will probably increase the hesitation of the Belgian Government to buy American material because of the uncertainty of being able to replace or service it in time of war.

The Government is desperately trying to prevent their country from again being the battlefield. The hope in my opinion will be impossible of realization. The European press of the totalitarian states is profuse in jubilation over this set-back to the democracies. I have no hesitation in expressing an opinion that the Congressional action gave aid and comfort to the aggressors and quite possibly may be a definite factor in the determination of their immediate plans.

DAVIES

811.04418/461 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, July 5, 1939—7 p. m.

[Received 7:45 p. m.]

598. Department's circular July 2, 2 p. m. The German press has expressed relatively little interest in the Neutrality Bill passed by the House of Representatives and has confined itself to news accounts of the debate regarding the measure which though perhaps emphasizing the speeches in opposition to the bill sponsored by Representative Bloom are primarily of a factual nature. The headlines over these despatches link the House Neutrality Bill with the failure of the Senate to extend the President's monetary powers with particular reference to the devaluation of the dollar interpreting both develop-

ments as severe setbacks to the administration. Summaries of Secretary Hull's statement regarding the Neutrality Bill made at his press conference of July 1¹³ written in such a way as to imply derogatory criticism were also published though not prominently.

The most conspicuous comment on the Neutrality Bill thus far noted is contained in the leading editorial in this morning's *Frankfurter Zeitung*. Referring to Secretary Hull's "condemnatory judgment of the form and aims of the newly amended law as presented to him by the authorized representatives of the American people" the editorial states "the antithesis noticeable in the criticism of the man responsible for the conduct of American diplomacy divides the citizenship of the United States in a national matter that may become just as important for the peace of the world as the direct declarant of a cabinet which is entrusted with power over war or peace in a decisive moment". The paper then sets out to explain what the provisional amendment of the Neutrality Law by the House means to American politics and to international politics and states in part as follows:

"There are two provisions in the House bill which constitute basic departures from the text of the former Neutrality Law namely (a) the restriction of the absolute embargo on exports to 'deadly weapons' in case of war and (b) the inclusion of Congress in making the decision of whether a state of war exists and whether accordingly the various provisions of the law are to go into force. In the former respect the new law coincides in part though not entirely with the wishes of President Roosevelt inasmuch as the so-called Pittman Bill proposed complete abolition of the embargo on arms and supplies of American materials to other countries in case of war subject only to the proviso contained in the cash and carry clause.

This clause constituted a unilateral preference for the powers which due to their ample capital and their maritime predominance on the Atlantic Ocean would have been the only ones capable of taking advantage of this possibility. Pittman's intention—and in that Pittman is merely Roosevelt's mouthpiece—was precisely to place an inexhaustible arsenal of arms in the United States at the disposal of those very powers i. e. England and France. The House of Representatives put a stop to that (and in this connection the numbers of the votes must be kept well in mind) without quite closing the door to the American market. Accordingly there are certainly distinct limits to the satisfaction which might be experienced here and there at this 'defeat' of Roosevelt and his intervention policy.

The distrust of Roosevelt's foreign policy felt by a large number of Congressmen and expressed by this restriction is even more clearly apparent in the second provision. Until now it was left to the President to determine a state of war and upon so deciding to allow the cognizant provision of the Neutrality Law to become operative. But these full powers for the President also include the possibility—as demonstrated later in the case of the Sino-Japanese conflict—not to

¹³ Department of State *Bulletin*, July 1, 1939, p. 4.

afford the law i. e. not to take American 'neutrality' as a guide to political action if there were backers of a different nature. As the omission of a declaration of war by Japan to China admitted of the fiction that there was no 'state of war'—in an international legal sense—the President by not taking advantage of his authority could deny the spirit of the Neutrality Law without violating the letter thereof. Of course limitation of this authority may be determined less by the desire to force the President to apply the law to the conflict in the Far East than by the intention to deprive him of a dangerous tool of his intervention policy in Europe. In fact the provision whereby the President may only pronounce a state of war jointly with the Congress (or not pronounce a state of war which can often be just as important) most clearly expresses doubt of Roosevelt's foreign political leadership.

Two provisions then and also the slight difference in the number of votes for and against reflect the sentiment of the people which have apparently not yet formed a clear idea of the position of the United States in the world. After the House of Representatives comes the Senate. Inasmuch as opposition against any relaxation of the old law is very strong in the Senate there is still the possibility that the old law will remain and consequently also as far as international relations are concerned an Anglo-French-American 'alliance' that bears the vague but yet clearly discernible traits of that law."

KIRK

811.04418/466 : Telegram

The Minister in Switzerland (Harrison) to the Secretary of State

BERN, July 7, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received July 7—5 p. m.]

61. Your circular telegram July 2, 2 p. m. Switzerland's sole aim in an eventual conflict is to remain neutral and it is determined to defend its neutrality at all costs. Swiss official circles therefore exercise great care to avoid doing or saying anything which might be construed as taking sides in the present European alignment. Consequently it is extremely difficult to obtain an expression of opinion from Swiss officials regarding the action of the House of Representatives concerning the neutrality legislation. With the exception of one editorial in *Journal de Genève* which is almost entirely explanatory, the Swiss press has been completely reticent on the subject.

While Swiss public opinion undoubtedly welcomes recent declarations by Great Britain and France and hopes that they will prove a deterrent against further aggression it is undoubtedly generally believed that an important if not the most important factor in preventing further aggression would be the conviction on the part of the aggressors that the United States would not remain indifferent in the event of a clash between the aggressor and peace loving nations. A disposition on the part of the Congress in giving warning to aggress-

sors that the United States would as has been proposed facilitate the extension of material aid to peace loving nations would I am convinced be unofficially but warmly welcomed here as an important perhaps vital factor in the maintenance of world peace. The advance knowledge that peace loving nations might not be able to count on this aid cannot but prove a source of satisfaction to aggressors as has been evidenced by press reports of comments in their newspapers.

The effect if any of the vote last Friday on the policy of Switzerland could I believe only be to strengthen its determination to accelerate military preparations for the defense of its neutrality.

HARRISON

811.04418/514

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Under Secretary of State
(Welles)*

[WASHINGTON,] July 13, 1939.

The Minister of the Netherlands called to see me this morning at his request. The Minister said that his Government was greatly disturbed by the situation with regard to the neutrality legislation here and that while, obviously for reasons of propriety, he was making no official inquiry, nevertheless it would be a very great help to him in guiding his Government if I would tell him in a personal way what the situation really was. He stated that under present conditions the Netherlands in time of emergency would be unable to obtain any material for their national defense from the United States because undoubtedly, by reason of the wording of the neutrality act, Germany would declare war upon any of the smaller European powers which might be obtaining, as neutrals, war materials from the United States in order to shut off that source of supply.

I replied to the Minister that, of course, the views of the Executive were well known to him and that they had been set forth in detailed and clear form in the communications addressed by the Secretary of State to the two appropriate committees of the Congress on May 27, last. I said that it was too early for me as yet to give him any indication as to what the legislative situation might be but that the Executive had under consideration certain steps as the result of which the views of the Administration would be emphasized and further clarified for the benefit of the Congress and of the American people as a whole and that it was only after those steps had been taken that I thought the legislative situation would be sufficiently clear to permit me to have any positive idea as to what the outcome might be.

The Minister then stated that his Government had just informed him by telegram that it had received information that the Japanese

Government had suggested to the Government of the United States that both powers jointly guarantee the neutrality of the Philippines. His Government was very much interested in this report because of its bearing on the Dutch East Indies. I told the Minister that no such official communication had been received by this Government from the Japanese Government and that it seemed to me highly improbable that any such communication would in fact be made.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

811.04418/478 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, July 16, 1939—noon.

[Received 1 p. m.]

661. My telegram No. 658, July 15, 4 p. m.¹⁴ The latest issue of the German Foreign Office DDPK¹⁵ comments as follows respecting American neutrality legislation developments.

“The difficulties which the present Government of the United States has met in Congress with regard to its efforts to change the neutrality law have in no way altered its determination forcibly to obtain power to raise the embargo on arms. On the contrary the special message of the President as well as the Hull declaration again demanding the enactment of the administration project for this purpose adequately demonstrate how urgent it is from his point of view to have available the desired full powers.

“The arguments which Secretary Hull sets forth culminate in the statement that the risks of America becoming involved in a war would be by no means increased if the United States should permit the export of arms as well as of raw materials. Furthermore neutrality as such at any rate as seen from a purely juridical point of view would in no way be disturbed. And finally Mr. Hull envisages in the possibility of an unrestricted export of arms an excellent factor for peace which would be especially destined to play into the hand of the small states.

“It is clear that in the case of a country like the United States not only considerations of a purely juridical nature can be decisive but also and primarily facts and developments will tell. That the geographical situation for which it is not responsible plays a role was also admitted by Mr. Hull. Thus the deliberate and unilateral support which would result from a lifting of the arms embargo is clearly exposed. Furthermore experience shows that the United States from the very first would be selected as the arms factory of a particular party to a war which would build up its own war industry upon American soil with American workers and with American raw materials and so the cash and carry clause would be easily circumvented. The same situation would therefore arise as with the *Alabama* case;

¹⁴ Not printed.

¹⁵ Deutsche Diplomatisch-Politische Korrespondenz.

incidents which would please many would be conjured up and the possibility of maintenance of neutrality would perforce become ever more problematical.

"These considerations would of course not apply only in Germany and America. They enter into the calculations of all those who reckon with an even count on a war and who in their political objectives would in a given case rely upon such powerful assistance. Such encouragement would in no way as Mr. Hull believes lead to a strengthening and an assurance of peace only for this has been already adequately demonstrated by the conduct of Poland which has been surrounded with guarantees from the great powers and whose Government press has chosen to celebrate with pointed and renewed desires for conquest this very day which is the anniversary of a very awkward situation of over 500 years ago won over an army of the German order.¹⁶ This furnishes a clear indication as to how security or guarantees granted unconditionally can only lead to animosity and excess.

"Far more deserving of attention in the United States is the fear of those small states which more and more realize that they are exposed to the ill concealed greed of the 'peace front' that they may be drawn into the whirlpool of a conflict as the glacis or point of support of a party to a war. The efforts on the part of these several states to maintain their inviolability, their integrity and neutrality, under all circumstances would have been especially worthy of the moral and material support of that power which as Secretary Hull says wished above all to strengthen in grave emergency the powers of defense of those small weak and peace loving countries. In its final analysis anything else would only mean a deliberate aggravation of the tension which already exists in full measure."

KIRK

811.04418/508 : Telegram

The Chargé in Hungary (Travers) to the Secretary of State

BUDAPEST, July 27, 1939—2 p. m.

[Received July 27—1:11 p. m.]

139. The Foreign Minister yesterday expressed to me his conviction that the failure of the American Congress to pass the Neutrality Act and the British trial balloon by Hudson¹⁷ of a loan to Germany constituted the greatest present dangers to sustained peace. The first, because it precluded the democratic powers from achieving definite military preponderance; the second, because Hitler would seize upon the idea as a sign of British weakness [at a time?] when utmost firmness of democratic powers is imperative.

TRAVERS

¹⁶ The Polish victory over the Teutonic Knights in the battle of Tannenberg, July 15, 1410.

¹⁷ R. S. Hudson, British Parliamentary Secretary for the Department of Overseas Trade.

811.04418/553

*The Australian Prime Minister (Menzies) to President Roosevelt*¹⁸

We are greatly perturbed by the immediate result of your Neutrality Proclamation¹⁹ since it cuts off from us not only the military aircraft already on order and approaching delivery but actually makes it impossible for us to purchase from the United States civil aircraft for civil training purposes.

I need not tell you that I appreciate fully your position in the presence of the Neutrality Law but in a personal way I would like you to know that it is felt here that the effect of your law is to deprive us of vital supplies while inflicting no corresponding disability upon our enemy. We do not know what risk we may have to encounter in the Pacific, and our own resources in aircraft manufacture are naturally in a somewhat early stage of development.

Your friendship towards Australia and your great courtesy to me when I had the honour to visit you at the White House²⁰ have impelled me to make this personal communication to you which I am sure you will not take as an impertinent criticism of a policy which I recognise is one solely for the United States to determine.

SEPTEMBER 7, 1939.

811.04418/553a

*President Roosevelt to the British Prime Minister (Chamberlain)*²¹

[WASHINGTON,] September 11, 1939.

MY DEAR MR. CHAMBERLAIN: I need not tell you that you have been much in my thoughts during these difficult days and further that I hope you will at all times feel free to write me personally and outside of diplomatic procedure about any problems as they arise.

I hope and believe that we shall repeal the embargo within the next month and this is definitely a part of the Administration policy.

With my sincere regards

Faithfully yours,

[FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT]

¹⁸ Received by President Roosevelt from the British Ambassador, and transmitted on September 11, 1939, to the Under Secretary of State for preparation of a reply.

¹⁹ Proclamation regarding export of arms, ammunition and implements of war, September 5, 1939, 54 Stat. 2635.

²⁰ August 8, 1935; at that time Mr. Menzies was Attorney General of Australia.

²¹ Photostatic copy obtained from the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, N. Y.

811.04418/553

The Secretary of State to President Roosevelt

WASHINGTON, September 14, 1939.

MY DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: In accordance with your request of September 11th²² I am quoting the text of a proposed draft reply for your consideration to be made to the personal message of The Right Honorable R. G. Menzies, Prime Minister of Australia, through the British Ambassador²³ here:

"My dear Mr. Prime Minister: I have received through the British Ambassador your personal message of September 7th.

"May I say at once that I am glad to have your views and that I fully appreciate the spirit which prompted you to send me this message. Earlier this year I endeavored to bring about the repeal by Congress of the embargo provisions of our neutrality legislation. Congress finally decided to postpone the consideration of this matter in spite of the considered recommendations of the Secretary of State and my own efforts. As you know, the existing legislation becomes mandatory on the declaration of war.

"I have just called The Congress into special session on September 21st to consider our neutrality legislation.

"I recall with pleasure your visit here four years ago.

"With warmest personal regards and every good wish, I am

"Very sincerely yours,"

Faithfully yours,

CORDELL HULL

740.00/2138: Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, September 19, 1939—noon.

[Received 12:58 p. m.]

2050. Personal for the President. I now have in written form the report made in Vienna on March 12th last by two leading Nazis, Secretary of State Wilhelm Keppler and Director General Vogl, to which I referred in my telegram No. 565, March 25, 1 p. m.²⁴ The report reads as follows:

"On Wednesday March 8th a conference was held at the Fuehrer's which was attended by personalities from the army, economic circles and the party. 'Austria' was represented by Gauleiter Buerkel in addition to those mentioned above.

²² Not printed.

²³ Philip H. Kerr, the Marquess of Lothian.

²⁴ Not printed; in this telegram Ambassador Bullitt reported that he had received from Crown Prince Otto of Hapsburg information as to the meeting here more fully described (740.00/684).

Certain economic and labor problems were discussed first. Then the Fuehrer spoke. First he declared that the four-year plan was a last resort. The real problem for the German people was to assure for itself the sources from which could be obtained the raw materials necessary for its well-being. In addition in order to enjoy this well-being enemies of the German people must be exterminated radically: Jews, democracies and the 'international powers'. As long as those enemies had the least vestige of power left anywhere in the world they would be a menace to the peace of the German people.

In this connection the situation in Prague was becoming intolerable. In addition Prague was needed as a means of access to those raw materials. Consequently orders have been issued to the effect that in a few days not later than the 15th of March Czechoslovakia is to be occupied militarily.²⁵

Poland will follow.²⁶ We will not have to count on a strong resistance from that quarter. German domination over Poland is necessary in order to assure for Germany Polish supplies of agricultural products and coal.

As far as Hungary and Rumania are concerned they belong without question to Germany's vital space. The fall of Poland and adequate pressure will undoubtedly bring them to terms. We will then have absolute control over their vast agricultural and petroleum resources. The same may be said for Yugoslavia.

This is the plan which will be realized until 1940. Even then Germany will be unbeatable.

In 1940 and 1941 Germany will settle accounts once and for all with her hereditary enemy: France. That country will be obliterated from the map of Europe. England is an old and feeble country weakened by democracy. With France vanquished Germany will dominate England easily and will then have at its disposition England's riches and domains throughout the world.

Thus having for the first time unified the continent of Europe according to a new conception, Germany will undertake the greatest operation in all history: with British and French possessions in America as a base we will settle accounts with the 'Jews of the dollar' (dollar juden) in the United States. We will exterminate this Jewish democracy and Jewish blood will mix itself with the dollars. Even today Americans can insult our people, but the day will come when, too late, they will bitterly regret every word they said against us.

Among those present, some were very enthusiastic while others seemed much less so.²⁷

I feel certain of the authenticity of this report which you will note was made before the invasion of Czechoslovakia. Countless other pieces of evidence indicate with equal certainty that Hitler intends first to defeat France and England then to take their fleets and to attack the Americas in conjunction with Japan.

I am entirely certain that if France and England should be unable to defeat Hitler in Europe American soldiers will have to fight his forces in the Americas.

²⁵ See pp. 34 ff.

²⁶ See pp. 402 ff.

The opinion of our military and naval officers at this mission as well as the opinion of leading men and British military men with whom I have talked is that an embargo by the United States against shipments of airplanes and war materials to France and England will mean inevitably the defeat of France and England.

I therefore consider those who advocate today the maintenance of this embargo not only ignorant allies [of] Hitler but also war mongers for America since if they should be able to maintain the embargo they would make it certain that American soldiers would have to meet Hitler's armies in the Americas.

It is the opinion of the same military men that I have cited above that if the embargo on supplies to France and England should be lifted immediately France and England would have a 60% chance of winning the war without the participation of a single American soldier.

BULLITT

[For text of the President's message to the special session of Congress, September 21, 1939, requesting amendment of the Neutrality Act, see Department of State *Bulletin*, September 23, 1939, page 275, or *Congressional Record*, volume 85, page 10.]

811.04418/5544

*The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to President Roosevelt*²⁷

LONDON, October 6, 1939.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: I enclose a letter addressed to you by the Prime Minister which was handed to me yesterday.²⁸

Yours sincerely,

JOS. KENNEDY

[Enclosure]

The British Prime Minister (Chamberlain) to President Roosevelt

LONDON, 4 October, 1939.

MY DEAR MR. ROOSEVELT: Your letter of the 11th of last month has just reached me and I am very grateful to you for your sympathetic and encouraging words.

²⁷ Photostatic copy obtained from the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, N. Y.

²⁸ Referred by the President to the Secretary of State, October 25, 1939, and returned with the marginal notation: "Interesting—C. H."

These are indeed difficult days and there are many more before us, but I retain full confidence that we shall come out successfully in the end.

My own belief is that we shall win, not by a complete and spectacular military victory, which is unlikely under modern conditions, but by convincing the Germans that they cannot win. Once they have arrived at that conclusion, I do not believe they can stand our relentless pressure, for they have not started this war with the enthusiasm or the confidence of 1914.

I believe they are already half way to this conviction and I cannot doubt that the attitude of the United States of America, due to your personal efforts, has had a notable influence in this direction. If the embargo is repealed this month, I am convinced that the effect on German morale will be devastating.

I hope so much that one day I may have the great pleasure of meeting you personally and discussing with you the happy results of the actions of our two countries in this testing time for democracy.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely

NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN

811.04418/634

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State

[WASHINGTON,] October 6, 1939.

The Spanish Ambassador²⁹ came in this morning at his own request. He referred to his talk with Mr. Dunn, Political Adviser on European Affairs, and I replied that I had gone over with Mr. Dunn the memorandum of this conversation³⁰ and found it very interesting. The Ambassador then inquired whether I thought there might be complications with Germany in the event of the passage of the Neutrality Act changing our neutrality policy during the war. I replied that if such a thing were humanly possible, in the way of giving effective and binding notice of what our neutrality policy was intended to be in case of war, that notice had been given from month to month, week to week and day to day to all nations, particularly since the first of last January; that both the President and I had in effect been urging the repeal of the embargo since the latter part of 1935. In the second place, I said that, a nation, especially after giving constant notice for nine months, is not expected nor required to enact its neutrality policy either before a war or on the first day, the first week or the first two weeks of a war; and that this Government has been lacking in anything but diligence in prosecuting its neu-

²⁹ Juan Francisco de Cárdenas.

³⁰ October 4, 1939, *post*, p. 754.

trality objectives. I then added that during last summer, when we were urging the repeal of the embargo, no other nation intimated that it expected to inaugurate war and that it would do so on the assurance the embargo would not be repealed; that I doubted if any contention in harmony with this view would now be raised.

The Ambassador then made brief reference to the British blockade situation and referred to his conversation on this subject with Mr. Dunn, which included reference to our sales of cotton to the Spanish Government and the interest this Government would have in the non-interference with these shipments by the British blockade. I was careful to say that we, of course, could not undertake to approach the British Government jointly on the matter.

C[ORDELL] H[ULL]

811.04418/637: Telegram

The Minister in the Union of South Africa (Keena) to the Secretary of State

PRETORIA, October 10, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received 6:35 p. m.]

21. I have the honor to report the views expressed to me yesterday by General Smuts, the Prime Minister, in relation to the clause in the proposed neutrality legislation which would prohibit the carrying of all goods to belligerents in American ships.

The Prime Minister stated that he did not want to dwell on the very serious harm which would be done to South Africa if American vessels were debarred from carrying goods to and from this country but he wished to point out that American trade interests, in such an event, would be done a disservice entirely out of proportion to the problematical risk which would be run by American vessels on the South African route.

The Union of South Africa, he said, depended on the United States for yearly imports of goods valued at about 18,000,000 pounds and on receiving about 9,000,000 pounds worth of goods from Germany. The German percentage of imports into the Union would be America's practically for the asking, if American ships are not withdrawn from this trade route; and, in addition, there would be a South African market for goods not now obtainable from Great Britain.

The Prime Minister reminded me that it was during the last war that American goods had established their very favorable trade position in the Union of South Africa, and that there was now the opportunity for an enlarged and better balanced trade between South

Africa and the United States,—which the Government would welcome. If the legislation should prevent that opportunity being utilized it would be distinctly unfortunate for both countries.

The Prime Minister emphasized the fact that the goods which the Union would take from the United States both for its normal needs from that country and to fill the demand heretofore supplied by Germany, are ordinary trade goods and standard manufactured articles and not in any way war materials; consequently keeping this trade route open would be highly and directly beneficial in the disposal of the products of American farms and of America's normal peacetime manufactures.

He also emphasized the growing *rapprochement* between South Africa and the other Dominions and the United States which at the present time particularly because of the disturbed conditions and uncertain future of Europe, he feels should be safeguarded and furthered politically, spiritually and economically in every way possible.

KEENA

811.04418/659 : Telegram

The Minister in Yugoslavia (Lane) to the Secretary of State

BELGRADE, October 13, 1939—8 p. m.
[Received October 13—7:50 p. m.]

314. For the Secretary and Under Secretary. The Prince Regent said to me this evening during the course of an interview that the most important thing today for the future of Europe would be the abrogation of the Neutrality Act. He expressed the opinion that if the act had been revoked last summer in accordance with the desire of the President "who has been right all the way along" the European war would never have started. He said that unfortunately democracies must take a long time to make a decision. This is their greatest weakness. He hoped, however, that our Congress would act before it is too late. He said that if France and England are beaten it means the Bolshevization of Europe.

The above remarks were made entirely spontaneously by Prince Paul and show how deeply he feels regarding the importance of revoking the Neutrality Act.

Report on remainder of interview will follow later.³²

LANE

³² Telegram No. 315, October 14, 1 p. m., not printed.

811.04418/637 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Minister in the Union of South Africa
(Keena)*

WASHINGTON, October 16, 1939—5 p. m.

23. Your 21, October 10. South African Minister has delivered a note³³ in the sense of the Prime Minister's remarks to you and I have transmitted a copy of the note to the appropriate Committee of the Senate.³⁴

In the interview he was told that the executive was keeping entirely out of the discussions (unless asked for suggestions) and that I was unable to predict their outcome. You might show the Prime Minister a copy of my letter to Senator Vandenberg quoted in Radio Bulletin of September 27.

I think you might tell the Prime Minister that all of these considerations have been repeatedly recited in the Senate by certain members, from which it is apparent that that body will not fail to take into account the effect which any bill might have upon American commercial and shipping interests. Editorial writers stress these points and the business interests themselves are apparently active.

HULL

740.00111A/111 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Brazil (Caffery) to the Secretary of State

RIO DE JANEIRO, October 20, 1939—1 p. m.

[Received 2 p. m.]

371. Department's circular telegram of October 19, 4 p. m.³⁵ I transmitted pertinent information to Nabuco³⁶ (Aranha³⁷ will probably not return to Foreign Office until middle of next week). Nabuco said that he would make at once a study of the possibility of Brazil's adopting similar action. However, he was under the impression that paragraph 3, subparagraph K of the general declaration of neutrality read that neutrals "must exclude belligerent submarines et cetera" and was disappointed to learn that it said "may exclude."

He then asked me to telegraph Department that he hopes that Brazil can count on the vote of the United States for a Brazilian candidate for the Inter-American Neutrality Committee provided for in paragraph 5 of the general declaration of neutrality. He went on to say that he presumed to ask this not only in view of our well known friendly relations but also in view of the fact that Brazil

³³ Dated September 30, 1939, not printed.

³⁴ Letter of October 13, 1939, to Senator Pittman, not printed.

³⁵ Printed in vol. v, section entitled "Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the American Republics . . ."

³⁶ Mauricio Nabuco, Secretary General of the Brazilian Foreign Office.

³⁷ Oswaldo Aranha, Brazilian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

covers such a large part of South America, contains such a large population, only Portuguese language country, et cetera.

Nabuco remarked several times that he had not yet seen text of Panama Final Act.³⁸ I sent him the single copy I received this morning.

CAFFERY

811.04418/706

The Secretary of State to Senator Key Pittman

WASHINGTON, October 24, 1939.

MY DEAR SENATOR PITTMAN: The South African Minister and the Canadian Minister³⁹ have called at the Department and, in conversations, have invited attention to provisions of Section 2 of the neutrality bill which are causing anxiety to their respective governments.⁴⁰ What they have to say seems to me to be of sufficient significance from the point of view of our own national interest to warrant my passing it along to you for such consideration as you may deem appropriate.

The South African Minister pointed out that, although the amendment to Section 2 proposed by you and Senator Connally would permit American vessels to transport mail, passengers, and commodities to belligerent ports of the Western Hemisphere south of thirty degrees north latitude and to belligerent ports in the Pacific or Indian Ocean including the China Sea, the Bay of Bengal, and the Arabian Sea, they would still be prohibited from carrying mail, passengers, and commodities to belligerent ports in the South Atlantic Ocean. He had particularly in mind Capetown and other South Atlantic ports of the Union of South Africa. He felt that to exclude American vessels from touching at these ports while they were permitted to touch at belligerent ports considerably less distant from Europe constituted a discrimination against his country. I note that, in your proposed amendment, the line thirty degrees north latitude is made the southern boundary of the area in the Atlantic Ocean within which American vessels may not carry on trade with belligerent ports in the Western Hemisphere. Might it not be possible to meet the Minister's objection by carrying that line across the Atlantic to Africa? Thus, American vessels could continue to carry on trade not only with Capetown and other Atlantic ports of the Union of South Africa

³⁸ Signed October 3, 1939, Department of State *Bulletin*, October 7, 1939, p. 321; for correspondence concerning meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the American Republics at Panamá, September 23–October 3, 1939, see vol. v.

³⁹ Ralph W. Close and Loring C. Christie, respectively.

⁴⁰ Similar protests with reference to certain provisions of the proposed joint resolution were also received from the Irish Legation, October 25, the Danish Legation, October 27, the Netherland Legation, October 30, and the Finnish Legation, November 2, 1939; none printed.

but also with French and British Colonial ports lying farther to the north but still many thousands of miles from Europe.

The Canadian Minister directed his remarks particularly to the provisions of Section 2 relating to the passage of title. He pointed out that, although the proposed exceptions to the provisions of section 2 (e) exempt transportation of mail and personal effects of individuals "by American vessels on or over lakes, rivers, and inland waters bordering on the United States" or "by aircraft on or over lands bordering on the United States", there is no exemption for transportation of mail or personal effects of individuals by automobile, autobus, or train between the United States and Canada. Thus, although American citizens desiring to enter Canada in furtherance of trade and commerce or as tourists could freely carry with them their personal effects if they were to cross the Great Lakes or travel by plane, they would have to divest themselves of all right and title to an automobile before crossing with it into Canada and to any personal effects which they might wish to transport by automobile, autobus, or train. He feared that, were the bill enacted into law in its present form, it would not only interfere seriously with ordinary travel and ordinary commercial intercourse between the United States and Canada but would entirely disrupt the important traffic by rail which is ordinarily carried on between Detroit and Niagara Falls across Southern Ontario and between the Provinces of Quebec and New Brunswick across the State of Maine. These provisions would also interfere seriously with the common practice of American companies of shipping to wholly-owned subsidiary sales organizations in Canada.

I take it that your proposed amendment to Section 2 (f), which was printed in the *Congressional Record* for October 20,⁴¹ was prepared with a view to dealing with some of these points raised by the Canadian Minister.

Sincerely yours,

CORDELL HULL

[The Neutrality Act, passed by the Congress, was approved November 4, 1939; 54 Stat. 4.]

811.04418/554½

The British Prime Minister (Chamberlain) to President Roosevelt ⁴²

LONDON, 8 November, 1939.

MY DEAR MR. ROOSEVELT: In your letter of the 11th September you invited me to write to you personally whenever there were any prob-

⁴¹ Vol. 85, p. 645.

⁴² Photostatic copy obtained from the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, N. Y.

lems on which I wished to consult you. You may be sure that I shall do so. At the moment, I have no question to raise with you, but I cannot forbear from sending you a private line of thanks and congratulation on the great development of the last week-end.

The repeal of the arms embargo, which has been so anxiously awaited in this country, is not only an assurance that we and our French Allies may draw on the great reservoir of American resources; it is also a profound moral encouragement to us in the struggle upon which we are engaged. As I said in my letter of the 4th October,⁴³ I am convinced that it will have a devastating effect on German morale; it will also, I am confident, have a great influence on world opinion. We here have derived all the greater satisfaction from it because we realise to what an extent we owe it to your personal efforts and goodwill.

May I send you my sincere thanks, not only for the measure itself, but for your great sympathy to which it is so largely due?

With kind regards

Ever sincerely

NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN

711.00111 Articles or Materials/2

The British Embassy to the Department of State

AIDE-MÉMOIRE

The attention of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom has been drawn to certain provisions of Section 2 of the Joint Resolution approved by the President on November 4th—the Neutrality Act of 1939.

Subsection (a) of Section 2 provides that "Whenever the President shall have issued a proclamation under the authority of section 1 (a) it shall thereafter be unlawful for any American vessel to carry any passengers or any articles or materials to any state named in such proclamation."

Subsection (c) provides *inter alia* that "Whenever the President shall have issued a proclamation under the authority of section 1 (a) it shall thereafter be unlawful to export or transport, or attempt to export or transport, or cause to be exported or transported, from the United States to any state named in such proclamation, any articles or materials (except copyrighted articles or materials) until all right, title and interest therein shall have been transferred to some foreign government, agency, institution, association, partnership, corporation, or national."

⁴³ *Ante*, p. 674.

Subsection (*g*) lays down that "the provisions of subsection (*a*) and (*e*) of this section shall not apply to transportation by American vessels (other than aircraft) of mail, passengers, or any articles or materials (except articles or materials listed in a proclamation referred to in or issued under the authority of section 12 (*i*)) (1) to any port in the Western Hemisphere south of thirty-five degrees north latitude, (2) to any port in the Western Hemisphere north of thirty-five degrees north latitude and west of sixty-six degrees west longitude, (3) to any port on the Pacific or Indian Oceans, including the China Sea, the Tasman Sea, the Bay of Bengal, and the Arabian Sea, and any other dependent waters of either of such oceans, seas or bays, or (4) to any port on the Atlantic Ocean or its dependent waters south of thirty degrees north latitude. The exceptions contained in this subsection shall not apply to any such port which is included within a combat area as defined in section 3 which applies to such vessels."

Subsection (*L*) states "The provisions of subsection (*e*) of this section shall not apply to the transportation by a neutral vessel to any port referred to in subsection (*g*) of this section of any articles or materials (except articles or materials listed in a proclamation referred to in or issued under the authority of section 12 (*i*)) so long as such port is not included within a combat area as defined in section 3 which applies to American vessels."

The effect of these provisions is to allow American and neutral vessels to carry goods (other than war material) to ports of belligerent countries lying within the areas specified in subsection (*g*) without the title in the goods having previously been transferred to some foreign agency. Similar facilities are however not extended to goods carried on vessels of belligerent states proceeding to the same areas and in such cases the title to the goods has to be transferred before they can be exported from this country.

Subsections (*a*), (*e*) and (*g*) quoted above reproduce to all intents and purposes similar provisions contained in the text of the Joint Resolution as originally passed by the Senate on October 27th.⁴⁴ That text did not however include any clause similar to subsection (*L*) of the final Act and its effect was therefore to extend to American vessels only the exemption from the necessity of complying with the transfer of title provision in the case of goods exported to belligerent ports lying within the areas specified in subsection (*g*).

The fact that the Joint Resolution as originally passed by the Senate thus discriminated in favour of American vessels was brought to the notice of the State Department on November 1st by a member of His Majesty's Embassy who pointed out that such discrimination

⁴⁴ H. J. Res. 306; *Congressional Record*, vol. 85, p. 1024.

would seriously prejudice important British shipping interests.⁴⁵ The member of His Majesty's Embassy was informed that the State Department were already alive to the situation, and that as far as they were concerned they did not wish to see such discrimination embodied in the final version of the Act. He was given to understand that the State Department would be prepared to recommend that the position be rectified by the amendment in Conference of subsection (*g*) so as to omit the word "American" in line 2 of the printed text and thus make the exemption apply to vessels of all nationalities. It is understood that such a recommendation was in fact made to the appropriate quarter by the State Department. The recommendation was not however adopted; subsection (*g*) remained applicable to American vessels only and a fresh subsection (*L*) extending the exemption from the transfer of title provisions to neutral ships was inserted.

The result is therefore that as stated above the Act as finally passed and approved extends to American and neutral vessels certain facilities which it denies to those of belligerent countries. The immediate effect on British shipping is very serious since it is considered that on the average about two-thirds of the cargo usually carried on British ships to belligerent ports in the prescribed areas is consigned to agents or branches of shippers and therefore not sold before shipment. In order to comply with the terms of the Act several British ships which have already loaded or are in process of loading in United States ports may have to be detained for an appreciable period until the formalities in connexion with transferring the title of their cargo have been completed, while in other cases it may even be necessary for some of the cargo to be unloaded. Neither American nor neutral vessels proceeding to the same destinations will however be subjected to similar handicaps.

Furthermore the effect on British shipping in the future if this measure of discrimination were to continue would be even more serious while the position is aggravated by the fact that a large proportion of the cargoes affected are in fact destined for British ports.

His Majesty's Embassy has therefore been instructed to call the attention of the State Department to the matter, to emphasise the great importance which His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom attach to the question and to urge that the United States authorities explore every possibility of rectifying this inequitable position at the earliest possible moment.

WASHINGTON, November 9, 1939.

⁴⁵ Memorandum of conversation between the First Secretary of the British Embassy and the Chief of the Division of European Affairs, not printed.

711.00111 Articles or Materials/2

The Department of State to the British Embassy

AIDE-MÉMOIRE

Careful consideration has been given to the British Ambassador's *aide-mémoire* of November 9, in regard to certain provisions of Section 2 of the Neutrality Act of 1939 concerning the transfer of title to articles and materials on their exportation to certain belligerent areas.

The effect of the provisions cited in the Ambassador's *aide-mémoire* is to permit American and other neutral vessels to carry goods (other than arms, ammunition, and implements of war) to ports of belligerent states lying within the areas specified in Sub-Section (G) without the title to the goods having previously been transferred to some foreign agency; and to require that title to the goods be transferred to a foreign agency before they could be exported on vessels of belligerent states.

Informal representations regarding this question were made while this legislation was pending in the Congress by an officer of the British Embassy, who was orally informed in the sense indicated in the Ambassador's *aide-mémoire*.

It is apparent that in enacting Section 2 of the Neutrality Act of 1939 in its existing form the Congress felt that these particular provisions with which the Ambassador deals in his *aide-mémoire* were necessary from the standpoint of preventing the involvement of the United States in controversies with belligerent governments. American vessels receive no preferential treatment over the vessels of other neutral countries, and the provisions applying to vessels of belligerent countries appertain to vessels of all belligerents. In these circumstances, the American Government cannot agree that the provisions cited are discriminatory.

It may be noted that the delay and inconvenience in British ships which have already occurred, mentioned in the Ambassador's *aide-mémoire*, are in a large measure incidental to the early stages of the administration of a new law and may be expected to be reduced materially at an early date. Delay and inconvenience to shipping, however regrettable, are perhaps inevitable in such circumstances. For its part, the American Government is prepared to do everything within its power to eliminate any possible delay to shipping as a consequence of wartime conditions.

WASHINGTON, December 1, 1939.

**II. PROCLAMATION OF UNITED STATES NEUTRALITY UPON THE
OUTBREAK OF WAR; OTHER MEASURES FOR THE PRESERVATION
OF UNITED STATES NEUTRALITY**

740.00111A/25b

Proclamation of September 5, 1939, Proclaiming the Neutrality of the United States in the War Between Germany and France; Poland; and the United Kingdom, India, Australia, and New Zealand

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS a state of war unhappily exists between Germany and France; Poland; and the United Kingdom, India, Australia and New Zealand;

AND WHEREAS the United States is on terms of friendship and amity with the contending powers, and with the persons inhabiting their several dominions;

AND WHEREAS there are nationals of the United States residing within the territories or dominions of each of the said belligerents, and carrying on commerce, trade, or other business or pursuits therein;

AND WHEREAS there are nationals of each of the said belligerents residing within the territory or jurisdiction of the United States, and carrying on commerce, trade, or other business or pursuits therein;

AND WHEREAS the laws and treaties of the United States, without interfering with the free expression of opinion and sympathy, nevertheless impose upon all persons who may be within their territory and jurisdiction the duty of an impartial neutrality during the existence of the contest;

AND WHEREAS it is the duty of a neutral government not to permit or suffer the making of its territory or territorial waters subservient to the purposes of war;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT, President of the United States of America, in order to preserve the neutrality of the United States and of its citizens and of persons within its territory and jurisdiction, and to enforce its laws and treaties, and in order that all persons, being warned of the general tenor of the laws and treaties of the United States in this behalf, and of the law of nations, may thus be prevented from any violation of the same, do hereby declare and proclaim that by certain provisions of the act approved on the 4th day of March, A. D. 1909, commonly known as the "Penal Code of the United States"⁴⁶ and of the act approved on the 15th day of June, A. D. 1917,⁴⁷ the following acts are forbidden to be done,

⁴⁶ 35 Stat. 1088.

⁴⁷ 40 Stat. 217.

under severe penalties, within the territory and jurisdiction of the United States, to wit:

1. Accepting and exercising a commission to serve one of the said belligerents by land or by sea against an opposing belligerent.

2. Enlisting or entering into the service of a belligerent as a soldier, or as a marine, or seaman on board of any ship of war, letter of marque, or privateer.

3. Hiring or retaining another person to enlist or enter himself in the service of a belligerent as a soldier, or as a marine, or seaman on board of any ship of war, letter of marque, or privateer.

4. Hiring another person to go beyond the limits or jurisdiction of the United States with intent to be enlisted as aforesaid.

5. Hiring another person to go beyond the limits or jurisdiction of the United States with intent to be entered into service as aforesaid.

6. Retaining another person to go beyond the limits or jurisdiction of the United States to be enlisted as aforesaid.

7. Retaining another person to go beyond the limits or jurisdiction of the United States with intent to be entered into service as aforesaid. (But the said act of the 4th day of March, A. D. 1909, as amended by the act of the 15th day of June, A. D. 1917, is not to be construed to extend to a citizen or subject of a belligerent who, being transiently within the jurisdiction of the United States, shall, on board of any ship of war, which, at the time of its arrival within the jurisdiction of the United States, was fitted and equipped as such ship of war, enlist or enter himself or hire or retain another subject or citizen of the same belligerent, who is transiently within the jurisdiction of the United States, to enlist or enter himself to serve such belligerent on board such ship of war, if the United States shall then be at peace with such belligerent.)

8. Fitting out and arming, or attempting to fit out and arm, or procuring to be fitted out and armed, or knowingly being concerned in the furnishing, fitting out, or arming of any ship or vessel with intent that such ship or vessel shall be employed in the service of one of the said belligerents to cruise, or commit hostilities against the subjects, citizens, or property of an opposing belligerent.

9. Issuing or delivering a commission within the territory or jurisdiction of the United States for any ship or vessel to the intent that she may be employed as aforesaid.

10. Increasing or augmenting, or procuring to be increased or augmented, or knowingly being concerned in increasing or augmenting, the force of any ship of war, cruiser, or other armed vessel, which at the time of her arrival within the jurisdiction of the United States was a ship of war, cruiser, or armed vessel in the service of a belligerent, or belonging to a national thereof, by adding to the number of guns of such vessel, or by changing those on board of her for guns of a larger caliber, or by the addition thereto of any equipment solely applicable to war.

11. Knowingly beginning or setting on foot or providing or preparing a means for or furnishing the money for, or taking part in, any military or naval expedition or enterprise to be carried on from the territory or jurisdiction of the United States against the territory or dominion of a belligerent.

12. Despatching from the United States, or any place subject to the jurisdiction thereof, any vessel, domestic or foreign, which is about to carry to a warship, tender, or supply ship of a belligerent any fuel, arms, ammunition, men, supplies, despatches, or information shipped or received on board within the jurisdiction of the United States.

13. Despatching from the United States, or any place subject to the jurisdiction thereof, any armed vessel owned wholly or in part by American citizens, or any vessel, domestic or foreign (other than one which has entered the jurisdiction of the United States as a public vessel), which is manifestly built for warlike purposes or has been converted or adapted from a private vessel to one suitable for warlike use, and which is to be employed to cruise against or commit or attempt to commit hostilities upon the subjects, citizens, or property of a belligerent nation, or which will be sold or delivered to a belligerent nation, or to an agent, officer, or citizen thereof, within the jurisdiction of the United States, or, having left that jurisdiction, upon the high seas.

14. Despatching from the United States, or any place subject to the jurisdiction thereof, any vessel built, armed, or equipped as a ship of war, or converted from a private vessel into a ship of war (other than one which has entered the jurisdiction of the United States as a public vessel), with any intent or under any agreement or contract, written or oral, that such vessel shall be delivered to a belligerent nation, or to any agent, officer, or citizen of such nation, or where there is reasonable cause to believe that the said vessel shall or will be employed in the service of such belligerent nation after its departure from the jurisdiction of the United States.

15. Taking, or attempting or conspiring to take, or authorizing the taking of any vessel out of port or from the jurisdiction of the United States in violation of the said act of the 15th day of June, A. D. 1917, as set forth in the preceding paragraphs numbered 11 to 14 inclusive.

16. Leaving or attempting to leave the jurisdiction of the United States by a person belonging to the armed land or naval forces of a belligerent who shall have been interned within the jurisdiction of the United States in accordance with the law of nations, or leaving or attempting to leave the limits of internment in which freedom of movement has been allowed, without permission from the proper official of the United States in charge, or wilfully overstaying a leave of absence granted by such official.

17. Aiding or enticing any interned person to escape or attempt to escape from the jurisdiction of the United States, or from the limits of internment prescribed.

AND I do hereby further declare and proclaim that any frequenting and use of the waters within the territorial jurisdiction of the United States by the vessels of a belligerent, whether public ships or privateers for the purpose of preparing for hostile operations, or as posts of observation upon the ships of war or privateers or merchant vessels of an opposing belligerent must be regarded as unfriendly and offensive, and in violation of that neutrality which it is the determination of this

government to observe; and to the end that the hazard and inconvenience of such apprehended practices may be avoided, I further proclaim and declare that from and after the fifth day of September instant, and so long as this proclamation shall be in effect, no ship of war or privateer of any belligerent shall be permitted to make use of any port, harbor, roadstead, or waters subject to the jurisdiction of the United States as a station or place of resort for any warlike purpose or for the purpose of obtaining warlike equipment; no privateer of a belligerent shall be permitted to depart from any port, harbor, roadstead, or waters subject to the jurisdiction of the United States; and no ship of war of a belligerent shall be permitted to sail out of or leave any port, harbor, roadstead, or waters subject to the jurisdiction of the United States from which a vessel of an opposing belligerent (whether the same shall be a ship of war or a merchant ship) shall have previously departed, until after the expiration of at least twenty-four hours from the departure of such last mentioned vessel beyond the jurisdiction of the United States.

If any ship of war of a belligerent shall, after the time this notification takes effect, be found in, or shall enter any port, harbor, roadstead, or waters subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, such vessel shall not be permitted to remain in such port, harbor, roadstead, or waters more than twenty-four hours, except in case of stress of weather, or for delay in receiving supplies or repairs, or when detained by the United States; in any of which cases the authorities of the port, or of the nearest port (as the case may be), shall require her to put to sea as soon as the cause of the delay is at an end, unless within the preceding twenty-four hours a vessel, whether ship of war or merchant ship of an opposing belligerent, shall have departed therefrom, in which case the time limited for the departure of such ship of war shall be extended so far as may be necessary to secure an interval of not less than twenty-four hours between such departure and that of any ship of war or merchant ship of an opposing belligerent which may have previously quit the same port, harbor, roadstead, or waters.

Vessels used exclusively for scientific, religious, or philanthropic purposes are exempted from the foregoing provisions as to the length of time ships of war may remain in the ports, harbors, roadsteads, or waters subject to the jurisdiction of the United States.

The maximum number of ships of war belonging to a belligerent and its allies which may be in one of the ports, harbors, or roadsteads subject to the jurisdiction of the United States simultaneously shall be three.

When ships of war of opposing belligerents are present simultaneously in the same port, harbor, roadstead, or waters, subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, the one entering first shall depart first, unless she is in such condition as to warrant extending her stay.

In any case the ship which arrived later has the right to notify the other through the competent local authority that within twenty-four hours she will leave such port, harbor, roadstead, or waters, the one first entering, however, having the right to depart within that time. If the one first entering leaves, the notifying ship must observe the prescribed interval of twenty-four hours. If a delay beyond twenty-four hours from the time of arrival is granted, the termination of the cause of delay will be considered the time of arrival in deciding the right of priority in departing.

Vessels of a belligerent shall not be permitted to depart successively from any port, harbor, roadstead, or waters subject to the jurisdiction of the United States at such intervals as will delay the departure of a ship of war of an opposing belligerent from such ports, harbors, roadsteads, or waters for more than twenty-four hours beyond her desired time of sailing. If, however, the departure of several ships of war and merchant ships of opposing belligerents from the same port, harbor, roadstead, or waters is involved, the order of their departure therefrom shall be so arranged as to afford the opportunity of leaving alternately to the vessels of the opposing belligerents, and to cause the least detention consistent with the objects of this proclamation.

All belligerent vessels shall refrain from use of their radio and signal apparatus while in the harbors, ports, roadsteads, or waters subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, except for calls of distress and communications connected with safe navigation or arrangements for the arrival of the vessel within, or departure from, such harbors, ports, roadsteads, or waters, or passage through such waters; provided that such communications will not be of direct material aid to the belligerent in the conduct of military operations against an opposing belligerent. The radio of belligerent merchant vessels may be sealed by the authorities of the United States, and such seals shall not be broken within the jurisdiction of the United States except by proper authority of the United States.

No ship of war of a belligerent shall be permitted, while in any port, harbor, roadstead, or waters subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, to take in any supplies except provisions and such other things as may be requisite for the subsistence of her crew in amounts necessary to bring such supplies to her peace standard, and except such fuel, lubricants, and feed water only as may be sufficient, with that already on board, to carry such vessel, if without any sail power, to the nearest port of her own country; or in case a vessel is rigged to go under sail, and may also be propelled by machinery, then half the quantity of fuel, lubricants, and feed water which she would be entitled to have on board, if dependent upon propelling machinery alone, and no fuel, lubricants, or feed water shall be again supplied to any such ship of

war in the same or any other port, harbor, roadstead, or waters subject to the jurisdiction of the United States until after the expiration of three months from the time when such fuel, lubricants and feed water may have been last supplied to her within waters subject to the jurisdiction of the United States. The amounts of fuel, lubricants, and feed water allowable under the above provisions shall be based on the economical speed of the vessel, plus an allowance of thirty per centum for eventualities.

No ship of war of a belligerent shall be permitted, while in any port, harbor, roadstead, or waters subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, to make repairs beyond those that are essential to render the vessel seaworthy and which in no degree constitute an increase in her military strength. Repairs shall be made without delay. Damages which are found to have been produced by the enemy's fire shall in no case be repaired.

No ship of war of a belligerent shall effect repairs or receive fuel, lubricants, feed water, or provisions within the jurisdiction of the United States without written authorization of the proper authorities of the United States. Before such authorization will be issued, the commander of the vessel shall furnish to such authorities a written declaration, duly signed by such commander, stating the date, port, and amounts of supplies last received in the jurisdiction of the United States, the amounts of fuel, lubricants, feed water, and provisions on board, the port to which the vessel is proceeding, the economical speed of the vessel, the rate of consumption of fuel, lubricants, and feed water at such speed, and the amount of each class of supplies desired. If repairs are desired, a similar declaration shall be furnished stating the cause of the damage and the nature of the repairs. In either case, a certificate shall be included to the effect that the desired services are in accord with the rules of the United States in that behalf.

No agency of the United States Government shall, directly or indirectly, provide supplies nor effect repairs to a belligerent ship of war.

No vessel of a belligerent shall exercise the right of search within the waters under the jurisdiction of the United States, nor shall prizes be taken by belligerent vessels within such waters. Subject to any applicable treaty provisions in force, prizes captured by belligerent vessels shall not enter any port, harbor, roadstead, or waters under the jurisdiction of the United States except in case of unseaworthiness, stress of weather, or want of fuel or provisions; when the cause has disappeared, the prize must leave immediately, and if a prize captured by a belligerent vessel enters any port, harbor, roadstead, or waters subject to the jurisdiction of the United States for any other reason than on account of unseaworthiness, stress of weather, or want of fuel or provisions, or fails to leave as soon as the circumstances which justified the entrance are at an end, the prize with its officers

and crew will be released and the prize crew will be interned. A belligerent Prize Court can not be set up on territory subject to the jurisdiction of the United States or on a vessel in the ports, harbors, roadsteads, or waters subject to the jurisdiction of the United States.

The provisions of this proclamation pertaining to ships of war shall apply equally to any vessel operating under public control for hostile or military purposes.

AND I do further declare and proclaim that the statutes and the treaties of the United States and the law of nations alike require that no person, within the territory and jurisdiction of the United States, shall take part, directly or indirectly, in the said war, but shall remain at peace with all of the said belligerents, and shall maintain a strict and impartial neutrality.

AND I do further declare and proclaim that the provisions of this proclamation shall apply to the Canal Zone except in so far as such provisions may be specifically modified by a proclamation or proclamations issued for the Canal Zone.

AND I do hereby enjoin all nationals of the United States, and all persons residing or being within the territory or jurisdiction of the United States, to observe the laws thereof, and to commit no act contrary to the provisions of the said statutes or treaties or in violation of the law of nations in that behalf.

AND I do hereby give notice that all nationals of the United States and others who may claim the protection of this government, who may misconduct themselves in the premises, will do so at their peril, and that they can in no wise obtain any protection from the government of the United States against the consequences of their misconduct.

This proclamation shall continue in full force and effect unless and until modified, revoked or otherwise terminated, pursuant to law.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

DONE at the city of Washington this fifth day of September in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and thirty-nine, and [SEAL] of the Independence of the United States of America the one hundred and sixty-fourth.

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

By the President:

CORDELL HULL,
Secretary of State.

[For texts of other proclamations concerning United States neutrality proclaimed during the year 1939, see the following citations:

(1) Export of Arms, Ammunition, and Implements of War, to France, Germany, Poland, and the United Kingdom, India, Australia, and New Zealand, September 5, 1939, 54 Stat. 2635.

(2) Neutrality of Canal Zone, September 5, 54 Stat. 2638.

(3) Neutrality of United States in War between Germany and South Africa, September 8, 54 Stat. 2643.

(4) Export of Arms, etc., to South Africa, September 8, 54 Stat. 2644.

(5) State of National Emergency, September 8, 54 Stat. 2643.

(6) Neutrality of United States in War between Germany and Canada, September 10, 54 Stat. 2652.

(7) Export of Arms, etc., to Canada, September 10, 54 Stat. 2653.

(8) Use of Ports or Territorial Waters by Submarines, October 18, 54 Stat. 2668.

(9) Existence of State of War between Germany and France, Poland, and the United Kingdom, India, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the Union of South Africa, November 4, 54 Stat. 2671.

(10) Defining Combat Areas, November 4, 54 Stat. 2673.

(11) Regarding Use of Ports or Territorial Waters by Submarines, November 4, 54 Stat. 2672.]

138 Emergency Program/31 : Circular telegram

The Secretary of State to All American Consular Officers Except Those in Europe

WASHINGTON, September 5, 1939—11 a. m.

Commencing immediately endorse on all passports issued and all outstanding passports which come into your possession "This passport is not valid for travel in any country of Europe." Case of any person desiring travel to Europe must be presented to Department with documentary evidence of the imperative necessity of trip.

In cases of great urgency where documentary evidence of necessity of trip is submitted and Consul is convinced of *bona fides* of applicant, facts may be presented Department by cablegram at expense of applicant.

HULL

138 Emergency Program/31 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Minister in Switzerland (Harrison)

WASHINGTON, September 5, 1939—2 p. m.

62. In view of the exigencies of the present situation in Europe, the Department on September 4 issued new regulations providing that

no passport heretofore issued shall be valid for travel from United States to any European country unless it has been submitted to Department for validation for such use.⁴⁸ Passports will be validated and new passports issued only to those persons submitting documentary evidence of imperative necessity for traveling to Europe. Women and children will not be included in passports issued their husbands or fathers unless imperative necessity of accompanying them is conclusively established. Passports will not, except in extraordinary circumstances, be validated for travel in opposing belligerent countries. Department contemplates examination at ports of passports to assure strict compliance with new regulations. Passports of returning American citizens will be taken up for safe keeping and to assure that they will not again be used except in accordance with new regulations.

When evacuation American citizens now waiting transportation to the United States shall have been substantially accomplished,⁴⁹ Department contemplates issue of instructions to consular officers in Europe concerning restrictions in use of passports heretofore and hereafter issued.

Advise all officers in Europe by mail.

HULL

740.00111A Passenger Travel/4a : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Minister in Ireland (Cudahy)

WASHINGTON, September 7, 1939—7 p. m.

16. Your telephone conversation with the Under Secretary.⁵⁰ Section 9 of Neutrality Act prohibits travel by American citizens on belligerent vessels. The prohibition does not apply, however, to citizens homeward bound sailing within 90 days from the date of the President's embargo proclamation. Furthermore, the Secretary is authorized to make exceptions by regulation. The regulation issued on September 5 reads as follows:⁵¹

"American diplomatic and consular officers and their families, members of their staffs and their families, and American military and naval officers and personnel and their families may travel pursuant to orders on vessels of France; Germany; Poland; or the United Kingdom, India, Australia and New Zealand if the public service requires.

"Other American citizens may travel on vessels of France; Germany; Poland; or the United Kingdom, India, Australia and New

⁴⁸ Department of State *Bulletin*, September 9, 1939, p. 230, or 4 *Federal Register* 3892.

⁴⁹ See pp. 573 ff.

⁵⁰ No record of conversation found in Department files.

⁵¹ Department of State *Bulletin*, September 9, 1939, p. 219, or 4 *Federal Register* 3838.

Zealand, provided, however, that travel on or over the north Atlantic Ocean, east of 30 degrees west and north of 30 degrees north or on or over other waters adjacent to Europe or over the continent of Europe or adjacent islands shall not be permitted except when specifically authorized by the Secretary of State in each case."

HULL

740.00111A Recruiting/23 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, September 15, 1939.

[Received September 15—9 : 48 a. m.]

1660. The Embassy is receiving inquiries from Americans who desire to serve Great Britain in one capacity or another in the armed combatant forces, army medical corps, air raid precautions organizations, or non-combatant activities related to the conflict and who desire to know if by so doing they would infringe United States laws and the effect their action would have on their American citizenship. Unless otherwise instructed, the Embassy plans to confine itself (1) to providing them with a copy of the President's Proclamation of Neutrality, and (2) to citing the first paragraph of section 2 of the Citizenship Act of March 2, 1907.⁵²

KENNEDY

740.00111A Armed Merchantmen/1 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, September 17, 1939—3 p. m.

[Received September 17—10 : 24 a. m.]

2017. Ministry of Navy inquires of our Naval Attaché whether it is permissible for French merchant vessels which are armed for defensive purposes to enter American ports.

BULLITT

841.3311/1080

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Chief of the Division of European Affairs (Moffat)

[WASHINGTON,] September 22, 1939.

Mr. Hoyer Millar⁵³ called this morning at our request to discuss the matter of the desire of Admiral Taylor and four non-commissioned

⁵² 34 Stat. 1228.

⁵³ First Secretary of the British Embassy.

officers now on the *Vaclite* to land in the United States en route to take up their duties with the Royal Navy in Halifax.

We informed Mr. Hoyer Millar that his request that we permit this landing and facilitate the passage of Admiral Taylor and his associates should it be found that they have no transport and transit visas, presented legal difficulties, and that we regretted very much that we could not see our way clear to comply with his request. We pointed out that this in effect involves the transit of belligerent troops through American territory en route to stations in other belligerent territory, and that the international law on the subject seemed to be clear.

Mr. Hoyer Millar said that he had been afraid that this request would present difficulties, and that they understood our position. He said that it was impossible for the British authorities to communicate with the *Vaclite* by radio and that they could not therefore divert the vessel to Halifax. He added, however, that the British authorities would endeavor to communicate with the vessel before it actually entered an American port, and if they could do so they would instruct the vessel to proceed at once to Halifax. He continued that if this were not possible and the vessel entered an American port they would give instructions that Admiral Taylor and his associates remain on board the vessel and proceed on the same vessel to Halifax as soon as possible after clearing from the American port of entry. He inquired whether this procedure was agreeable to us and we replied that it was.

P[IERREPONT] M[OFFAT]

740.00111A Armed Merchantmen/5

The Canadian Legation to the Department of State

AIDE-MÉMOIRE

The *Lady* class ships of the Canadian National Steamships ply between Bermuda and Halifax, Nova Scotia, calling at Boston, Massachusetts. The Canadian authorities have installed in each of these vessels a gun for defensive armament against submarines. In addition these ships may from time to time carry naval stores, e. g. ammunition, from Bermuda to Halifax, calling at Boston en route.

In connection with calls at United States ports by Canadian ships either with defensive armament or munitions on board, the Canadian Government are most anxious that Canadian ships should comply with all regulations which United States authorities may impose with respect to such vessels. The Canadian Legation would, therefore,

appreciate learning what requirements if any, must be met by such vessels when calling at ports of the United States.

[WASHINGTON,] September 26, 1939.

740.00111A Armed Merchantmen/1 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Bullitt)

WASHINGTON, September 27, 1939—5 p. m.

1143. Your telegram 2017, September 17. Department's 1005, September 20.⁵⁴ You may advise appropriate French authorities, for their confidential information and guidance, that, as a temporary measure and pending definite fixation of policy concurrently with or following Congressional action on pending neutrality bill,⁵⁵ this Government will not treat as war vessels armed belligerent merchant vessels whose arms are intended and used solely for defense but that it should be understood that this condition is subject to change without obligation to give prior notice. This Government reserves the right to determine for itself through collectors of customs or otherwise whether individual armed vessels are to be considered as merchant vessels or vessels of war.

The foregoing has also been transmitted to London for guidance of British authorities.⁵⁶

HULL

811.111 Diplomatic/14424a

The Secretary of State to American Diplomatic and Consular Officers

Diplomatic Serial No. 3132

WASHINGTON, September 30, 1939.

SIRS: As a measure of precaution during the existing hostilities, no diplomatic visa or passport visa as a foreign government official shall be issued to a civil official of a country engaged in the European war unless a request therefor, written or oral, shall have been received from the foreign office of the government concerned or, in the absence of such a request, unless the Department's authorization shall have been obtained by cablegram. Applications of members of the armed forces of a country engaged in the European war must be referred to the Department for consideration with respect to the neutrality law.

Applicants for non-immigrant visas and aliens applying for transit or limited entry certificates, particularly those who are nationals of belligerent countries, should be examined with unusual care to ascer-

⁵⁴ Letter not printed.

⁵⁵ H. J. Res. 306, approved November 4, 1939, 54 Stat. 4.

⁵⁶ Telegram No. 1147, October 3, 6 p. m., not printed.

tain if their admission would be contrary to the public safety. Police and military certificates may be required in doubtful cases. Consuls should also require convincing evidence of non-immigrant status and ability of the applicants to enter some country at the conclusion of their temporary sojourn in the United States.

Very truly yours,

For the Secretary of State:
G. S. MESSERSMITH

740.00111A Recruiting/33

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Adviser on Political Relations
(Dunn)*

[WASHINGTON,] October 2, 1939.

The Ambassador of Poland⁵⁷ came in this morning to inform the Department that, having seen reports in the press that the new Polish Prime Minister, M. Sikorski, had stated that an appeal would be made to the Poles in the United States and Canada to assist Poland in defense of her territory, and that they might possibly be recruited in the armed forces for that purpose, he, the Ambassador, had immediately cabled to Sikorski that no attempt should be made to recruit Poles in the United States. The Ambassador stated that he had advised his Government that no action should be taken with regard to the Poles in this country which would in any way be contrary to the neutrality of the United States. He wished the Department to be informed of the stand he had taken in this regard.

JAMES CLEMENT DUNN

740.00111A Recruiting/30a : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Bullitt)

WASHINGTON, October 2, 1939—9 p. m.

1136. For Biddle.⁵⁸ Today's *Washington Post* carries a story by Taylor Henry of the Associated Press in which Sikorski is quoted as having stated that the Polish Government hopes to raise from 8 to 10 divisions of Poles of from 15,000 to 20,000 men each in Canada and the United States to fight against Germany.

It is suggested that you inform the appropriate Polish officials that the publication of statements of this character tends to create an unfortunate impression in this country, pointing out to them at the same time the provisions of the President's Proclamation of neutrality

⁵⁷ Count Jerzy Potocki.

⁵⁸ Anthony J. Drexel Biddle, Jr., Ambassador to Poland, with the Polish Government in exile temporarily in France.

relating to the enlisting of soldiers, marines or seamen in the United States into the service of a belligerent.

HULL

740.00111A Recruiting/31 : Telegram

The Ambassador to Poland (Biddle), Then in France, to the Secretary of State

PARIS, October 7, 1939—2 p. m.
[Received October 7—11:45 a. m.]

3. 1. Your number 1136, October 2, 1939, 9 p. m. Minister Zaleski⁵⁹ expressed his deep regret that General Sikorsky's statement had created an unfavorable impression in the United States. Zaleski assured me (a) he was familiar with the provisions of the President's proclamation of neutrality relating to the enlistment of our soldiers and marines and (b) that when General Sikorsky made aforementioned statement he had in mind only those Poles who might not yet have acquired full American citizenship, a status similar to that of many Poles now in France.

2. I am aware moreover that since date of Sikorsky's aforementioned statement the new Polish Government has assumed more definite form a fact which will henceforth afford Government officials the benefit of consultation on all aspects of envisaged public utterances previous to their issuance.

BIDDLE

740.00111A Recruiting/35

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State

[WASHINGTON,] October 7, 1939.

During the call of the French Ambassador,⁶⁰ he spoke of his conversation on yesterday with Mr. Dunn, Political Adviser on European Affairs, relative to calling French citizens in the United States to the colors in France. I gave him copies of our domestic statutes which prohibit enlisting or movements for enlisting in this country,⁶¹ and then added that, in my opinion, the officials of the French Government have a right to issue notice to French citizens in the United States that their class has been called to the colors in France by the French Government and that they are earnestly requested to respond without delay, etc. I said that if the Ambassador had any other ques-

⁵⁹ August Zaleski, Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs.

⁶⁰ Count de Saint-Quentin.

⁶¹ S. 2932, approved March 4, 1909, 35 Stat. 1089; H. R. 2893, approved May 7, 1917, 40 Stat. 89.

tions in mind about the details he might confer with Mr. Hackworth, Legal Adviser, whom I had requested to examine all of the World War precedents on this subject.

C[ORDELL] H[ULL]

740.00111A Armed Merchantmen/5

The Department of State to the Canadian Legation

MEMORANDUM

Having reference to the *aide-mémoire* of September 26, 1939 which was left with the Counselor of the Department of State on that date by the Canadian Minister, the Department makes the following observations:

Vessels of Canadian nationality plying between Bermuda and Halifax, carrying arms, ammunition and implements of war, may stop at an American port en route without violating any of the laws or regulations governing the international traffic in arms and without being required to fulfill any special formalities by reason of their carrying such cargo, provided that the arms, ammunition and implements of war are not unloaded at an American port.

As a temporary measure and pending a definite fixation of policy concurrently with or following Congressional action on the pending neutrality bill, this Government will not treat as war vessels armed belligerent merchant vessels whose arms are intended and used solely for defense, but it should be understood that this condition is subject to change without obligation to give prior notice. The Government of the United States reserves the right to determine for itself, through collectors of customs or otherwise, whether individual armed vessels are to be considered as merchant vessels or vessels of war.

WASHINGTON, October 11, 1939.

740.00111A Recruiting/87

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Chief of the Division of European Affairs (Moffat)

[WASHINGTON,] October 11, 1939.

The French Ambassador called this morning on Mr. Hackworth and Mr. Moffat with further reference to his conversation with the Secretary of State on October 7 regarding the calling of Frenchmen to France to fulfil their military obligations.

Several points were raised:

(1) The Ambassador inquired whether a notice to French citizens that their classes had been called to the colors and that they should

proceed to France would violate our laws. Mr. Hackworth said that it would not. Many of these individuals, however, might either be physically unfit or might claim exemption on account of physical disability; would there, therefore, be any objection to their undergoing a physical examination by a doctor selected by the French Consul? Mr. Hackworth perceived no objection. The Ambassador then said that in order not to have too many individuals waiting around until transportation was available they would be free to remain at their residences until steamship accommodation was available on a French ship. As a matter of fact, third class passage is provided by the French Government though if, as is usually the case, the individual prefers to travel either tourist or first class, he must pay the difference in passage rates. Mr. Hackworth said that provided the individual was already enrolled in the French military service, the sending of a notice, the extension of a physical examination and the furnishing of transportation would not seem to conflict with American law.

(2) The next point raised by the Ambassador was with regard to Frenchmen who might volunteer in advance of their call to military service. In this connection he pointed out that no French Consul can accept a volunteer or enroll him. The utmost he can do is to enable a French volunteer to take a physical examination in order that he may be spared a useless journey to France for the purpose of enlisting. Mr. Hackworth saw no difficulty on this point, it being understood that the man is at any time free to change his mind before actually carrying out his purpose to enlist.

(3) The third point was whether or not there would be any conflict with our laws in the matter of calling up volunteers who had not yet been enrolled. The Ambassador explained the French system as follows: At a given date consular officers send to young men in their district letters to the effect that their class is about to be called and inviting them to give the Consul details as to their status. These details are immediately sent to the Prefect, the head of their administrative district. The Prefect in turn invites the Consul to have the young man physically examined and this report is forwarded to France to be considered by the "Conseil de Revision" which is the final authority, and which decides whether the young man is liable to military service and is to be enrolled. The positive act of enrollment thus takes place on French soil. Once this is done the Consul is ordered to invite the young man to join his military unit. Mr. Hackworth said that this procedure also seemed to him to be in consonance with American law, provided it be left entirely to the discretion of the man whether he shall respond to the invitation.

(4) The Ambassador then brought up a more difficult question, namely, what should be done where the individual called to the colors possesses both French and American nationalities under their respec-

tive laws. Mr. Moffat explained that in other cases we had taken the position that it was quite all right for a foreign Consul to circularize or invite the registration of his nationals up to the time when they presented evidence that they were American citizens; we objected strenuously to any pressure being placed by the foreign Consul on an American. The Ambassador pointed out that should such American, who was still regarded as French under French law or who had not fulfilled his military duties under French law were to return to France serious penalties might be invoked. Mr. Hackworth hoped that the French would as a practical measure not lay themselves open to the charge of putting pressure on American citizens. The Ambassador agreed.

The final point raised was whether French citizens who were established here on an immigration visa, could return at the conclusion of their military service without entering again via the quota. Mr. Hackworth and Mr. Moffat both thought there might be serious difficulties on this score and Mr. Hackworth referred to the opinion rendered by the Attorney General in the case of some aliens who had left the country to fight in the Spanish civil strife. After some talk back and forth it was agreed that the application of the immigration law was so complicated, and presented so many angles, that it would save time and misunderstanding if the Ambassador were to send Monsieur Firot, the French Consul here, to discuss this phase of the matter with Mr. Avra Warren, Chief of the Visa Division. The Ambassador agreed to do this.

PIERREFONT MOFFAT

740.00111A Ports/1

The Canadian Legation to the Department of State

MEMORANDUM

In the event of the Royal Canadian Navy wishing to transfer any of His Majesty's Canadian ships from one coast of Canada to the other it would be of great assistance to know that fuel could be obtained in the ports of the United States. It would therefore be appreciated if the Legation could be informed of the attitude which the Government of the United States would adopt if it were proposed that in the course of such a journey from the Atlantic to the Pacific or from the Pacific to the Atlantic Canadian vessels should call for fuel at San Pedro and the Canal Zone. In no case would there be any question of ships remaining in port for more than 24 hours except under stress of weather or due to damage, and there would also be no question of using United States ports as a base for belligerent operations.

[WASHINGTON,] November 3, 1939.

740.00111A Ports/1

The Department of State to the Canadian Legation

MEMORANDUM

With reference to the Canadian Legation's memorandum of November 3, 1939 requesting information concerning the attitude the Government of the United States would adopt if Canadian Naval vessels were to call for fuel at San Pedro and the Canal Zone in transit from coast to coast, there is transmitted herewith a copy of a Proclamation by the President of the United States of America Proclaiming the Neutrality of the United States in the War Between Germany and France; Poland; and the United Kingdom, India, Australia and New Zealand,⁶² which contains provisions concerning the treatment to be accorded to belligerent ships of war, while in waters subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, from which the following is quoted as particularly pertinent in this connection:

"No ship of war of a belligerent shall be permitted, while in any port, harbor, roadstead, or waters subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, to take in any supplies except provisions and such other things as may be requisite for the subsistence of her crew in amounts necessary to bring such supplies to her peace standard, and except such fuel, lubricants, and feed water only as may be sufficient, with that already on board, to carry such vessel, if without any sail power, to the nearest port of her own country; or in case a vessel is rigged to go under sail, and may also be propelled by machinery, then half the quantity of fuel, lubricants, and feed water which she would be entitled to have on board, if dependent upon propelling machinery alone, and no fuel, lubricants, or feed water shall be again supplied to any such ship of war in the same or any other port, harbor, roadstead, or waters subject to the jurisdiction of the United States until after the expiration of three months from the time when such fuel, lubricants and feed water may have been last supplied to her within waters subject to the jurisdiction of the United States."

A copy of each of the following documents is also enclosed for the information of the Government of Canada in this relation:

A Proclamation by the President of the United States of America governing the Use of Ports or Territorial Waters of the United States by Submarines of Foreign Belligerent States.⁶³

An Executive Order Prescribing Regulations Governing the Passage and Control of Vessels Through the Panama Canal in any War in which the United States is Neutral.⁶⁴

A Proclamation by the President of the United States of America Prescribing Regulations Concerning Neutrality in the Canal Zone.⁶⁵
Neutrality Act of 1939, approved November 4, 1939.⁶⁶

⁶² *Ante*, p. 685.

⁶³ 54 Stat. 2672.

⁶⁴ 4 *Federal Register* 3823.

⁶⁵ 54 Stat. 2638.

⁶⁶ 54 Stat. 4.

A Proclamation by the President of the United States of America Proclaiming the Neutrality of the United States in the War between Germany, on the One Hand, and Canada on the Other Hand.⁵⁷

WASHINGTON, November 7, 1939.

740.00111A Combat Areas/11a : Circular telegram

The Secretary of State to American Consular Officers at Seaports

WASHINGTON, November 7, 1939—11 a. m.

Your attention is directed to the fact that, under the provisions of the joint resolution of Congress approved November 4 and the proclamation of the President of the same day defining combat areas, it is unlawful except under such rules and regulations as may be prescribed for an American seaman to serve on a vessel proceeding into or through such combat areas.

Your attention is further directed to the fact that seamen are included with other American citizens under the provisions of the joint resolution referred to restricting travel by American citizens on vessels of belligerent countries under such rules and regulations as may be issued.

This should be brought to the attention of any American seaman who may be within your district.

HULL

740.00111A Combat Areas/6 : Telegram

The Minister in Sweden (Sterling) to the Secretary of State

STOCKHOLM, November 8, 1939—2 p. m.

[Received November 8—11 a. m.]

190. Local agent of the McCormack Line asks if it is possible under the Neutrality Act that its vessels which call only at Scandinavian ports could proceed from the United States direct to Bergen or north of Bergen, thence to Bergen, Oslo, Goteborg, Copenhagen and Malmo, remaining entirely in neutral territorial waters. Agent points out 20 years establishment of his line to Scandinavia and great loss if forced to abandon. I gave him no encouragement but said I would transmit inquiry. He states steamship *Mormactide* is scheduled to sail next Friday from New York.

STERLING

⁵⁷ 54 Stat. 2652.

740.00111A Combat Areas/6: Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Minister in Sweden (Sterling)

WASHINGTON, November 8, 1939—7 p. m.

78. Your 190, November 8, 2 p. m. By Proclamation of the President of November 4 defining combat areas American vessels cannot proceed to any port in Norway south of Bergen; nor to any ports in Sweden, Denmark, nor to Baltic ports.

HULL

740.00111A Combat Areas/8: Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, November 8, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received November 8—5:30 p. m.]

2695. The Embassy is daily receiving numerous pressing inquiries from Americans relative to the application of the neutrality laws to their residence in France and travel through this country to other countries within the war zone as well as to the United States upon vessels of belligerent nations. Instructions are urgently requested⁶⁸ in this regard and concerning the renewal of passports beyond December 31 of those persons regularly residing here for business or other reasons who are required to renew their French cards of identity.

BULLITT

740.00111A Combat Areas/23

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Secretary of State (Berle)

[WASHINGTON,] November 13, 1939.

The Irish Minister^{68a} came in to see me today, at his request. He had been asked to discuss informally the question of the including of Ireland within the combat zone. His people were of the opinion that Irish ports are very safe; Galway, for instance, is as safe as any in the world. I said that we all of us regretted having to include any neutral country in the combat area, but had to be guided by considerations of actual danger. The Minister said that he understood we had had a chart of actual sinkings and I replied that that was true. He said he understood there were not any sinkings off the Irish coast. I said that

⁶⁸ Notation on the file copy indicates that circular telegram of November 17, 6 p. m., p. 706, and telegram No. 121, November 22, 6 p. m., p. 709, were considered to have answered this telegram.

^{68a} Robert Brennan.

there had been relatively few sinkings in that area but that we had to consider not only what had happened but what was likely to happen, in determining danger; and that there was very real reason to fear that shipments to Ireland would be taken to be for trans-shipment to Great Britain and that in consequence the Germans would intensify the warfare in that area.

The Minister then asked whether an agreement by the Irish not to trans-ship goods to England might not be a factor which would induce us to change our decision. I said I would be glad to take up the matter; but that I thought that the Minister ought to understand our natural dislike of getting this government involved in rationing arrangements, or any other similar agreements. We would not, for instance, care to be put in the position of assisting a blockade. I said I thought the Minister might count on every sympathy of this government with other neutral countries. We had, indeed, the distinct feeling that wherever possible inter-neutral trade should be kept open. We were, however, bound by the spirit as well as the letter of the Neutrality Act.

The Minister then turned to another subject. Certain students, he said, had completed two or three years of their work in Ireland and wished to go back but were denied passports. Could anything be done about it? I said that we had been withholding passports for European points unless there were impelling necessity, and that we had not included study as impelling necessity. The Minister said he thought Ireland was certainly no more dangerous than Switzerland, Scandinavia, or other similar places. I pointed out that we had denied passports for some of these very countries. I added, however, that I personally believed that the matter ought to be re-examined with a view to determining the actual danger in respect of various neutral countries; and that I would be glad to have the matter re-examined to see whether, in the light of circumstances, a different conclusion could be reached. There was, I agreed, a real distinction between neutral countries and belligerent countries—depending always, of course, on the likelihood that the neutral might be involved.

A. A. BERLE, JR.

740.00111A Combat Areas/30: Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, November 17, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received November 17—1 p. m.]

2391. Since the passage of the Neutrality Act the Consulate at Belfast has been receiving inquiries as to whether citizens may return

to the United States on British ships sailing out of Irish ports within the next few days. It has requested a ruling from this office but, inasmuch as the regulations issued by the Secretary of State on November 6⁶⁹ (Radio Bulletin No. 263) seem to apply, it would be appreciated if the Department could instruct Belfast directly in the present instance and inform the Embassy whether special authorization is required in every case for an American citizen who is now in a combat area and who has little choice other than to travel on a British ship.

KENNEDY

740.00111A Passenger Travel/38a : Circular telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to All American Missions and Consulates

WASHINGTON, November 17, 1939—6 p. m.

First. Under Section 5 of the Neutrality Act approved November 4, 1939 and regulations prescribed thereunder it is unlawful for American nationals to travel on vessels of France, Germany, Poland or the United Kingdom, India, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the Union of South Africa except as follows:

(a) American diplomatic and consular officers and their families, members of their staffs and their families and American military and naval officers and personnel and their families may travel on such vessels if the public service requires;

(b) Other American nationals may travel on such vessels outside the following described areas—on or over the North Atlantic Ocean north of 35 degrees north latitude and east of 66 degrees west longitude or on or over other waters adjacent to Europe or over the continent of Europe or adjacent islands;

(c) Other American nationals may travel on such vessels in the above-described areas if specifically authorized by the Secretary of State in individual cases.

Second. By regulations prescribed on November 17, 1939,⁷⁰ the provisions of paragraph (c) above were amended to authorize, as indicated in paragraph Fifth of this telegram, the Passport Division of the Department and diplomatic and consular officers abroad to endorse, under certain conditions, American passports validating them for travel on belligerent vessels.

Third. Section 3 of the Neutrality Act provides that it shall be unlawful except under such rules and regulations as may be prescribed for any American national to proceed, either on belligerent or neutral vessels, into or through areas defined by Presidential proclamation as

⁶⁹ 4 *Federal Register* 4510.

⁷⁰ Department of State *Bulletin*, November 18, 1939, p. 553, or 4 *Federal Register* 4640.

combat areas. By proclamation of November 4 the President defined a combat area as follows:

“All the navigable waters within the limits set forth hereafter. Beginning at the intersection of the North Coast of Spain with the meridian of 2 degrees 45 minutes longitude west of Greenwich; thence due north to a point in 43 degrees 54 minutes north latitude; thence by rhumb line to a point in 45 degrees 00 minutes north latitude; 20 degrees 00 minutes west longitude; thence due north to 58 degrees 00 minutes north latitude; thence by rhumb line to latitude 62 degrees north, longitude two degrees east; thence by rhumb line to latitude 60 degrees north, longitude 5 degrees east; thence due east to the mainland of Norway; thence along the coastline of Norway, Sweden, the Baltic Sea and dependent waters thereof, Germany, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, France and Spain to the point of beginning.”

Fourth. The following regulations relating to travel of American nationals into or through combat areas were prescribed on November 6:

“Holders of American passports issued or validated subsequent to September 4, 1939 for travel in Europe are hereby permitted to proceed, in accordance with the authorizations and subject to the restrictions noted on such passports, into and through any such combat area, whether by surface vessels or aircraft, or both, until further regulation. Holders of American passports, whether or not so issued or validated, presently in the combat areas defined by the proclamation of the President of the United States dated November 4, 1939, are hereby permitted to proceed into and through such combat areas in connection with travel in accordance with the authorizations and subject to the restrictions noted on such passports, until further regulations.”

Fifth. The following supplemental regulations relating to travel into or through combat areas and also on belligerent vessels were prescribed on November 17, 1939:

1. American nationals may not travel on any surface vessel or aircraft into or through any area which is or may be defined as a combat area unless they possess American passports which have been endorsed as valid as hereinafter provided for such travel by the Passport Division of the Department of State or an American Diplomatic or Consular officer abroad.

2. Each such endorsement shall be restricted in validity to one specific journey into or through a combat area and shall not be valid for travel on a belligerent vessel unless transportation on a neutral vessel is not reasonably available.

3. Endorsements valid for travel into or through a combat area may be placed on the passports of officers and employees of the United States, civil or military, and members of their families if the public service requires.

4. Endorsements valid for travel into or through a combat area shall not be placed on the passports of other American nationals except in cases of imperative necessity and unless other routes of travel to destination are not reasonably available.

5. These regulations are not applicable to the following American nationals who are hereby authorized, under the conditions stated, to travel into or through combat areas without being in possession of American passports endorsed as valid for such travel:

(a) Officers and enlisted personnel on board any vessels of the United States Navy or United States Coast Guard proceeding into or through combat areas under orders or in the course of duty.

(b) Officers and members of the crew of any American vessel which, by arrangement with the appropriate authorities of the Government of the United States, may be commissioned to proceed into or through a combat area in order to evacuate citizens of the United States who are in imminent danger to their lives as a result of combat operations incident to the present war.

(c) Officers and members of the crew of any American vessel proceeding into or through a combat area under charter or other direction and control of the American Red Cross and under safe conduct granted by belligerent states.

(d) Officers and members of the crew of any American vessel which in advance of a proclamation by the President defining any area as a combat area cleared and departed from an American or foreign port for a port or ports within the area so defined as a combat area; *Provided, however*, that the provisions of this subsection are limited to a current voyage so undertaken."

Sixth. If it becomes necessary to redefine combat areas you will be advised of proclamations to that effect.

Seventh. In applying the above-mentioned regulations relating to travel in combat areas officers to whom passports are submitted for endorsement should be guided by the following statement of the President "It is intended by regulation to provide that ships and citizens who are now in combat areas may get out of them; and for the minimum of necessary, official, relief and other similar travel which must go on in such areas." Travel of war correspondents which is necessarily incident to the performance of their duties should be facilitated as much as possible.

Eighth. Attention of American nationals should be called to the fact that those who travel into or through combat areas, or on belligerent vessels, contrary to prescribed regulations are subject to severe penalties in addition to the penalties imposed for using American passports in violation of restrictions contained in such passports or of the rules regulating their issuance.

Ninth. Every validating endorsement placed on a passport should be reported to the Department as an amendment on form 219.

Tenth. General instructions to Europe regarding the validation of all outstanding American passports will follow.

Eleventh. Please promptly repeat to Consulates by air mail.

WELLES

740.00111A Combat Areas/30 : Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy)

WASHINGTON, November 17, 1939—8 p. m.

1449. Your 2391, November 17, 6 p. m. Department considers cases fall under Section Fifth, paragraph 2 of circular telegram today's date, and that special validation of each passport for travel through combat area on belligerent vessel is required.

Belfast instructed to grant such validation by appropriate endorsement.

WELLES

740.00111A Passenger Travel/42 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, November 21, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received November 21—1:51 p. m.]

2799. Department's November 17, 6 p. m., to Bern. Does Section 5, paragraph 1, relating to travel into or through combat areas refer to travel into or through those countries bordering on the navigable waters described as combat areas in the President's Proclamation of November 4th, and if so are Americans presently in France required to obtain the specific endorsement of their passports for travel through or to other countries within the described areas or for return to France after visiting Spain or other countries outside of the described areas.

BULLITT

138 Emergency Program/365a : Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Minister in Switzerland (Harrison)

WASHINGTON, November 22, 1939—6 p. m.

121. Reference Department's 62, September 5, 2 p. m. and circular telegram November 17, 6 p. m. In pursuance of Departmental Order 811 of September 8 [4], 1939,¹¹ which provides that passports of American nationals abroad shall be submitted to American consular officers for endorsement under special instructions to be sent subsequently the following instructions are sent for guidance.

¹¹ Department of State *Bulletin*, September 9, 1939, p. 230, or 4 *Federal Register* 3892.

First. Department desires that all unexpired American passports in possession of persons residing or travelling in Europe, irrespective of date or place of issue or remaining period of validity shall, as hereinafter provided, be validated by American consular officers prior to January 1, 1940.

Second. As provided by above-mentioned order, when passports are issued or validated for use in Europe validity shall be restricted to countries and for period necessary to accomplish purpose of travel or residence in Europe and shall in no case be issued or validated for Europe for period in excess of 6 months or for unnecessary countries. At the end of 6 months period they are subject to revalidation in appropriate cases under same general conditions as governed original validation.

Third. Validation of unexpired passports should be accomplished by appropriate endorsement by officer on page of passport and impression of signing officer's right thumbprint on same page and in case of first validation also on photograph on passport. See circular instruction of October 6 regarding fingerprinting.⁷² An endorsement should be dated and read in substance "this passport expires date. It is not valid for travel in Europe except (naming necessary countries) for (naming purpose)."

Fourth. When new passports are issued thumbprint should similarly be placed on page bearing officer's signature and on photograph affixed to passport.

Fifth. Applicants for new passports and bearers requesting validations must execute applications on form 219 and submit two additional recently taken photographs, on each of which officer shall affix right thumbprint of applicant. One photograph shall be affixed to form 219 and forwarded to Department. Duplicate of form with other photograph attached should be retained in consulate.

Sixth. Local authorities should be notified of requirement that after January 1, 1940 all passports bear validating endorsements and thumbprints and should be requested to refer holders of passports not so validated to nearest American consulate. In cases of suspected fraud appropriate steps should be taken to insure that passports will reach consulate safely.

Seventh. Unless applicant is personally known to consular officer Department desires thorough check through all appropriate sources including if desired local authorities into *bona fides* each applicant with a view to preventing improper use of outstanding passports and retiring those which may now be in alien hands.

⁷² Not printed.

Eighth. In issuing or validating passports for travel officers will of course be guided by circular telegram of November 17 regarding travel in combat areas and on belligerent vessels.

Ninth. Passports of persons whose travel in Europe is not reasonably necessary should be endorsed as valid only for immediate return to the United States. Reasons for residence or travel in belligerent countries in Europe must be of more imperative character than in neutral countries. American news correspondents, relief, philanthropic and religious workers, and representatives of American commercial concerns may be regarded as in approved categories when identified as such by proper credentials. Having in mind that Department does not desire to create unnecessarily cases of real hardship leniency may be shown in cases of persons having a permanent residence abroad and of those whose financial situation is such that return to United States for residence would involve serious financial difficulties. In applying test of necessity with respect to persons desiring to return to Europe Department has, for the present, adopted a more lenient attitude with respect to Spain, Portugal, Italy, Sweden, Norway, Switzerland and Denmark and has accordingly regarded students adult members of families and persons with urgent personal business as eligible.

Tenth. Passports should not be issued or validated for travel in opposing belligerent countries. There is no objection to validating for a belligerent country passports previously valid for an opposing belligerent if passport has first been appropriately amended to exclude belligerent first included.

Eleventh. Promptly repeat to all offices in Europe by air mail.

WELLES

740.00111A Passenger Travel/42 : Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Bullitt)

WASHINGTON, November 22, 1939—8 p. m.

1433. Your 2799, November 21, 6 p. m. Presidential Proclamation so far limits combat areas to water. Countries bordering on waters described as combat areas are not themselves combat areas.

Telegraphic circular instruction regarding validation of passports of Americans in Europe dispatched Berne today.⁷³ It is believed this circular covers second point your telegram.

WELLES

⁷³ *Supra.*

138 Emergency Program/368 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Consul General at Calcutta (White)

WASHINGTON, November 27, 1939—3 p. m.

Your 24th.⁷⁴ Passports of American women married to belligerents may not be endorsed for travel into combat area except in cases of imperative necessity such as critical illness or other impelling cause. American women travelling into combat area on foreign passports are liable to penalties set forth in Neutrality Act of 1939.

HULL

740.00111A Combat Areas/62

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Secretary of State (Berle)

[WASHINGTON,] November 28, 1939.

The Irish Minister called to see me today, at his request. He referred to his earlier conversation indicating that Ireland objected to being included within the danger area. He wished to know whether there were anything new.

I said that the question had, of course, received consideration. On the other hand, it had to be realized that the danger in the area marked out by the President was steadily growing; the free mines had made their appearance and none of us as yet had any knowledge as to the areas which would be covered. In accordance with the President's statement that he would conform the danger zones to actual danger as circumstances might appear, I hoped that the Irish Minister would feel confident that we would watch the situation and that no one would be happier than we if the actual circumstances warranted modification of the danger zone so as to increase the possibilities of traffic between neutrals.

He referred, likewise, to his earlier conversation in which he had expressed the hope that we might lift our passport requirements, permitting Americans to travel to Ireland. I said that we had asked for information from our people abroad, with a view to gathering the data on which the question of passport controls could be reviewed.

The Minister then brought up the subject of the proposed air transport lines. He pointed out that, acting on the assumption that the landing rights which this government had negotiated for in 1935 would be used, considerable amounts of money had been invested in putting the Shannon air field in condition. Further, if flights were to be commenced in 1940, certain additional work had to be done and therefore the Minister hoped we could give him some indication as

⁷⁴ Not printed.

to whether the danger area would be continued so as to prevent air flights. He pointed out that there was a distinct difference between air hazard and marine hazard as matters now stand.

I told him I was entirely sympathetic to his point of view; that I thought the time had come when we ought to consider whether there was the same degree of danger in the air as there was at sea; and that I would bring the subject up for consideration.

The Minister referred briefly to the fact that the Export Lines apparently were contemplating (whenever possible) service to Ireland, much as the Pan-American Airways had done. They had indicated that they were prepared to maintain winter service, which Pan-Air was not. I pointed out that the whole matter of the Export Lines' participation was now before the Civil Aeronautics Authority, which naturally had to determine a number of questions, including the financial responsibility and technical ability of the Export Lines, and so forth. I presumed we would have a decision on that point within a few weeks.

NOTE. It seems to me that the Inter-Departmental Committee should reconsider the question as to whether air traffic into the west of Ireland is dangerous. As matters now stand, I question whether air traffic into Ireland is any more dangerous than air traffic to, say, Lisbon, or any other place. There is plainly emerging a distinct difference in conditions between air and sea transport; and it is not inconceivable that the danger area could be profitably modified accordingly.

A. A. BERLE, JR.

740.00111A Combat Areas/56

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Chief of the Division of
European Affairs (Moffat)*

[WASHINGTON,] December 2, 1939.

The Swedish Minister called to ask if there had been any developments with relation to his representations that the combat area be modified so as to permit American ships to continue from Bergen to Göteborg through territorial waters. I replied that I had heard of no plan to modify the combat area as the Minister desired, and personally felt that with increase in the damage done by mines such a modification would be difficult to justify. The Minister then said that the Scantic Line was urging him to intensify his representations, but that he had told them that they were an American company and should approach their own Government directly. He therefore wanted it made clear that he was not expressing the Scantic Line's

views, but the views of his own Government as telegraphed some weeks ago.

P[IERREPONT] M[OFFAT]

740.00111A Combat Areas/53a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Chargé in the United Kingdom
(Johnson)*⁷⁵

WASHINGTON, December 2, 1939—5 p. m.

1541. Department desires to be advised promptly of any American vessels taken into any belligerent port, especially in the combat area, contrary to the provisions of the American Neutrality Act. You will recall that the Act does not apply to vessels which sailed from an American port prior to the effective date of the Act.

HULL

740.00111A Combat Areas/53a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Chargé in the United Kingdom
(Johnson)*⁷⁶

WASHINGTON, December 7, 1939—8 p. m.

1565. Department's 1541, December 2, 5 p. m. Have any American vessels been taken into the combat area since the approval on November 4 of the Neutrality Act of 1939?

Telegraph reply.

HULL

740.00111A Combat Areas/64 : Telegram

*The Chargé in the United Kingdom (Johnson) to the Secretary
of State*

LONDON, December 8, 1939—6 p. m.
[Received December 8—2: 12 p. m.]

2568. Department's 1565, December 7, 8 p. m. This Embassy knows of no American ships which have been taken into the combat area and which sailed from the United States subsequent to the approval of the Neutrality Act. The *Scanmail* was taken in to Kirkwall on November 5. Others which sailed from the United States prior to November 4 entered the combat area while proceeding to neutral ports in Holland and Belgium and were detained at control bases as reported in Em-

⁷⁵ The same telegram was sent December 2, 7 p. m., to the Ambassador in France (No. 1473).

⁷⁶ The same telegram was sent December 7, 6 p. m., to the Ambassador in France (No. 1497).

bassy's number 2563, December 8,⁷⁷ and previous cables. Sometimes a few days elapse between the time an American ship arrives at control base and the date we are notified by the Minister of Economic Warfare but subject to this delay we believe they have notified us of all American vessels detained.

The *Nishmaha* while not taken into the combat area was detained at Gibraltar on November 11 and about November 19 was given an option of submitting to further detention or of proceeding to Barcelona and from there to Marseille and discharging detained items at Marseille when she would be free to proceed. The *Nishmaha* left Barcelona on November 27 arrived at Marseille November 29 and should finish discharging detained items December 10. In the meantime the Ministry of Economic Warfare have not yet decided which of the detained items are ultimately to be seized and which released in spite of representations from this Embassy urging them to do so. All seaport Consulates in the United Kingdom have been asked to report to this Embassy immediately any cases of American ships being taken into the combat area.

JOHNSON

740.00111A Combat Areas/67 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, December 8, 1939—10 p. m.
[Received December 8—9: 28 p. m.]

2935. Department's 1497, December 7, 6 p. m.⁷⁸ So far as ascertainable no American vessel which cleared from American ports after November 4 has entered a French port in the combat area.

Department's 1478, December 2, 7 p. m.⁷⁹ was circulated to Consuls in France who were instructed to cable Department each entry contrary to Neutrality Act.

BULLITT

740.00111A Passenger Travel/58a : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Minister in Switzerland (Harrison)

WASHINGTON, December 16, 1939—5 p. m.

134. On December 14, 1939, following regulations prescribed,⁸⁰ amending the regulations issued on November 6, 1939, as amended by regulation issued on November 17, 1939, relating to travel on belliger-

⁷⁷ Not printed.

⁷⁸ See footnote 76, p. 714.

⁷⁹ See footnote 75, p. 714.

⁸⁰ Department of State *Bulletin*, December 16, 1939, p. 686, or 4 *Federal Register* 4871.

ent vessels, and also amending the regulations issued on November 17, 1939, relating to travel into or through combat areas:

"Individuals who possess both American nationality and a foreign nationality, and who habitually reside in the foreign state of which they are nationals, and who are using passports of such foreign state, may, while en route to and from such state, travel on a belligerent vessel across the English Channel, the Irish Sea or St. George's Channel without obtaining specific authority and without an American passport endorsed as valid for such travel. Individuals who undertake travel under the conditions indicated shall do so on the understanding that they will look for protection to the foreign state whose passport they carry."

Repeat to consulates by air mail.

HULL

740.00111A Passenger Travel/63a : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Minister in Switzerland (Harrison)

WASHINGTON, December 20, 1939—6 p. m.

138. Please urgently inform all missions in Europe that in carrying out Department's telegrams of November 17, 6 p. m. and November 22, 6 p. m. the travel of news correspondents and broadcasters should be expedited and facilitated every possible way.

HULL

**CONTROL OF COMMERCE BY BELLIGERENT
GOVERNMENTS**

**I. ESTABLISHMENT OF CONTROL MEASURES BY THE BELLIGERENTS
INTERFERING WITH NEUTRAL COMMERCE; RESERVATIONS BY
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICAN RIGHTS**

340.1115/207 : Telegram

The Minister in the Netherlands (Gordon) to the Secretary of State

THE HAGUE, August 30, 1939—3 p. m.

[Received August 30—11:08 a. m.]

143. Personal for the Under Secretary. Will you please give me some information concerning suggestions with respect to eventual arrangements for free entry of goods into Rotterdam and Antwerp which I understand the President made in conversations he had yesterday with the Dutch Minister and the Belgian Ambassador?

GORDON

740.00112 European War 1939/2 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Minister in the Netherlands (Gordon)

WASHINGTON, August 30, 1939—5 p. m.

69. Personal for the Minister. Your 143, August 30, 3 p. m. In the conversation to which you refer, the President expressed his interest should war break out in having kept open a so-called "neutral channel" from the Atlantic to the ports of Rotterdam and Antwerp in order to afford a means whereby neutral shipping would have access to those ports without incurring danger. The President said that this Government would be willing to join with the other two Governments mentioned as well as with other neutral powers in joint representations to the belligerents for the purpose mentioned. If and when there are further developments in this regard, you will be informed.

HULL

740.00112 European War 1939/2: Telegram

The Minister in the Netherlands (Gordon) to the Secretary of State

THE HAGUE, September 1, 1939—2 p. m.

[Received September 1—11 a. m.]

147. Personal for the Secretary and Under Secretary. Department's 69, August 30, 5 p. m. I understand that Belgian Ambassador and Dutch Minister have conveyed to you the results of joint consultation here yesterday between head of Economic Division of Belgian Foreign Office and local Foreign Office officials concerning eventual blockade measures in general and the President's suggestion in particular. Foreign Office this morning emphasized the marked cordiality and similarity of views prevailing throughout the consultation. Further consultations are expected to be held; as they will take place at a frontier town or towns halfway between the two capitals they will probably be frequent.

The following given me in the strictest confidence by Secretary General may be of interest for background and I risk repeating some items already known to Department. While the Dutch and Belgians will keep [the Scandinavian countries?] in touch with the arrangements, the Dutch view is that there is not much use in working closely with them. . . . the Dutch say that they and the Belgians feel that it will be better to work closely together—that is to say not making their decisions dependent upon consultation with and agreement of the Scandinavian countries but only keeping in contact with them—in all matters affecting blockade and free neutral shipping routes. The Dutch anticipate the institution of blockade and submarine warfare upon the outbreak of hostilities.

GORDON

740.00112 European War 1939/46

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State

[WASHINGTON,] September 4, 1939.

Lord Lothian¹ called at my request. I brought up the whole question of American shipping and suggested that each of our two Governments should designate experts to confer with a view to adopting something like the certificate system that was in operation during the last part of the World War,² and otherwise simplify in every possible

¹ British Ambassador in the United States.² See *Foreign Relations*, 1917, supp. 2, vol. II, pp. 804-1052 *passim*; also *ibid.*, 1918, supp. 1, vol. II, pp. 938-971 *passim*.

manner the British and American situation as it would relate to the interference by Great Britain with American commerce, thereby reducing the occasion for halting or taking our ships into British ports or otherwise interfering with American commerce destined especially for small countries in Europe, such as Scandinavia, Holland and Belgium; that this would probably deal with the problem of rationing and its simplification. The Ambassador seemed interested in the matter and said he would communicate at once with his Government. I said to him that this proposed step would avoid the chief portion of the difficulties and serious controversies which raged between our two Governments during the first two years and more of the World War.

C[ORDELL] H[ULL]

740.00112 European War 1939/27

The British Ambassador (Lothian) to the Secretary of State

No. 374

WASHINGTON, September 5, 1939.

SIR: I have the honour, under instructions from His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to inform you that a proclamation has been issued in London specifying the articles to be treated as contraband of war by His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom. These articles are as follows:—

SCHEDULE I

Absolute Contraband.

(a) All kinds of arms, ammunition, explosives, chemicals, or appliances suitable for use in chemical warfare and machines for their manufacture or repair; component parts thereof; articles necessary or convenient for their use; materials or ingredients used in their manufacture; articles necessary or convenient for the production or use of such materials or ingredients.

(b) Fuel of all kinds; all contrivances for, or means of, transportation on land, in the water or air, and machines used in their manufacture or repair; component parts thereof; instruments, articles, or animals necessary or convenient for their use; materials or ingredients used in their manufacture; articles necessary or convenient for the production or use of such materials or ingredients.

(c) All means of communication, tools, implements, instruments, equipment, maps, pictures, papers and other articles, machines, or documents necessary or convenient for carrying on hostile operations; articles necessary or convenient for their manufacture or use.

(d) Coin, bullion, currency, evidences of debt; also metal, materials, dies, plates, machinery, or other articles necessary or convenient for their manufacture.

SCHEDULE II

Conditional Contraband.

(e) All kinds of food, foodstuffs, feed, forage, and clothing and articles and materials used in their production.

I have [etc.]

LOTHIAN

300.115(39) *Santa Paula*/31

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Under Secretary of State
(Welles)*

[WASHINGTON,] September 8, 1939.

The British Ambassador called to see me at my request. I told him that I wanted to have an off-the-record talk with him and that I was not to be understood as making any protest even unofficially. I said that I had had word last night from one of the head officers of the Grace Line that one of the Grace Line vessels of American registry plying from the port of New York had been hailed a few hundred miles north of the coast of Venezuela by the commanding officer of a British cruiser and that the captain had been requested to give formal assurances whether there were any German passengers on board, the implication being that if the captain had not given such assurances, the officers of the cruiser would have boarded the vessel to search for German passengers and possibly might have taken some off. I told the Ambassador that I had not yet the full details of the incident and I consequently could not say whether the vessel in question, the *Santa Paula*, had been halted or whether the information had been requested and received by radio. I said that I was sure the Ambassador would agree with me that any act by British cruisers affecting American ships in waters so close to the United States involving possible boarding of them and taking off of civilian passengers would create a very highly unfortunate impression upon American public opinion at this time and was something thoroughly undesirable in itself, since if civilian passengers actually had been taken off, such act would be clearly counter to international law.

The Ambassador expressed his great appreciation of what I had said, emphasized that he thoroughly agreed with me, and said that he would take the necessary steps to prevent occurrences of this kind from happening.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

740.00112 European War 1939/31: Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, September 8, 1939—4 p. m.

[Received 9:10 p. m.]

1143. Embassy's 1075, September 5, 1 p. m.⁴ An examination of the prize law code promulgated in the *Reichsgesetzblatt* dated September 3 indicates that the code is in general based on the Declaration of Paris 1856,⁵ the several pertinent Hague Conventions,⁶ and the Declaration of London 1909.⁷

The following appear to be the principal provisions in the code not found in the foregoing declarations and conventions:

Article 14 among other things provides that a neutral vessel is liable to capture if it offers passive resistance. In this connection article 35 provides that "if after stoppage of a vessel the visit or search cannot be properly carried out because of the behaviour of the master or crew (passive resistance) the vessel is liable to capture."

Article 40 (2) provides that if a vessel equipped with wireless telegraphy sends messages regarding the forces or military operations which are of service to the enemy the "vessel can be captured and condemned for giving aid to the enemy within one year of the time when the message is sent."

Respecting the visit and search of vessels, article 57 (2) provides that "if by reason of special circumstances the sending of a boarding party is not possible the requirement may, by way of exception, be made that the ship's papers be brought on board the warship for examination."

There is a section entitled "Instructions as to Course" which consists of the following articles:

Article 60. "Instructions as to course consist of the order to a vessel to proceed to a specified place for the carrying out of visit and search."

Article 61. "Instructions as to course for the purpose of visit are admission [*admissible*] if (1) there are strong reasons for suspicion and (2) visit cannot be carried out at once because of the condition of the sea, the danger of enemy action or the nature of the vessel which is to perform the visit or of the vessel to be visited."

Article 62. "Instructions as to course for the purpose of search are admissible if (1) there are still strong reasons for suspicion after the visit has been made and (2) the searching of the vessel on the spot is impossible or inexpedient.["]

Article 63. "(1) A vessel which does not obey the instructions as to course can be compelled to do so by force. (2) It is liable to capture."

⁴ Not printed.

⁵ *British and Foreign State Papers*, vol. XLVI, p. 8.

⁶ For texts of the 1907 conventions, see *Foreign Relations*, 1907, pt. 2, pp. 1181-1283.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 1909, p. 318.

In connection with the destruction of vessels, article 74 (2) provides that "ship's boats are not to be regarded as a place of safety unless the safety of passengers and crew under the existing conditions of the sea and the weather is assured by the proximity of land or the presence of another vessel which is able to take them on board."

Full text and translation of prize law code will be transmitted by mail.⁸ Report on prize courts follows.⁹

Please inform Navy.

KIRK

740.00112 European War 1939/30 : Telegram

The Minister in the Netherlands (Gordon) to the Secretary of State

THE HAGUE, September 8, 1939—4 p. m.

[Received 8:19 p. m.]

160. For the Secretary and Under Secretary. Secretary General has just sent for me and put the following before me in strictest confidence.

Yesterday a meeting was held at Breda between the Belgian and Dutch blockade and trade delegates (see my 147, September 1, 2 p. m.). They had before them for discussion a draft agreement proposed to them by the British.

Article 1 provides for reaching agreement as to maximum quantities of certain commodities to be exported by the neutral country directly or indirectly to Germany, the neutral country to supply the British Government with monthly statistics of the export and reexport of such commodities to all destinations in Europe.

Article 2 limits to a quantity to be agreed upon, the export of certain commodities from Britain into the neutral country; such imports to be utilized only for domestic consumption and not to be exported from the neutral country directly or indirectly.

In this draft proposal no actual quantities are mentioned under articles 1 and 2.

Articles 3 and 4 are unimportant.

Article 5 provides that pending the negotiations respecting the unsettled quantities above mentioned the neutral country will take necessary steps by means of export licenses or otherwise to enable the exportation to all destinations in Europe of certain listed commodities to be checked and will not permit the export to Germany in any one month of more than one-twelfth of the average annual export of such commodity to Germany during a period of years which is not specified in the draft.

⁸ Not printed.

⁹ Telegram No. 1172, September 9, 6 p. m., not printed.

Article 6 earnestly desires [*sic*] the agreement is to remain in force for 1 month after signature and thereafter for successive periods of 3 months if not denounced 1 month before the end of any such period.

List of commodities to be checked under article 5 covers a very wide range. Will not cable list unless desired; the immediate important point now seems to be the principle underlying the British offer.

Along with the draft proposal the British gave the Dutch and Belgians the British Order in Council of September 4 enumerating articles of absolute and of conditional contraband (I presume the Department already has the contents of this order to refer to).

Although they have not specifically been told so the Dutch understand that this proposal was made to the other Oslo states.¹⁰ The Dutch inquired if it was made to Italy and were told that it had not been; this presumably is because transit trade from Italy to Germany is so relatively insignificant that the British are not concerned therewith.

The Dutch state that their position is considerably different from the Belgians: firstly, the Dutch have a large mercantile fleet. Secondly, Holland is predominantly agricultural and Belgium may be considered predominantly industrial; consequently Belgium does not need very much more export trade than what she can carry on with allied and neutral countries and her industrial exports do not consist of articles primarily required by Germany. It is represented Germany is greatly interested in acquiring Dutch agricultural exports.

The Dutch view this British proposal as a very clever move; they feel that it is not only in Britain's natural interest but also that the manner in which it has been advanced is calculated to win favor in the United States. The Dutch realize that the British want to prevent a repetition of 1914, when much larger stocks than were needed for internal consumption were imported into Holland. Between 1914 and 1918 the British gradually tightened up on that process. Now the whole matter may be again presented for decision at once and the Dutch wonder if in filling out the quantities of commodities under articles 1 and 2 the British will not try to approximate the situation obtaining in 1918. While article 5 envisages a provisional limitation to normal annual exports to Germany—and the Dutch consider this perfectly reasonable—the Dutch have no reason to feel any assurance that the implementing of articles 1 and 2 will be based on any such reasonable limitation.

Moreover, the Dutch ask themselves if a country desirous above all of maintaining real neutrality can "even under duress" agree with

¹⁰ i. e., Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden, the states which signed the convention at Oslo, December 22, 1930; League of Nations Treaty Series, vol. cxxvi, p. 341. A new convention, signed May 28, 1937, at The Hague, included Finland and Luxembourg with the original group; for text, see *ibid.*, vol. clxxx, p. 5.

one belligerent to limit exportation to an opposing belligerent. If they enter into an arrangement of the nature proposed with England will not Germany insist that they are not being neutral? The Dutch also are naturally apprehensive that while Germany may be prepared not to object to pursuance of normal Dutch trade with England provided the Dutch keep up their normal trade with Germany (see my 150, September 2, 1 p. m.¹¹) she will actively retaliate if various commodities essential to her which she has normally been getting from the Dutch are put on the proscribed list by Great Britain (hence the importance of the list of commodities to be checked, which includes, for instance, rubber, tin, and bauxite, and of the Order in Council).

On the other hand it is possible that Germany might listen to practical argument: namely if the Dutch do not enter into an arrangement of this kind with the British they most probably will not get imports sufficient for even their own internal consumption needs and they certainly will be unable to export anything to Germany; if, however, they enter into such an arrangement they will reasonably get sufficient imports to permit them to export something to Germany.

These are the considerations the Dutch Government, and presumably the Belgian now, are now weighing.

Practically the whole Dutch mercantile fleet bound for Dutch ports is now held up in the Downs and the Dutch Government now has under consideration issuing an order "at any moment" (this is entirely necessary) for all homeward bound Dutch ships to go to neutral ports avoiding British waters. For instance, the *Nieuw Amsterdam* now en route from New York may be ordered to return there, though more probably it will be ordered to call, for instance, at a northern Spanish port.

There is no doubt that the question of being able to preserve their neutrality is causing the Dutch Government increasingly grave concern. Aside from the problem presented in this respect by the foregoing trade considerations the Dutch are definitely worried over the attitude taken by Germany concerning airplane flights over Holland: the amount of German complaint that Holland is not properly protecting her neutrality against England is entirely disproportionate to what has actually occurred (see my 154, September 4, 5 p. m.,¹¹ in addition to which there have since been other cases of unidentified foreign airplanes—so far as is known in small quantities only—flying over Dutch territory) and is unpleasantly symptomatic mistake in tactics in drumming up frivolous excuses for subsequent drastic action on Germany's part.

¹¹ Not printed.

Will you please convey the foregoing to the President especially in view of the matter referred to in Department's 69, August 30, 5 p. m.? Needless to say, it is essential that I be kept promptly informed of any further developments in that connection.

GORDON

740.00112 European War 1939/36 : Telegram

The Minister in the Netherlands (Gordon) to the Secretary of State

THE HAGUE, September 9, 1939—1 p. m.

[Received September 9—10:45 a. m.]

164. For the Secretary and Under Secretary. My 160, September 8, 4 p. m. Foreign Office this morning received draft and [*sic*] reply note from Belgium declining in principle to accept the British proposal. While it does not say that the proposal involves an abandonment of neutrality, it points out that the interpretation and implementations of articles 1 and 2 are quite uncertain and that the application of the principles which appear to underlie these articles seems susceptible of creating serious difficulties; by way of counterproposal, draft reply suggests that it would be much more practical to take up cases concretely as they arise. It states that the transitory provisions envisaged by article 5 are already in effect in Belgium. It expresses confidence that the well-known humanitarian principles of Britain will not permit of measures which could deprive Belgium of the importation of articles necessary to the sustenance of her population and voices the hope that Belgian ships now held up by the British will be allowed to proceed at the earliest possible moment.

The Dutch Government is considering this Belgian draft reply and at the moment is leaning toward agreement with the general tenor thereof.

GORDON

740.00112 European War 1939/45

The British Ambassador (Lothian) to the Secretary of State

No. 385

WASHINGTON, September 10, 1939.

SIR: I have the honour to inform you, under instructions from His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, that in the war which is being forced upon them, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom intend to use their best endeavours to facilitate innocent neutral trade so far as is consonant with their determination to prevent contraband goods reaching the enemy. They will be com-

pelled to use their belligerent rights to the full, but they will at all times be ready to consider sympathetically any suggestions put forward by neutral governments designed to facilitate their bona fide trade.

In order to secure their objects, His Majesty's Government have established contraband control bases at Weymouth, Ramsgate, Kirkwall, Gibraltar and Haifa. Vessels bound for enemy territory or neutral ports affording convenient means of access thereto are urgently advised to call voluntarily at the appropriate base, in order that their papers may be examined, and that, when it has been established that they are not carrying contraband of war, they may be given a pass to facilitate the remainder of their voyage. Any vessel which does not call voluntarily will be liable to be diverted to a Contraband Control base if an adequate search by His Majesty's ships at sea is not practicable.

Every effort will be made to expedite the examination of vessels, particularly those which call voluntarily for the purpose. Vessels can greatly contribute to this end by having their papers in good order and free from ambiguity, and by ensuring that manifests, etc., are drawn up in the English language. A stowage plan of the cargo would also be helpful.

As regards vessels calling at British ports, other than contraband bases, in the ordinary course of trade, I am instructed to inform you that, before clearance can be given, Customs will require full particulars, not only of goods to be landed, including transit and trans-shipment goods, but also of goods remaining on board. Delay will be avoided if such vessels are ready to furnish the Customs with full and true particulars in writing of all such goods. The particulars should include the nature and quantity of each item of cargo, the names of the consignor, consignee and shipper, the country of origin and the countries of immediate and ultimate destination.

I have [etc.]

LOTHIAN

740.00112 European War 1939/66

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Chief of the Division of Controls (Green)

[WASHINGTON,] September 11, 1939.

Señor Don Luis de Silva, Marquis de Zahara, Chargé d'Affaires of Spain, called at my office this morning introduced by Mr. Wendelin of Eu.²⁸ He said that he had been instructed by his Government to

²⁸ Division of European Affairs.

ascertain this Government's opinion of the recently published British contraband list and to ascertain whether this Government intended to register a protest with the British Government in respect to that list.

I told Señor de Silva that the pressure of business during these last few days had been so great that I had not had an opportunity to examine the list in question. I said that I understood from my colleagues, however, that it was in all essentials similar to the contraband list published by this Government on June 30, 1917.¹⁴ I added that it was my understanding that this Government had no present intention of making any representations to the British Government in regard to its list but that the list was being carefully studied and that I did not know what action, if any, in regard to it might possibly be taken in the future.

JOSEPH C. GREEN

740.00112 European War 1939/49 : Telegram

The Minister in the Netherlands (Gordon) to the Secretary of State

THE HAGUE, September 11, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received September 12—7: 15 a. m.]

169. For the Secretary and Under Secretary. My 167, September 10, 1 p. m.¹⁵ Dutch and Belgians have agreed on identic note. Conditionally being put before the Oslo States with the suggestion that if they wish they can send a similar note but they are being told that whether they do or not the Dutch and Belgians will send this note in reply to the British proposal. As soon as note is delivered to British I will be given a copy.

GORDON

¹⁴ For section II of "Instructions for the Navy of the United States Governing Maritime Warfare, June, 1917," dealing with contraband, see *Foreign Relations*, 1918, supp. 1, vol. II, p. 920.

¹⁵ Not printed; it reported a meeting of the Belgian and Netherland Foreign Ministers at Breda, September 11, in an endeavor to reach agreement on an identic reply to the British proposal (740.00112 European War 1939/40).

740.00112 European War 1939/258

Memorandum of Conversation, by Mr. Leroy D. Stinebower of the Office of the Adviser on International Economic Affairs

[WASHINGTON,] September 12, 1939.

Participants: British Embassy: Sir Owen Chalkley¹⁶
 Mr. Keith Officer¹⁷
 Captain Curzon-Howe¹⁸
 Mr. Foster¹⁹

U. S. Navy: Captain Schuirmann
 Captain Moore

State Dept.: Mr. Moffat²⁰ Mr. Hickerson²³
 Mr. Feis²¹ Mr. Alger Hiss²⁴
 Mr. Hawkins²² Mr. Stinebower

Mr. Feis opened the discussion by referring briefly to the conversation between the Secretary of State and the British Ambassador to the effect that it might be desirable for the two Governments to explore in a preliminary way questions arising out of the British interference with American trade with neutral countries with a view to avoiding or minimizing as much as possible many of the problems and difficulties which arose during the last War. After communicating with his Government, the Ambassador had indicated that the British Government was agreeable to such discussion. Sir Owen Chalkley verified these terms of reference, adding his understanding they were to be only exploratory conversations, the object being to minimize to the greatest extent possible delays to American ships and cargoes which are inevitable in the present circumstances. It was further mutually understood that for various reasons, the conversations would be conducted with only northern neutrals in mind. These were defined as the Oslo group of nations. The question of whether the northern neutrals include Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia was by agreement left open.

It was agreed to dispense with any review of the statistics of the trade of the United States with the northern neutrals on the understanding that such information would be sent promptly to the British Embassy. It was added orally, however, that it should be kept in mind that a certain part of American trade with those countries has normally been transshipped through German free ports or through

¹⁶ Commercial Counselor of the British Embassy.¹⁷ Australian Counselor of the British Embassy.¹⁸ British Naval Attaché.¹⁹ Legal adviser for the British Embassy with local rank of First Secretary.²⁰ Chief, Division of European Affairs.²¹ Adviser on International Economic Affairs.²² Chief, Division of Trade Agreements.²³ Assistant Chief, Division of European Affairs.²⁴ Assistant to the Adviser on Political Relations.

the United Kingdom, and that the recorded figures would tend to understate total United States exports.

As a final orientation of the problem, Mr. Feis recalled that the trade of the United States with the neutral area is very substantial and that in one sense the Oslo group of nations constitutes the leading area of the world which is conducting trade along the lines of the American trade agreements system, and that for these reasons our trade with those areas assumed a position of great importance to us.

Mr. Foster then briefly reviewed the system of control adopted by the British during the last War. Because cargoes on neutral ships were subject to very serious delay by British investigation, various devices were adopted. At first shipping companies on their own initiative started sending cables of inquiry to London giving information as to their cargoes and asking whether they would be permitted to pass through the British blockade to neutral countries. Sometimes these inquiries were answered and other times not. These were followed by "letters of assurance" which some shippers obtained in advance of shipment. The difficulties that arose in this case, however, arose out of the fact that some cargoes in a given ship would have letters of assurance whereas others would not and the ship would be delayed anyway.

These preliminary systems were followed by the "Navicert" system. Fairly comprehensive notice was given to shippers in advance that the system was to be imposed. Following that, the prospective shipper would obtain a form from the nearest British consul on which he gave very extensive information as to the cargo, consignee, et cetera. These forms were then sent to the British Embassy, or some central clearing authority, and in some cases referred to London for an indication as to whether the cargo could go through or not or whether it must await further investigation. If everything appeared in order, a certificate was issued.

This system tied in with many other types of agreements between the British Government and private exporters in the United States and other neutral countries as to how much would be exported to other countries, agreements with shippers that the spirit of the blockade would not be broken, agreements with private parties or neutral governments as to import rationing, et cetera. When the United States came into the war, it joined in the same system.

Unless everything in a ship had been navicerted, there was danger that the ship might be delayed, whereas otherwise it might go through with the minimum delay, therefore shippers had agreed among themselves that everything in a given ship would be required to have received a certificate.

It was alleged that the system in the last War had worked to the satisfaction of everyone.

Mr. Officer then briefly outlined the system now contemplated by the British, alleging that it was made to work chiefly for the "advantage and convenience of neutrals." Simple suggestions have already been made public to shippers as to how to avoid undue delay, such as making public lists of contraband, suggesting that boats carry an extra copy of their manifests for inspection, et cetera. It now appears that the navicert system will be revived as soon as necessary details and public notice thereof can be worked out.

In response to particular questions, the following additional facts were elicited as to the operation of the system in the past:

Certificates were issued on cargo alone, not for the ship on which it moves. Certificates were good for only two months. In issuing certificates, account was taken of the amounts of imports which were permitted to neutrals under rationing controls or agreements. The navicert system was not controlled by the contraband list but many other considerations were taken into account in issuing certificates.

A question was asked whether the navicert system would enable shipment of arms, ammunitions and implements of war destined for neutral governments to move through the blockade. In reply it was stated that applications for certificates on such things as airplanes, for example, destined for the Netherlands would be more carefully examined and subject to more delay than would certain other shipments.

It is proposed to have the system worldwide in scope and in response to a question as to how the British trade with neutrals was affected, it was replied that all British trade will be closely controlled.

Mr. Chalkley then asked what systems of controls had been set up by the United States for the enforcement of the Neutrality Act²⁵ and what controls were contemplated. In reply it was explained that the decisive control is exercised by the Division of Controls in this Department before a license is granted, that the utmost care is taken to be sure that the consignments of arms, ammunition and implements of war are genuinely destined to neutral countries. In recent days the examination has been doubly careful. The licenses so obtained are presented by the shippers at the time of shipment. Further, customs officials have begun greatly to intensify checking up on all cargo, in many cases requiring the deposit of export declarations and manifests before clearance is allowed to ships. This whole problem is still being further considered by the responsible Departments of the Government. Reference was also briefly made to the measures which the shipping companies had themselves voluntarily taken to require permits before goods can be delivered to their piers.

It was agreed that a memorandum of the new regulations and machinery for checking on export cargo from the United States would

²⁵ Approved May 1, 1937; 50 Stat. 121.

be prepared for the information of the Embassy and of the Department. On their part the Embassy undertook to see that all notices issued for the information of shippers would be sent to Mr. Hickerson.

Mr. Chalkley expressed the hope that it would be possible for this Government to coordinate its measures with those of the British Government so as to reduce delays and interference with American exports to a minimum. No reply was made on this point other than an agreement that both the Embassy and the Department would give thought to all of the problems raised by the discussion with a view to resuming the discussion at a later date.

Mr. Feis added that of course behind all of this discussion and the prospect of any further discussion, would lie the determination of what attitude this Government is going to take toward the whole problem of belligerent interference with our trade with neutrals. This question of policy which would have to be settled would have a determining bearing upon whatever else might be said as to the mechanics of any system which the British might set up.

740.00112 European War 1939/55 : Telegram

The Minister in the Netherlands (Gordon) to the Secretary of State

THE HAGUE, September 12, 1939—4 p. m.
[Received September 12—1:56 p. m.]

171. My 160, September 8, 4 p. m., particularly section 4.²⁸ At the Breda meeting referred to in my said telegram Belgians informed Secretary General of Dutch Foreign Office that they had just received a cable from the Belgian Ambassador in Washington substantially as follows: Secretary of State told the Ambassador that the American Government wish to see maritime communications with Belgium kept open; the American Government felt that the best procedure was to get in touch with London to examine possible measures to be taken for overcoming blockade difficulties; after the American and British Governments had been in communication the former would get in touch with Belgium and Holland.

Secretary General has referred to this matter several times in my conversations with him in the intervening days. The Dutch felt that this probably had some connection with subject matter of the conversation referred to in Department's 69 of August 30, 5 p. m. and wondered whether a similar communication would be sent here. Secretary General says that the Belgians appear to be uncertain as to whether we intend first to talk to London and then approach Holland

²⁸ I. e., the last three paragraphs of the telegram under reference.

and Belgium but the Dutch interpret the message to mean this. A very brief telegram of clarification would be appreciated.

GORDON

740.00111 European War 1939/123 : Telegram

The Chargé in Belgium (Wilson) to the Secretary of State

BRUSSELS, September 12, 1939—7 p. m.

[Received 7:06 p. m.]

131. The permanent committee of the representatives of the Oslo powers met yesterday in Brussels in order to consider the problems confronting these countries arising from the economic measures to be put into effect by France and Great Britain against Germany. Two representatives of Switzerland attended the meeting as observers.

An economic and a juridicial subcommittee were set up for the purpose of recommending concerted action by the Oslo powers.

I am officially informed that the economic committee is studying (1) the regulation of imports and exports during the existence of war; (2) purchases in other neutral countries; (3) maritime transport. It is probable that the committee also will consider the question of economic relations with the belligerent states.

I understand that the juridicial committee will study the general question of neutrality as well as the organization of an international commission whose function would be to coordinate the policy of the Oslo states in carrying out a neutral policy.

WILSON

740.00112 European War 1939/62 : Telegram

The Minister in the Netherlands (Gordon) to the Secretary of State

THE HAGUE, September 13, 1939—11 a. m.

[Received 11:53 a. m.]

173. For the Secretary and Under Secretary. My 169, September 11, 6 p. m. I received copy of identic note in question last night. In general it follows the lines set forth in my 169 [164[?]], September 9, 1 p. m. Three interesting changes are: (1) Note recites that the Dutch Government has affirmed its determination to maintain its neutrality and that the Governments of neighboring belligerent countries have solemnly declared that as long as this was maintained they would respect it; (2) by way of counterproposal the Dutch Government declares its readiness to enter immediately into negotiations with the British diplomat exploring the possibility of arriving at an arrangement which on the general basis of the British proposal would

respond to the necessities of safeguarding the food supply of Holland and in a reasonable measure the free communication of its ports and commerce with both belligerent and neutral countries; (3) no mention is made of the transitory provisions envisaged by article 5 of British proposal.

Will send text of note by first confidential means.²⁷

GORDON

740.00112 European War 1939/83a : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Minister in Norway (Harriman)

WASHINGTON, September 13, 1939—8 p. m.

34. The questions involved in the maintenance and control of Norwegian trade with the belligerents are, of course, of great interest to us and we are anxious to be kept fully and promptly informed in detail of all developments resulting from British or German proposals to Norway in this connection. We believe that if you approach the appropriate Norwegian authorities for detailed information they may probably gladly keep you currently informed. The Norwegian Government can be assured that any information which it may be willing to impart to you will be held by us in the strictest confidence.

HULL

740.00112 European War 1939/55 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Minister in the Netherlands (Gordon)

WASHINGTON, September 14, 1939—6 p. m.

88. Your 171, September 12, 4 p. m. The Department considers it desirable to discuss the questions referred to first of all with the British Government and is presently engaged in such conversations. As soon as it can be ascertained from these conversations what course of procedure in the opinion of this Government may be the most desirable, the Department will immediately inform the Belgian and Dutch Governments with a view to making such progress as may be possible along the lines of the suggestions conveyed by the President in the conversations of which you are already informed. You will be advised of all developments.

Two partly separate questions may present themselves, that of keeping open maritime communication as mentioned in your 171, and that of exactly what trade can move.

HULL

²⁷ Despatch No. 885, September 13, not printed.

740.00112 European War 1939/72: Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, September 15, 1939—1 p. m.

[Received 4:46 p. m.]

1252. Embassy's 1226, September 12, 1 p. m.²⁸ Although fully impressed with the extremely difficult positions in which their countries are placed as a result of the state of war existing between England and Germany the Danish, Dutch, and Belgian representatives in Berlin appear to attach no immediate importance to the warning contained in the Foreign Office's D. D. P. K.^{28a} of September 12 that Germany would regard as unneutral conduct any submission by a neutral state to actual limitations or formal controls on its commerce by a third state which would affect the normal transit and export trade of a neutral state with Germany.

They regard it as natural that Germany by such a warning should endeavor to stiffen the resistance of the Oslo powers to British blockade restrictions. The members of the staffs of the three missions above referred to do not believe that the warning means that Germany is planning to take any early aggressive action against them if they accept British blockade restrictions which they state they are powerless effectively to resist. At the moment they think that Germany's economic interests are best served by the neutrality of the Oslo powers but admit that the situation might change as the war progressed and that later the independence and neutrality of the northern countries particularly Denmark, Holland, and Belgium might no longer be advantageous to Germany.

At the Dutch and Belgian missions it was indicated that their Governments had already informed Germany that they would endeavor to maintain "normal" trade with the Reich but that they could do nothing if France and Britain prevented them from obtaining raw materials normally entering into their trade with Central Europe.

The mention in the D. D. P. K. of the treaty between Denmark and Germany cited as an example of the German conception of the rights and duties of neutral states referred according to the Danish Legation to the protocol attached to the German-Danish nonaggression pact signed May 31, 1939²⁹ recognizing the right of one contracting party to conduct "normal" trade with an enemy of the other party.

KIRK

²⁸ Not printed. The telegram contained a translation of a German Foreign Office statement appearing in the press to the effect that Germany would continue its normal trade with neutral states and did not object to their continuing their normal trade with states at war with Germany; it was implied that encroachment by England on the economic activities of neutrals might compel Germany to revise this attitude. (740.00112 European War 1939/132)

^{28a} Deutsche Diplomatisch-Politische Korrespondenz.

²⁹ League of Nations Treaty Series, vol. cxovii, p. 37.

740.00112 European War 1939/73 : Telegram

The Minister in the Netherlands (Gordon) to the Secretary of State

THE HAGUE, September 15, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received September 15—3:40 p. m.]

176. For the Secretary and Under Secretary. I have conveyed the contents of the Department's 88, September 14, 6 p. m. to Foreign Minister and Secretary General who were much gratified to learn that we were already engaged in conversations with the British. All the more so as the Foreign Minister had just prepared for communication to me a proposal of the same general nature which he wished to submit for our Government's appreciation.

A brief memorandum which the Foreign Minister gave me reads substantially as follows: He felt that it might have a sobering effect on British tendencies to interfere with neutral shipping and especially with neutral merchandise in neutral bottoms destined for neutral countries, if the neutral countries concerned should make it known in London that while the rights of belligerents under international law to impose certain limitations on neutral trade are recognized, the neutral countries must insist that British measures of this nature taken against neutral merchandise and shipping be not attended with undue delay but that the British authorities take necessary steps to insure all reasonable celerity.

Amplifying this brief memorandum the Foreign Minister explained that what he wished to inquire was whether we would be disposed to take the initiative in securing the agreement of neutral countries, South American as well as European, to make representations of this nature; if so, his thought was that these representations while not to be made jointly in a body by the diplomatic representatives in London of the neutral countries concerned should be made severally by such representatives on the same day and the representations should of course recite that they were being made in common accord.

As the Department may be aware upwards of 100 Dutch ships alone have been detained in British waters, for what in view of the duration of hostilities is an unduly long time, for cargo examination and discharge in connection with which facilities normally to be expected even at such a time as this have not been prepared; it is also to be noted that some of these ships have been ordered to go as far as Hull and Middlesbrough for these operations.

It is clear that the Foreign Minister hopes that the idea of giving a lead to South American countries as well as to European neutrals may appeal to us.

GORDON

740.00112 European War 1939/91 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Belgium (Davies) to the Secretary of State

BRUSSELS, September 18, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received 8:47 p. m.]

137. For the President and Secretary of State. Supplementing Wilson's cables 132, September 12, and 135, September 15, midnight,³⁰ I report that I had conferences today with Prime Minister Pierlot and Foreign Minister Spaak and ascertained the following:

(1) Belgium is trying desperately to preserve its neutrality and still avoid inciting German aggression.

(2) Situation is grave and growing worse.

(3) The British some days ago proposed a formal agreement with Belgium providing that the British blockade would [not?] prevent Belgium imports of foodstuffs and raw materials which were necessary for the use of the Belgian population but which imposed conditions that would assure that there shall be no reexport of such commodities to Germany contrary to British interests. Last week Germany threatened that if neutrals accepted the imposition of such blockade conditions, Germany would no longer consider such countries neutral and would act accordingly. I am informed from other sources that a special German mission has been here for some days insisting that exports to Germany shall be the same as heretofore. Minister Spaak advises that yesterday, Sunday, the Foreign Office here received a still more severe and "menacing" note from Germany containing the implied threat that if Belgium did not protect her sovereign rights and her neutrality herself, Germany would be prepared to protect such neutral rights for her.

(4) While recognizing the belligerent rights of Britain and the necessities of that situation Belgium, nevertheless, is trying to avoid an explicit formal agreement with either belligerent and is trying to solve or alleviate the situation by securing an arrangement whereby each individual case may be settled as it arises. Unless this is effected there is great fear that Germany will be incited to immediate action and possible invasion.

(5) Both officials expressed the desire to keep the United States fully and completely informed of each development in the situation.

DAVIES

³⁰ Neither printed.

800.8840/1407

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Chief of the Division of European Affairs (Moffat)

[WASHINGTON,] September 19, 1939.

The Counselor of the Belgian Embassy, Baron de Gruben, called this morning. He said that he wished to discuss the question of maritime communication between the United States and Belgium.

Belgium, according to Baron de Gruben, was interested in seeing American ships continue in the carrying trade to Belgium for three reasons: (1) Because the Belgian merchant marine was insufficient to carry Belgian commerce; (2) because they felt it only right that the American merchant marine should transport the goods which Belgium bought in the United States; and (3) because they felt that the lead of the United States would be followed by other neutral ship-owning powers.

On August 28th the President had told both the Belgian Ambassador and the Netherlands Minister that should war come the United States was interested (a) in the maintenance of neutral trade, and (b) in maintaining open a sea lane to Antwerp and Rotterdam. The Belgian Ambassador had never been clear as to whether the President referred to an actual marked channel or whether he was using the words "sea lane" as an image to mean the continuance of shipping from the United States to Belgium.

Accordingly the Belgian Ambassador had called on the Under Secretary, who told him that as he saw the problem it possessed three phases: (1) The State Department would consult the Navy Department and obtain its opinion as to whether it was safer for American ships to sail through the English Channel or via the Norwegian Coast and the North Sea; (2) following the receipt of the Navy's opinion the American Government would discuss matters with the British Government; (3) thereupon the American Government would initiate discussions with the neutral nations covering not only shipping but cargoes.

The Belgian Counselor then enumerated the dangers or inconveniences to American shipping destined for Belgium. He excluded danger from German submarines as he said that it was to Germany's interest to have cargoes carried to neutral ports, even if none of them were re-exported to Germany. The physical danger therefore was concentrated in mines, either anchored or floating. The inconveniences resulted in the delays attendant to visit and search, which in turn depended upon agreements, express or implied, between the United States and Great Britain regarding contraband and the quantities of goods which might enter Belgium.

Inasmuch as the Belgian Ambassador had heard nothing from Mr. Welles or any official of the American Government for nearly two weeks Baron de Gruben came to ask me what I could, with propriety, tell him.

I replied that the problem he had raised could be divided into two parts. The one dealt with shipping, on which I would have to inform myself. The other and bigger problem dealt with the maintenance of trade between the United States and neutral countries. On this I said considerable progress had been made. A sub-committee was in existence which had canvassed the matter in some detail and had obtained the views of the various interested Departments. This committee had nearly completed the formulation of its recommendations, and as soon as these had been approved the Belgian Ambassador or Baron de Gruben would be invited down to discuss the matter further. In general, we took the position that it was to our interest to see that as much of a normal trade as possible between the United States and neutrals, which was for their own use, should be maintained. Baron de Gruben replied that he hoped we would take the leadership of the neutral nations in waging the fight for neutral rights. I replied that I thought that in his word picture he was using colors altogether too vivid. He said that he had expressed his hope rather than his anticipation, but that in any event the European neutrals would have to follow the lead of the United States, whatever that lead might be.

He said that in theory there was no way to reconcile the British and German views. Britain was going to bend every effort to make Belgium cease exporting to Germany. Germany was going to insist on its normal trade with Belgium, although it would allow Belgium to carry on its normal trade with Great Britain. As there was no logical way to merge these two different conceptions, the problem resolved itself into working out the best *modus operandi* possible. I said that I agreed, and that I thought it would be not one but a perpetual series of working arrangements that we would be engaged in from now on.

Baron de Gruben then changed the subject and asked whether it was true that the United States had advised the British Government to make its purchases through a special mission of its own rather than through J. P. Morgan or some other large bank in New York. I replied that I did not think that this Government had given any advice, but that I did know that there was considerable feeling throughout administration circles that Britain and France would have made a mistake had they chosen a New York bank as their purchasing agents.

The rest of the conversation dealt with the probable course of the war and the dangers to which Belgium felt herself exposed.

PIERREPONT MOFFAT

740.00112 European War 1939/114

The German Chargé (Thomsen) to the Secretary of State

[Translation]

WASHINGTON, September 19, 1939.

MR. SECRETARY OF STATE: By order of my Government, I have the honor to send to Your Excellency, herewith, the text of the Law amending the Prize Law and the Proclamation on Conditional Contraband of September 12, 1939.

Law Amending the Prize Law of September 12, 1939:

In its endeavor to spare as far as possible peaceful maritime trade, the German Government, in the Prize Law of August 28 declared as unconditional contraband only such articles and materials intended for enemy territory or enemy armed forces as serve directly the land-, sea- or air armament. However, since the British Government has issued a list of unconditional contraband far exceeding that limitation, the German Government feels compelled likewise to enlarge the scope of unconditional contraband.

The German Government has therefore adopted the following Law which is hereby proclaimed:

Article 1. The following articles and materials are considered as contraband (unconditional contraband) if they are intended for enemy territory or for enemy armed forces:

1. Weapons of all kinds, and parts and accessories thereof;
2. Ammunition and parts thereof; bombs, torpedoes, shells, and other kinds of projectiles, contrivances for shooting or throwing such projectiles; powder and explosives including detonators and igniting materials;
3. Warships of all types, their parts and accessories;
4. Military aircraft of all kinds, their parts and accessories, airplane motors;
5. Armored cars, tanks and armored trains, armor plate of all kinds;
6. Chemical combat materials and contrivances and machines used to throw or blow such chemicals;
7. Military uniforms and equipment;
8. Means of communication, signaling and military illumination, and parts thereof;
9. Transportation and communication equipment and parts thereof; draft animals; beasts of burden and animals for riding;
10. Materials of all kinds for producing energy and heat, lubricating oils;
11. Gold, silver, currency, certificates of debt;
12. Implements, tools, machines and material for the production or use of the articles and products enumerated under figures 1 to 11.

Article 2. Article 1 of this Law becomes Article 22, Section One, of the Prize Law.

Article 3. This Law becomes effective upon the date of its proclamation.

Headquarters of the Fuehrer, September 12, 1939.

The Fuehrer and Reich Chancellor

sgd. Adolf Hitler

The Chief of the High Command of the Defense Force

sgd. Keitel

The Reich Minister of Foreign Affairs

sgd. von Ribbentrop

The Reich Minister for Justice

sgd. Dr. Guertner.

Proclamation regarding Conditional Contraband, of September 12, 1939:

Since the British Government has issued a list of conditional contraband and has included therein foodstuffs and other necessities of life, the German Government now feels compelled also on its part to proceed in a corresponding manner. The following is therefore proclaimed:

Under the conditions of Article 2 of the Prize Law of August 28, 1939, the following articles and materials are considered as contraband (conditional contraband):

Foodstuffs (including live animals), luxuries, feeding stuffs and clothing, articles and materials used for their production.

This proclamation becomes effective on September 14, 1939.

Berlin, September 12, 1939.

The Chief of the High Command of the Defense Force

sgd. Keitel

The Commander-in-Chief of the Navy

sgd. Raeder

The Reich Minister of Foreign Affairs

sgd. von Ribbentrop

The Reich Minister of Justice

sgd. Dr. Guertner.

Accept [etc.]

THOMSEN

740.00112 European War 1939/141

The German Chargé (Thomsen) to the Secretary of State

AIDE-MÉMOIRE

WASHINGTON, September 19, 1939.

On the occasion of the presentation to the Department of State of the United States of his note of September 19, 1939,³¹ dealing with the "Act to Amend the German Prize Law" and the "Ordinance on

³¹ *Supra.*

Conditional Contraband", of September 12, 1939, the German Chargé d'Affaires made the following remarks:

We are merely following the procedure applied against us by England ever since the beginning of the War. It goes without saying that our procedure can by no means be regarded as directed against neutral states; it is exclusively directed against England. We would regret it if neutral shipping and commercial interests should be injured thereby; and we would be prepared to rescind or restrict our measures to the same extent to which England rescinds or restricts her measures taken against supplies provided by neutrals to Germany. Unfortunately, however, there are indications that further intensification of the English procedure is to be expected which, in turn, would compel us to follow suit.

The German Chargé d'Affaires also presented to the Department of State an unofficial translation of the "Act to Amend the Prize Law" and of the "Ordinance on Conditional Contraband", of September 12, 1939.

740.00112 European War 1939/119

The French Ambassador (Saint-Quentin) to the Secretary of State

[Translation]

The Ambassador of France to the United States has the honor to advise His Excellency the Secretary of State that the Government of the French Republic is taking thought, in the course of the current hostilities, to spare as far as possible the legitimate interests of neutral commerce. However, it sees itself obliged to avail itself of the rights at sea recognized to belligerents. The exercise of such rights will moreover cause the less disturbance to bona fide navigation if the latter will be good enough to lend itself voluntarily to the indispensable operations.

Mr. de Saint-Quentin has the honor to indicate to the Honorable Cordell Hull the essential features of the provisions intended to put into effect the determination of the Government of the Republic to prevent contraband goods from reaching the enemy.

The list of the articles considered under the present circumstances as contraband has been made the subject of a modification by the French Government inserted in the *Journal Officiel* of Monday, September 4, 1939 (page 10,096). Measures have been adopted to facilitate the inspection of vessels in the ports of Brest, Sète and Oran.²² Vessels bound for enemy territory or neutral ports, which do not have the intention of making a stop in another French or allied port, are urgently advised, in their own interest, to stop in whichever one of

²² On September 29, 1939, the French Ambassador informed the Department that the port of Havre had been designated as a port of search instead of Brest, and Marseilles instead of Sète.

the three above-mentioned ports is most convenient for them (incorporated in one of the British inspection ports). The inspection of the said vessels will be conducted with all desirable celerity. When it has been shown that they are not transporting contraband of war they will receive a certificate which will facilitate the continuation of their voyage. Any vessel which should not voluntarily call would run the danger of being inspected subsequently and in case of need turned aside from its route in conditions less favorable for it.

The Government of the Republic will try in all cases to make the inspection of vessels as short as possible and, in particular, those which make voluntary calls for that purpose. Moreover, it pertains to the vessels concerned themselves to make the necessary operations as short as possible. The time of the control operations will be noticeably shortened if the vessels have complete papers in due form indicating without any ambiguity the exact nature of all the parts of their cargo, the names of the shippers, of the forwarding agents and the real consignees, the place of origin and the immediate as well as final destination of all the articles transported.

It is particularly recommended in this connection not to make use of bills of lading made out to order or drawn up in the name of a broker or forwarding agent, which would necessitate verifications which might involve delays. Some detailed plans of the loading of the cargo, as well as translations in French or English of the manifests and bills of lading would accelerate the execution of the control operations. In a general way vessels calling at French ports other than the control ports above mentioned will have to furnish to the French authorities the complete description not only of the goods which are to be unloaded, including goods in transit and for transshipment, but also of the goods remaining on board. The written declaration made to the French authorities of all the complete and true details concerning such goods—nature and quantity of each of the parts of the cargo—name of the shipper, the forwarding agent and the real consignee, place of origin, place of immediate, intermediate and final destination will permit vessels to avoid delays. French and allied vessels which might without knowing it transport contraband will be subject to inspection like neutral vessels.

The French Government moreover declares that it is ready at any time to give sympathetic consideration to suggestions which might be made to it by the neutral governments with a view to facilitating bona fide navigation by their nationals to such degree as is compatible with its right to prevent any contraband reaching the enemy.

Mr. de Saint-Quentin is happy to avail himself of this opportunity

to renew to the Honorable Cordell Hull the assurances of his very high consideration.

WASHINGTON, September 21, 1939.

740.00112 European War 1939/191

The Danish Minister (Kauffmann) to the Secretary of State

The Minister of Denmark presents his compliments to the Honorable the Secretary of State and acting under instructions from his Government has the honor to inform him that after the meeting in Copenhagen on September 18 and 19 of the Northern countries the following communiqué was issued :

"The Prime Ministers and Foreign Ministers of Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden, and the Minister of Iceland to Denmark representing his Government, discussed at a meeting in Copenhagen on the 18th and the 19th of September 1939 the conditions of their countries in the calamitous war which has broken out. They confirm once again the steadfast will of their countries to carry on a strictly equitable policy of neutrality in their relations with the parties in conflict. They are determined to pursue this policy in close collaboration with each other and to cooperate in its execution with other states inspired by similar intentions. The Northern countries are convinced that neither of the groups of powers have any desire whatsoever to see any of these countries involved in the hostilities. Just as the three Scandinavian countries in the year 1914 by a joint note to the belligerent powers³³ maintained the rights of neutral States to trade and to traffic on the high seas, so the Northern countries are now determined, in order to safeguard their own economic life, to uphold their right to continue their traditional commercial relations with all States including the belligerent powers. They have reasons to trust that they will be able through open negotiations with the opposing parties, to arrive at an understanding with both parties to the effect that this commercial intercourse be respected. In the face of the manifold difficulties and losses which the war in any circumstances will inflict also upon the Northern peoples in their daily existence and in their economic life, they intend by an intimate cooperation to alleviate the difficulties to the greatest possible extent. It has been decided that the special committees set up in view of the war conditions shall enter at the earliest date into mutual negotiations on all appropriate issues. The Ministers taking part in the discussions appeal to their peoples to face the anxieties and privations of the war time with calmness and composure. They give expression to their conviction that it is in the interest not only of the Northern peoples but of all nations that throughout the war there remains a group of States which may facilitate that reconciliation of the belligerent nations which the future must bring."

WASHINGTON, September 23, 1939.

³³ *Foreign Relations*, 1914, supp., p. 360.

740.00112 European War 1939/132: Telegram

The Minister in the Netherlands (Gordon) to the Secretary of State

THE HAGUE, September 23, 1939—1 p. m.

[Received September 23—11:30 a. m.]

194. Some days ago Secretary General informed me that German Minister here had given him an *aide-mémoire* conveying the point of view of the German Government towards any yielding by the neutrals to British pressure concerning neutral trade with Germany. Today he gave me a copy thereof. While short, it contains the essence of the DDPK article transmitted to the Department by Berlin's number 1226, September 13 [12], 1 p. m.³⁴ and is extremely sharp in tone, closing with the following threat: if neutral governments should in any way comply with British demands Germany would reserve to itself the fullest freedom of action to combat with all means such participation of neutral states in the economic war directed against Germany.

Secretary General states that when he received this document from the German Minister he qualified it to the latter as "pure nonsense" and when a similar communication was delivered by the German Ambassador to the Belgian Foreign Minister the latter declared it "inadmissible".

The Dutch have been debating whether to send a reply to the German communication but present indications are that they will not; as they feel that the *aide-mémoire* is probably a paraphrase of an instruction drafted by Ritter³⁵ whom they know of old, they are inclined not to take its unusual tone too seriously.

GORDON

740.00112 European War 1939/42: Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Minister in Norway (Harriman)

WASHINGTON, September 23, 1939—3 p. m.

49. We understand that early in September instructions were issued to all Norwegian vessels in European waters to proceed immediately to Norwegian or safe neutral ports and await orders.

Please telegraph present status and terms of these instructions and whether any instructions have been issued which would affect the movement of Norwegian vessels operating between the United States or other neutral ports and belligerent ports not in European waters.

HULL

³⁴ See footnote 28, p. 734.

³⁵ Karl Ritter, German Ambassador on special assignment in the German Foreign Office.

800.8840/1399 : Telegram

The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State

HELSINKI, September 24, 1939—noon.

[Received 1:05 p. m.]

193. With reference to the Legation's telegram number 184, September 20,³⁶ in conversation with the Minister of Foreign Affairs yesterday he inquired with manifest anxiety whether the United States had any plans for maintaining maritime communications with neutral northern countries to insure essential supplies to them and exports from them. He did not conceal his hope that cooperation along these lines between the United States and the northern countries could be secured and told me that this matter among others had been discussed at the conference of northern Ministers at Copenhagen last week. I told the Minister that pending reconsideration by Congress of the so-called neutrality law I doubted whether it had been possible for our Government to formulate any such plans.³⁷

It is evident that in Finland, if not in the other northern countries, there is earnest hope that the United States will cooperate actively to maintain economic stability against the pressure which has already begun from belligerents.

SCHOENFELD

740.00112 European War 1939/151

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Chief of the Division of European Affairs (Moffat)

[WASHINGTON,] September 25, 1939.

The Belgian Ambassador called this morning to inquire what had transpired with the idea thrown out by the President to maintain a "sea lane" to Belgium and the Netherlands. The Ambassador said that he had difficulty in reconciling the President's earlier suggestion with his message to Congress recommending that the American Merchant Marine be forbidden from entering danger zones.³⁸

I answered the Ambassador that while I did not see how it would be possible to give him any more precise information regarding the shipping situation until the Congressional debates on neutrality were clarified, yet I did not see that the creation or maintenance of a sea lane necessarily required that American ships should use that sea lane.

³⁶ Not printed.³⁷ Department's telegram No. 113, October 2, 7 p. m., stated, in reply, that "final determination of the whole shipping question must await the outcome of Congressional consideration of amendments to Neutrality Bill and possible legislation on war risk insurance."³⁸ President Roosevelt's message to Congress, September 21, 1939, Department of State *Bulletin*, September 23, 1939, p. 275.

Meanwhile I called to the Ambassador's attention the two schools of thought regarding cash and carry that were becoming vocal on Capitol Hill. One school wished to exclude American ships from all belligerent ports; the other school wished to exclude them from danger zones. There was a distinction between the two and it was not yet clear which concept would prevail.

I told the Ambassador, however, that it was quite clear that the idea of cash and carry was demanded by the public and that there would undoubtedly be limitations on the right of American ships to ply back and forth between America and certain European ports. The Ambassador said that he realized the force of all that I had told him, but that Belgium was still hoping that somehow or other arrangements might be made to keep American ships in the trade between New York and Antwerp.

PIERREPONT MOFFAT

740.00112 European War 1939/140: Telegram

The Minister in Norway (Harriman) to the Secretary of State

OSLO, September 25, 1939—noon.

[Received September 25—9:13 a. m.]

64. Department's telegram No. 49, September 23, 3 p. m. On September 3 after consultation between Foreign Office, Admiralty and Shipowners Association, broadcasts were sent to all Norwegian vessels in European waters bound in belligerent ports to seek nearest Norwegian or other neutral port and await instructions from the owners. This was an emergency measure to give owners time to decide on their own responsibility whether destinations of ships should be changed or not. No specific instructions have been issued since that time. The present status, a Foreign Office official today states, is that all Norwegian vessels are free to trade with the United States and all other neutral ports and with belligerents in and outside European waters.

HARRIMAN

855.001 Leopold/60

*The King of the Belgians (Leopold III) to President Roosevelt*³⁹

BRUSSELS, 26 September 1939.

MY DEAR PRESIDENT AND FRIEND: In agreement with my Cabinet I have decided to send M. G. Theunis, Minister of State, on a special mission to your Government.

³⁹ Transmitted to the Department on October 26, 1939, by the President, for preparation of reply. The text of this letter had previously been approved by the Belgian Foreign Minister (023/7-1354).

M. Theunis, who has been Prime Minister several times in my Father's time and since my accession, has learned to know and to appreciate your Country in the course of several visits to the United States of America. I venture to express the hope that after having been so kind as to receive him, you will be good enough to facilitate the accomplishment of his mission.

I take this opportunity to place before you, in all sincerity, here under, my personal views on Belgium's particular position.

Knowing you have a perfect command of the French language, I think it preferable that I should express myself in my native tongue.

[Translation]

Since the war of 1914-1918, in the course of which American supplies saved our country from famine, the great Republic of the United States has never ceased to show the warmest sympathy for Belgium. My entire people and I have, as you know, always been deeply grateful for it.

Today, when the dark days of 1914 are returning for part of Europe, it is to America that we quite naturally turn, and we at once receive from her the expected comfort: you have been good enough to suggest the organization of special facilities for sending food supplies to Belgium and the Netherlands. It gives Belgium the greatest possible encouragement to know that its existence is once more assured, thanks to your help. Thus the United States continues tirelessly the work for peace to which it has always been devoted.

We have followed with admiration, Mr. President, your ceaseless efforts to save the world from the madness of war. It did not lie within your power to spare Europe this calamity.

Belgium has been deeply touched by the expression of your peaceful sentiments and by their deeply humane spirit. It finds in them the justification for its own attitude and the reasons for maintaining it.

Since 1936, my country has solemnly declared its will to adhere to a policy of absolute independence. In so doing, it has pursued a twofold purpose: to serve world peace and to assure and preserve its own liberty.

Independence does not mean indifference. All Europe's problems find their echo in Belgium for the very reason of its geographic position, surrounded by the three Great Western Powers. More than any country in the world Belgium, overpopulated and with an economy which has not yet recovered from the war of 1914-1918, is, for vital reasons, desirous of maintaining normal economic currents; more than any other territory, it runs the risk of total destruction if it becomes involved in war.

Thus, when we saw the ominous clouds presaging the storm gather over Europe, we made a supreme effort and reminded the men who held

the fate of so many millions in their hands, of their responsibilities, to the end that they might seek through conciliation the basis for a lasting peace founded on justice.

Our voice was not heard. War broke out. The mobilized Belgian Army is ready to fight in defense of the nation's territory and independence. My people, which is in no wise responsible for the distant and immediate causes of the war, has proclaimed its will to maintain its neutrality as long as its sovereignty and the integrity of its territory are respected.

Our position is therefore clear: we are determined to remain outside the conflict provided our territory is not violated. If, to suppose the impossible, it should be violated, we are resolved, as in 1914, to defend ourselves with all our strength for Right and Liberty.

But Belgium's mission, entirely peaceful and conciliatory, is not ended. By placing itself outside the conflict, my country is limiting the extent of that conflict; it interposes itself between the great Belligerent States, and each of them, for a different reason, reaps the priceless benefits of this stand; lastly, it is maintaining, in the very center of the struggle, a regime of common sense and liberty, similar to that of the great American Democracy.

To serve this regime and through it, to serve the humanitarian ideal it represents, is Belgium's duty and ambition at a time when the fate of civilization is at stake.

We shall undoubtedly be the object of pressure from various sides; but we will resist it.

There is, however, one thing which might jeopardize our resistance: the shortage of foodstuffs and raw materials. Surrounded as we are by the Great Belligerents, we expect to suffer from the economic war. But it would be very unjust if a peaceful country were faced with inactivity and famine and if, because of its will not to participate in the hostilities, whether economic or military, its eight million inhabitants were deprived of their daily bread and of materials the conversion of which would enable them to pay for their food.

Belgium's international trade is the source of its national income and consequently of its fiscal resources. These are, in turn, essential to keep the country from becoming financially dependent on one or another of the belligerents.

As Head of State you will understand, I know, Belgium's vital need of being assured of a minimum of industrial and commercial activity. It is for it a matter of life and death; we claim our right to existence.

My country and I are counting on your enlightened sense of human solidarity and on the warm and powerful friendship of the Great Republic to help us.

I make bold to say that Belgium places all its hopes in the United States and its President.

Believe me, dear President,
Yours very sincerely,

LEOPOLD

641.5831/32 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom
(Kennedy)*

WASHINGTON, September 27, 1939—2 p. m.

1085. Minister Sterling at Stockholm has telegraphed us that he has informed you of the desire of Boheman, head of the Swedish delegation shortly arriving in London, to keep in touch with you during the progress of his discussions of trade and shipping relations with Great Britain. The questions involved in the maintenance and control of trade between the belligerents and the Scandinavian countries are of great interest to us and we are anxious to be kept fully and promptly informed in detail of all developments both from the British point of view as well as from that of Sweden or other neutral country concerned. You may assure Boheman and any British official with whom you may talk in this connection that any information they may be willing to impart will of course be held by us in the strictest confidence.

HULL

740.00112 European War 1939/148 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Minister in the Netherlands (Gordon)

WASHINGTON, September 27, 1939—8 p. m.

100. Your 196, September 26, 11 a. m.⁴⁰ The whole shipping question is in abeyance pending the outcome of the Congressional consideration of the neutrality question. We had a preliminary and informal conversation with the British regarding trade with neutral countries about 2 weeks ago but, following the receipt of the British blockade note, it became necessary to review the whole situation from the standpoint of our trade before resuming the conversations. This review has now been completed and we expect to make in the next day or so an oral statement to the British and to the diplomatic representatives here of several neutral governments including the Netherlands. We shall send you the substance of this statement as soon as

⁴⁰ Not printed; but see telegram No. 176, September 15, 5 p. m., from the Minister in the Netherlands, p. 735.

it is made. You may communicate the foregoing to the Foreign Minister in the strictest confidence.

HULL

740.00112 European War 1939/158 : Telegram

The Minister in the Netherlands (Gordon) to the Secretary of State

THE HAGUE, September 28, 1939—4 p. m.

[Received September 28—12:43 p. m.]

201. My 176, September 15, 5 p. m., and Department's 100, September 27, 8 p. m., substance of which I have conveyed to the Foreign Minister in the strictest confidence.

British detention of shipping having become increasingly vexatious, the Dutch have felt that they must take action on their own. Accordingly the Dutch Minister in London is being instructed to register through customary channels a general protest concerning the unreasonable delay and lack of efficient organization displayed by British shipping control officials. More specifically protest is to be made against British regulations which prohibit captains of ships detained in British waters from notifying their home office of their whereabouts; the British have even sought to stretch this to the extent of prohibiting Dutch Consuls in British seaports from notifying their Legation in London of the arrival of detained ships in such ports.

GORDON

740.00112 European War 1939/161 : Telegram

The Minister in the Netherlands (Gordon) to the Secretary of State

THE HAGUE, September 28, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received September 28—2:39 p. m.]

202. A Dutch delegation will go to London tomorrow to assist Dutch Minister in the negotiations referred to in my 182, September 18, 5 p. m.⁴¹ The Dutch characterize these as "informative" negotiations. The general tenor of the instructions to the Dutch delegation is to seek interpretation of the proposals of the British note (see my 160, September 8, 4 p. m.) and to protest against what the Dutch allege to be the arbitrariness and vagueness of the British definition of contraband. If agreement can be reached as to what commodities can properly be classified as contraband the Dutch are prepared to agree to limit their importation of such commodities entirely to home

⁴¹ Not printed; it referred to telegram No. 173, September 13, 11 a. m., from the Minister in the Netherlands, and reported that the British had agreed to enter into negotiations, proposed by the Netherlands note, to take place shortly in London (740.00112 European War 1939/90).

consumption and give guarantees against re-export to Germany. With reference to article 5 of the British proposals the Dutch will of course be glad to agree to maintain only a normal trade with Germany compared to any period of years the British may desire to specify but as such normal trade from the Dutch point of view would necessarily include articles on the contraband list the Dutch do not hope, though they will ask for it, to secure British agreement to this. The Dutch delegation is also instructed to seek British agreement to a regime which was countenanced during the earlier part of the last war but as I understand it was practically closed up during the later stages of the war, i. e., if the Dutch should buy for instance guns from Germany containing a certain amount of copper the Dutch should be allowed to re-export to Germany an equivalent amount of raw copper; it would seem to me that there is also very little chance of the British agreeing to this.

GORDON

740.00112 European War 1939/173 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Belgium (Davies) to the Secretary of State

[Extract]

BRUSSELS, September 29, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received September 29—4: 50 p. m.]

147. For the President and Secretary of State. 1. Belgium has succeeded in persuading Britain and France not to insist upon a formal convention in connection with the blockade as originally proposed. Matters are to be taken up by separate commodities and seriatim. The same condition obtains as to Luxemburg. The tension and anxiety aroused by this situation (see my telegram 137, September 18, 6 p. m.) has been much allayed. The Belgian Ambassador to Berlin arrived here several days ago and was reported to have received advice from Berlin that Belgian neutrality would be respected. This word has not been confirmed but my information is specific and I believe it to be. His report has carried special weight because he has been previously strongly pessimistic.

DAVIES

740.00112 European War 1939/203a : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy)

WASHINGTON, September 29, 1939—8 p. m.

1117. Department's 1085, September 27, 2 p. m. Yesterday the following oral statement was made to the Commercial Counselor and

other representatives of the British Embassy. The same statement is also being communicated for their information to representatives of the Belgian Embassy and the Legations of Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and the Netherlands:

"1. We have noted the statement in the Embassy's note of September 10, that it is the intention of the British Government 'to use their best endeavors to facilitate innocent neutral trade so far as is consonant with their determination to prevent contraband goods reaching the enemy.'

"2. This Government on its part desires that its trade with neutral countries proceed with the least possible disturbance due to the existence of a state of war in Europe. As regards trade of neutral countries (in particular the so-called northern neutrals) with the United States, it should be fully understood as has already been publicly announced, that this Government reserves all rights of the United States and its nationals under international law and is not to be understood as endorsing any principle of interference with trade of genuine neutral character.

"3. The American Government has in recent years obtained in several of the countries under reference, by means of Trade Agreements, tariff concessions and quota benefits for a large number of commodities of which this country is the principal supplier. These benefits for American goods were granted in exchange for compensating concessions in the American market which continue in force.

"4. We shall follow with close attention developments in connection with neutral trade. If specific cases arise in which we feel that representations should be made to the British Government, we shall be glad to utilize the informal contacts which have been here established to discuss such cases in an effort to reach a satisfactory decision and thereby avoid the necessity of a formal protest by the American Government."

Repeat to Embassy Brussels and Legations Helsinki, Stockholm, Oslo, Copenhagen and The Hague.

HULL

740.00112 European War 1939/286

The German Chargé (Thomsen) to the Secretary of State

[Translation]

WASHINGTON, September 30, 1939.

MR. SECRETARY OF STATE: By direction of my Government, I have the honor to advise Your Excellency of the following:

Neutral merchant ships have repeatedly attempted in the waters around France and England to evade the exercise of the right of German naval forces, granted by international law, of stoppage and search. Besides, they have repeatedly aroused suspicion of attack or unneutral acts, by improper behavior.

The Government of the Reich therefore begs to call the attention of American merchant vessels traveling into the waters mentioned to the fact that, in their own interest, and in order to prevent confusion with naval or auxiliary ships of the enemy, especially at night, they should avoid any suspicious behavior, particularly change of course and use of the radio apparatus upon sighting German naval forces, zigzagging, screening lights, failing to obey a demand to stop, and the acceptance of convoy by naval forces of the powers at war with Germany.

Accept [etc.]

THOMSEN

740.00112 European War 1939/193 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Brazil (Caffery) to the Secretary of State

RIO DE JANEIRO, October 2, 1939—1 p. m.

[Received October 2—12:05 p. m.]

343. Aranha⁴² asked me this morning to ascertain if the British have drawn up anything in the nature of a blacklist applicable in the United States.

CAFFERY

641.5931/103 : Telegram

The Minister in Denmark (Atherton) to the Secretary of State

COPENHAGEN, October 2, 1939—7 p. m.

[Received October 2—3:02 p. m.]

81. In conversation with the Foreign Secretary today he said in reply to Danish representations in Berlin as to recent interferences with normal Danish trade with England that German Government had pointed out that England was interfering with Argentine exports of beef to Germany. In other words the Foreign Secretary admitted with bitterness the Germans were already departing from the protocol of the nonaggression pact and going back to the old laws of contraband in war time. However, the German Minister was returning today from Berlin to Copenhagen with a Foreign Office representative to discuss the matter further here.

The Foreign Secretary then told me that he expected shortly to complete a temporary trade agreement with Great Britain by an exchange of notes based on 1939 as a "normal" basic average (my 69, September 19, 7 p. m.⁴³).

He knew of the oral statement referred to in the Department's 1117, September 29 to London and in conclusion asked as to any details I

⁴² Brazilian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

⁴³ Not printed.

could give him on the proposal made to the Danish and other Ministers in Washington for the convening of a conference of neutral countries in trade matters and whether it was proposed this conference should meet in Washington and with the neutral powers represented by their various Ministers there. I confess to a certain embarrassment as I have no knowledge of the proposal to which he referred but said that I expected no detailed information at least until the attitude of the several countries concerned was known to Washington.

I should appreciate being informed on this subject since in discussion with me the Foreign Secretary always refers at length to matters relating to neutral trade.

ATHERTON

641.5931/103 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Minister in Denmark (Atherton)

WASHINGTON, October 3, 1939—3 p. m.

50. Your 81, October 2, 7 p. m. We handed the Danish Minister a copy of the oral message quoted in my 1117, September 29, 8 p. m. to London and informed him that we should be glad from time to time to exchange informally and in confidence information of common interest respecting trade between the United States and Denmark. No "conference" of any kind was proposed or contemplated.

Please inform the Foreign Minister at once. We shall similarly correct any misapprehensions on the part of Kauffmann.

HULL

740.00112 European War 1939/402

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Adviser on Political Relations (Dunn)

[WASHINGTON,] October 4, 1939.

The Spanish Ambassador ⁴⁵ came in this afternoon by appointment, having just returned from a visit to Spain. He said that he was instructed by his Government to ask whether the United States would support protests the Spanish Government might make to the British Government in the event the British interfered with shipping and trade between the United States and Spain. He said the Spanish Government was particularly interested in the shipments of cotton now going forward from the United States to Spain.

I told the Ambassador that it would not be proper to report to his Government that we would support any protests made by the Span-

⁴⁵ Juan Francisco de Cárdenas.

ish Government to the British Government regarding such interference. I said that this Government was, however, extremely interested in maintaining our neutral trade with neutral nations, and that the question of keeping up the shipping, communications, and trade between the United States and Spain was a matter of mutual interest to our two Governments.

Mr. Cárdenas then asked what attitude we had taken toward the British notices of blockade and contraband classification, and what replies we had made, if any, to the British Government's communications on these two subjects. I told the Ambassador that an oral communication had been given to the British Government with regard to this general subject, and I read to him in that connection the pertinent points in the oral communication given to the representatives of the British Embassy here by Mr. Hickerson on September 28, 1939. I pointed out to the Ambassador that the sense of our oral communication to the British was that we reserved all our rights under international law, that we did not recognize any principle of interference with innocent neutral trade, and that we reserved the right to take up with the British any specific cases of detention or interference with American ships or cargoes which might come to our attention.

I pointed out to the Ambassador that this information was being made available to him, to be held in confidence by his Government. I added that we were very much interested in this general subject, and would be glad to be kept informed of any arrangements the Spanish Government might make with the British Government regarding this question of neutral trade. I said that he could assure his Government that any information they wished to give us would be held entirely confidential by this Government, and that we would be very happy at any time to consult with them for the purpose of advancing the interests of the trade between our respective countries.

The Ambassador expressed his deep appreciation for this information, and said that he would report immediately to his Government in the premises.

JAMES CLEMENT DUNN

740.00112 European War 1939/218: Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, October 4, 1939—10 p. m.

[Received 10:40 p. m.]

2316. For the President and the Secretary. Daladier⁴⁶ telephoned me this evening and said that he wished to talk with me immediately

⁴⁶ President of the French Council of Ministers and Minister for National Defense.

about a serious problem. I called on him at once at the Ministry of War.

Daladier said that 4 days ago the German Minister in Belgium had presented a note to the Belgian Government stating that the German Government considered that the acquiescence of Belgium in British blockade measures constituted a participation of Belgium in the British blockade which was intolerable for Germany and that Germany would take the most violent measures against Belgium unless Belgium should take the position that any goods received in Belgium might be sent through without let or hindrance to Germany.

The same day the German Minister in The Hague presented a similar note couched in equally violent language to the Dutch Government and the German Minister in Stockholm presented a similar note to the Swedish Government.

In each case the terms of the note were so bellicose and insulting that the Ministers in question had wished to refuse to receive it but had not dared.

Daladier went on to say that the British Government had been informed by the Dutch, Belgian, and Swedish Governments of these *démarches* by the German Government and that the conclusion had been reached that Germany was seeking a pretext for an invasion of each of the countries in question.

The British and French Governments had tried to discover what reasons Germany might have for invading Belgium, the Netherlands, and Sweden. Aside from the obvious military reasons it had seemed to the British and French Governments and to the Governments of Sweden, Belgium, and the Netherlands that Germany was probably intensely desirous of acquiring the gold now in each of the countries in question. In the case of Belgium and the Netherlands there were in addition vast stocks of diamonds and in the case of Belgium there was an important stock of wolfram.

Daladier said that 2 days ago the British Government had proposed to the Swedish, Belgian and Dutch Governments that their stocks of gold should be sent to Great Britain for safekeeping and in the case of the Belgian and Dutch Governments that the stocks of diamonds should be placed in security in the same manner and that the Belgian stock of wolfram should be removed to England.

The Swedish, Belgian, and Dutch Governments had replied individually that they would not dare to send their stocks of gold either to France or England since the Germans would insist that such an act was proof that they were cooperating with the British and French Governments and that the German argument with regard to the blockade therefore was justified.

Daladier said that he had been in touch with the British Government today and that it had been decided to ask me if it might not be

possible for the Government of the United States to acquire in one way or another for safekeeping the gold stocks of Sweden, the Netherlands and Belgium. At the same time he wished to ask if it might not be possible to devise a method by which the diamond stocks of Belgium and the Netherlands might be shipped for safekeeping to the United States and if it might not be possible for the United States to acquire the Belgian stock of wolfram.

I replied that I could not see any legal objection to the purchase of dollars by any of the Governments in question with the gold now in their possession. Since Germany had taken to sinking Swedish and other neutral ships it was obvious that the Swedish Government would be reluctant to place its gold reserves on a ship since that ship might be captured or sunk. The same applied to the Belgian and Dutch Governments. I had no idea whether or not it might be possible for the Government of the United States to acquire the gold in question while it was still on this side of the Atlantic. The questions of the diamonds and the wolfram were very different from the question of the gold and would require special thought and special handling.

Daladier asked me if I would communicate to you at once what he had said to me. I replied I would do so.

I realize that there may be political objections to taking any action whatsoever with regard to this matter. If no political objections exist it occurs to me that the Secretary of the Treasury might inform the Belgian Ambassador and the Ministers of the Netherlands and Sweden individually and separately that the United States Government was aware of the *démarche* that the German Government had made and that the Government of the United States within the framework of the tripartite monetary agreement⁴⁷ would be glad to purchase for dollars the gold now held by his country and would be glad, when the gold should have reached the United States, to sell it back to the country in question, after deducting the charges of transportation, insurance, et cetera.

Similarly if no political objections exist it might be possible to make an arrangement for some large American diamond importing house to purchase the diamonds in question with the understanding that they should be repurchased by the Government in question on arrival in New York after deducting charges and duties, et cetera.

I wonder if the wolfram in question could not be acquired by the Government of the United States with a portion of the monies appropriated by Congress for the purchase of rare raw materials useful in war.

⁴⁷ Set forth in simultaneous statements by the United States, United Kingdom, and France, September 25, 1936; for text, see *Foreign Relations*, 1936, vol. 1, p. 560.

Daladier said that he had forgotten the amounts of gold, diamonds, and wolfram involved but that he would send the Minister of Blockade, Georges Pernot, to me tomorrow with the details. I replied that I should prefer not to see the Minister of Blockade until I had some indication from you that my Government was interested in pursuing this matter further.

I think that it might be wise in case you take up this matter—and I hope you will—to stress the fact that we are merely ready as loyal members of the tripartite monetary agreement to attempt to cooperate with our fellow associates, and that we are not pressing them to take any such action.

We have after all no direct indication that any one of these actually wishes to ship the gold, the diamonds, or the wolfram to the United States. On the other hand the small countries of Europe are so terrified at the moment of German attack and are so fearful that all their codes are in the hands of the German Government—which they probably are—that I doubt that any one of them would dare to send a telegram to Washington making any such proposal. They might, however, be exceedingly glad to receive from their representatives in America a telegram from Washington announcing the readiness of the Government of the United States to cooperate with them under such circumstances.

BULLITT

740.00112 European War 1939/193 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Brazil (Caffery)

WASHINGTON, October 5, 1939—7 p. m.

195. The Department has received no official blacklist. A list purported to be the British blacklist containing about 300 names of firms in Europe and Central and South America and believed to have been mailed from London to interested trade associations in the United States was published in the *New York Times* of September 26, 1939.

HULL

740.00112 European War 1939/286

The Secretary of State to the German Chargé (Thomsen)

WASHINGTON, October 6, 1939.

SIR: I acknowledge receipt of your note under date of September 30 concerning precautionary measures which you suggest neutral shipping should adopt for its own protection in certain areas.

Prior to receiving the note under reference, the Government of the United States had already taken careful and detailed measures direct-

ing captains of American merchant ships to avoid suspicious conduct. The specific character of such measures would seem to preclude the possibility that the nationality and neutral character of any American vessel could be misapprehended by naval officers exercising ordinary care. I further call to your attention that American merchant ships are forbidden by law to carry armament.

Accordingly, the Government of the United States feels entitled to expect that especial care will be used by the belligerent governments to respect the neutral rights of its vessels and nationals, and will maintain all such rights in the event of violation.

Accept [etc.]

CORDELL HULL

740.00112 European War 1939/239 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Belgium (Davies) to the Secretary of State

BRUSSELS, October 6, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received October 6—12:20 p. m.]

151. Netherlands Legation yesterday confirmed a statement made to the Embassy by a Foreign Office official that Belgian and Dutch Governments have made representations a few days ago to the British Government on the subject of the British contraband regulations. They contend that the list of conditional contraband is entirely too indefinite and allows too much discretion to the commanders of the ships of the blockade squadron. No reply has yet been received to these communications.

DAVIES

740.00112 European War 1939/218 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Bullitt)

WASHINGTON, October 6, 1939—6 p. m.

1176. Your 2316, October 4, 10 p. m. The Secretary of the Treasury informs me that in response to several requests within recent weeks that the Treasury accept gold in Europe the Treasury has replied uniformly that in present circumstances it is following the policy of purchasing gold only upon delivery in New York. He added that the Treasury sincerely regrets that it is unable to deviate from this established practice.

As to the Belgian wolfram, it is impracticable to make special deals for the purchase of raw materials for reserve stocks since the law specifically calls for advertising for bids. An advertisement for tungsten ore was issued by the Procurement Division of the Treasury on September 20, for delivery f. o. b. cars, Columbus, Ohio, the bids to

be received within 30 days. While it is presumed that the holders of wolfram stocks in Belgium are Belgian smelters rather than producers or dealers in ore, they may possibly have received copies of this announcement of "Specifications and Proposals for Supplies" and be in a position to file bids. Otherwise the time would probably be too short for them to submit bids even if they were in a position to compete with other suppliers for delivery at Columbus, Ohio.

It would appear therefore that it would be impossible to take any affirmative action on the lines suggested by Mr. Daladier irrespective of the political questions which would also have to be considered.

HULL

740.00112 European War 1939/281: Telegram

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Chief of the Division of European Affairs (Moffat)

[WASHINGTON,] October 7, 1939.

Baron de Gruben, Counselor of the Belgian Embassy, telephoned this morning to say that the Embassy had received a direct query from Brussels as to whether the United States was going to take the initiative in the matter of a "sea lane" to Belgium and Holland.

I replied that if by "sea lane" they meant a physical channel, I thought the more experts looked into it, the more difficulties were found. If by "sea lane" they meant keeping commerce open between the United States and Belgium, he could reply that the United States was as interested as ever in the maintenance of bona fide neutral trade between one neutral and the other if for the latter's own use. This was implicit in the statement which Mr. Hickerson had handed him under instructions of the Secretary of State.⁴⁸ As to shipping questions, it was obvious that the Executive could not finally determine its position pending the conclusion of the debates on the neutrality bill.

PIERREPONT MOFFAT

740.00112 European War 1939/269: Telegram

The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State

HELSINKI via LONDON, October 9, 1939—4 p. m.

[Received October 10—1:10 a. m.]

228. My telegram No. 220, October 7.⁴⁹ Yesterday Minister for Foreign Affairs told me, in response to inquiry, that northern neutral

⁴⁸ Presumably the statement referred to in telegram No. 1117, September 29, 8 p. m., to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom, p. 751.

⁴⁹ Not printed.

governments were exchanging views regarding action to be taken at Berlin in the matter of German interference with northern shipping and foreign trade. He said German spokesmen had also proposed to Finland taking all its exports of food, metals and many wood products including cellulose against compensation in German manufactures under expanded clearing agreement. The point was made on behalf of Finnish Government that Germany was competitor of Finland for cellulose exports among other wood products and consequently could not take increased quantity of such commodities but no satisfactory answer to this argument had been forthcoming.

Minister for Foreign Affairs interpreted present German policy regarding shipping and trade of northern neutral countries as expression of broad intention to dominate them to the exclusion of trade relations with other countries especially with British Isles hitherto their chief market.

Repeated to Berlin and London.

SCHOENFELD

740.00112 Navicert/8/10

Verbal Statement by the Commercial Counselor of the British Embassy (Chalkley), October 16, 1939

We have reported the results of our last meeting, and have been asked to express our appreciation of the very helpful attitude your members of the Committee have adopted. Meanwhile careful consideration has been given to the suggestion made by the Secretary of State on the 4th September regarding the possibility of bringing a system of letters of assurance into operation. The result is that we have been authorized by His Majesty's Government to make the preliminary arrangements for the institution of a Navicert system, the object being to facilitate the legitimate trade of American exporters, and we hope that the institution of this system will be welcomed and considered helpful by the United States Government. The proposal is to institute the system in the first instance in respect of exports from this country to Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Belgium and Holland, and at a later date to Finland, Estonia and Latvia. We have prepared the notice which will be issued at an early date,⁵⁰ and we have copies of the application form.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Not printed; the notice, with slight revisions to include Estonia, Finland, Iceland, and Latvia in the list of consignee countries, was issued November 21, 1939, effective December 1, 1939. By December 22, 1939, Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Portugal, Rumania, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, and Yugoslavia had been added to the list of consignee countries.

⁵¹ Not printed.

740.00112 European War 1939/331 : Telegram

The Minister in Denmark (Atherton) to the Secretary of State

COPENHAGEN, October 18, 1939—3 p. m.

[Received October 18—11:33 a. m.]

105. Would urgently appreciate substance of any recent discussions Department has had with Danish or other Nordic Ministers regarding "neutral trade" (more especially as it may relate to contraband) since Foreign Office advises me Foreign Secretary hopes to discuss this question with me on his return from Stockholm.

In possible explanation of above I learn from Foreign Office source that just before Stockholm conference German Legations have made representations Copenhagen, Oslo and presumably Stockholm referring with some satisfaction to alleged "contraband resolution" of Pan-American Conference regarding non-inclusion of supplies for civilian population.

I have no knowledge of any such resolution.

ATHERTON

740.00112 European War 1939/332 : Telegram

The Minister in the Netherlands (Gordon) to the Secretary of State

THE HAGUE, October 18, 1939—4 p. m.

[Received October 18—2:53 p. m.]

227. My 218, October 12, 4 p. m.⁵² Forthcoming negotiations in London will now probably only begin next Monday. At present instructions to the delegation are only in the skeleton stage; nevertheless, four cardinal points already emerge which will be pressed vigorously.

1. The Dutch delegation will be empowered to guarantee that various imported contraband commodities will only be used for home consumption. The Foreign Office now seems to feel a little more hopeful than previously that the British list of contraband goods can be somewhat whittled down and ameliorated—for instance, there seems to be a possibility that the British may agree to eliminate tea and coffee from the [list?] and to refrain from adding tobacco at a later date.

2. The delegation will seek British agreement to a reexportation by Holland to other neutrals of commodities figuring integrally on the British contraband [list?] or consisting partly of articles or materials on the said [list?].

⁵² Not printed; it stated: "A Dutch delegation will return to London next week to resume negotiations." (740.00112 European War 1939/287)

3. An attempt will be made to secure British agreement that certain articles with a negligible amount of contraband materials therein may be exported to Germany even without compensation, e. g., finished articles comprising the contents of a few spindles worth of textile materials or a modest amount of rubber, et cetera; by "without compensation" is meant that the Dutch will not have to guarantee that they will receive from Germany a similar amount of textile materials or rubber in other forms.

4. The Dutch will seek British agreement to the following form of trade: Holland for instance finds herself unable at the moment to buy arms, ammunition and other material for the use of her armed forces elsewhere than in Germany; these articles of course compromise [*comprise?*] a certain amount of copper, tin, possibly rubber and other contraband materials:—in exporting such strategically valuable material Germany will demand compensation therefor in the form of a similar amount of copper, tin, rubber, etc., either in their natural state or as part of semi-finished articles. Naturally the British will want ironclad assurances that Germany's stock of such contraband materials be not increased by such trade; consequently they may insist that Germany must be the first to export such finished goods and that only in return therefor can Holland and [*sic*] export to her semi-finished articles with a (presumably vigorously controlled) similar amount of strategic contraband materials—the Foreign Office professes to regard this latter as a procedural detail but it would seem to me to be a point of the greatest importance. In connection with point 4, it should be borne in mind that the Dutch can supply commodities on the British contraband list such as rubber and tin via Vladivostok and the trans-Siberian and others such as copper on Netherlands ships through northern ports such as Narvik.

GORDON

740.00112 European War 1939/357 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Chargé in Germany (Kirk)

WASHINGTON, October 18, 1939—8 p. m.

732. Some days ago, following an assertion in the United States Senate that tobacco had been placed on the German contraband list, the German Embassy here issued a statement reading in part as follows:

"tobacco will be considered as conditional contraband by Germany only when and if it should be included in the British list of conditional contraband."

The British Embassy here advises us informally that tobacco does not appear on the British contraband list nor is it regarded as contraband by the British Government.

Unless you perceive objection you are requested to communicate this information informally to the appropriate German authorities with a view to ascertaining whether they would not be disposed to give you a statement which might be issued to the press clarifying the status of tobacco.

HULL

740.00112 European War 1939/349

The German Chargé (Thomsen) to the Secretary of State

[Translation]

WASHINGTON, October 19, 1939.

MR. SECRETARY OF STATE: By direction of my Government, I have the honor to advise Your Excellency of the following, referring to my note of September 30th:

The English Government is disseminating the assertion that for neutral merchant ships traveling in the escort of English naval vessels means increased safety and does not represent any violation of neutrality.

With regard to this I have been directed by my Government to notify the Government of the United States of America of the following:

English or French convoys will be attacked by German combat forces with armed force. The German action will be directed not only against escorting warships, but also, without distinction, against all escorted ships. This corresponds to the generally recognized rules of naval warfare. At the same time attention is once more called to the fact that all neutral merchant ships, including passenger steamers, which run at night without lights showing expose themselves to confusion with the enemy's warships or auxiliary vessels, and consequently to danger of destruction.

Accept [etc.]

THOMSEN

740.00112 European War 1939/331 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Minister in Denmark (Atherton)

WASHINGTON, October 20, 1939—6 p. m.

56. Your 105, October 18, 3 p. m.

(1) Beyond giving to each of the Nordic Ministers a copy of the oral statement referred to in our 50, October 3, 3 p. m., we have had no conversations with any of them regarding neutral trade beyond a few quite informal conversations of no substantial importance.

We have made inquiry of the German Government regarding certain Swedish and Finnish vessels carrying cargoes consigned to the United States which were held for examination at German ports,⁵³ and have so informed the Swedish and Finnish Ministers respectively. Some of these vessels have been released but eight or more are still being held.

(2) The Panama meeting passed a resolution registering opposition "to the placing of foodstuffs and clothing intended for civilian populations, not destined directly or indirectly for the use of a belligerent government or its armed forces, on lists of contraband."⁵⁴

HULL

740.00112 European War 1939/350 : Telegram

The Minister in the Netherlands (Gordon) to the Secretary of State

THE HAGUE, October 21, 1939—1 p. m.

[Received October 21—9:48 a. m.]

234. Foreign Office yesterday evening received a note from the German Government warning that if Dutch merchant vessels should accept the convoy of a hostile belligerent they will be treated as enemy vessels.

The local press of yesterday afternoon carried Berlin D. N. B. reports referring to British efforts to arrange for convoying neutral merchant vessels. It is to be noted, however, that the Netherlands Government has not received any offer from the British Government for the convoying of Dutch merchant vessels. Apparently the only thing approaching an offer or even suggestion of British convoys for neutral merchantmen was the following passage in Churchill's radio broadcast of October 1: "I hope the day will come when the Admiralty will be able to invite ships of all nations to join the British convoys and insure them on their voyages at a reasonable rate."

On the other hand the German note apparently contains nothing that is not in accordance with sound international law.

GORDON

740.00112 European War 1939/395 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Belgium (Davies) to the Secretary of State

BRUSSELS, October 28, 1939—10 a. m.

[Received October 28—7:55 a. m.]

163. My 137, September 18, 6 p. m. Conversations in London relating to British contraband control were initiated some weeks ago be-

⁵³ See pp. 821 ff.

⁵⁴ See vol. v, section entitled "Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the American Republics . . ."

tween representatives of Belgian and British Governments and are still in progress. Negotiations are being conducted on the basis of reaching an agreement on the amount of each specific article of commerce which Belgium would be allowed to import for the purpose of domestic consumption or for manufacture and export. Foreign Office informs me that these fall within three categories: (1) Articles the export of which from Belgium is forbidden such as wheat and gasoline. No difficulty is being encountered with respect to these. (2) Other articles and raw materials imported for manufacture and export. The Belgians are insisting that if they should be compelled by Great Britain to abolish or limit their exports of such merchandise to Germany they would, in order to preserve a policy of complete neutrality, accord the same treatment to the other belligerents. It is believed that British need for certain classes of Belgian manufactures will oblige them to concede to Belgium the right to export similar quantities of such commodities to Germany. (3) Goods in transit. These are presenting considerable difficulty as important amounts have been imported in bond to order and subsequently sold to Germany. The conclusion of war trade agreements between Great Britain and other European neutrals would prove helpful. It was acknowledged, however, that the transit trade of Antwerp will certainly suffer.

Although these negotiations are making progress no information was given as to the date of their conclusion.

It is probable that the Belgian attitude towards British claims has been stiffened by intimations from Germany that British pressure on the neutrals endangers the latter's neutrality and that Germany would not accept passively the increase of the neutrals' trade with Great Britain. That such an increase would compensate the decrease in neutrals' trade with Germany occasioned by the blockade was indicated by the British Minister of Economic Warfare in an interview given on October 22 to a representative of the *Independance Belge*.

DAVIES

740.00112 European War 1939/431

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State

[WASHINGTON,] October 31, 1939.

The Ambassador of Belgium, accompanied by Mr. Theunis, came in at his own request. The latter stated that he was to be here for some months to aid the Ambassador in looking after the commercial and economic interests of Belgium during the war. Mr. Theunis did virtually all of the talking and the burden of his remarks was the drastic nature of the British blockade in its effect on Belgium. I in-

quired whether it looked as if the British were expecting his country to make a contribution. He understood that I was not making the inquiry in earnest. He particularly expressed the fear that this Government under the proposed neutrality legislation might feel constrained to designate the Channel ports, including those of Belgium and Holland, as danger areas. I replied that that would be a serious question for our Government.

Mr. Theunis then spoke of the lack of shipping. He went on to say that shipping was necessary to his country to supply its needs, and raised the question of the purchase by his Government of two or three American ships, I think he said, from the Black Diamond Line. He was under the impression that the Government might insist upon passing on the policy of such transaction. I replied that probably the Government would have no particular concern in that respect, but that in any event, if he should take the matter up with the owners of the Black Diamond Line, they would very quickly give him a full and accurate prospective that such a proposed transaction would present. The Ambassador said that the British were harder on American ships or cargoes than on those of smaller countries and opposing belligerents; that this practice might be only intended to continue until after the neutrality legislation now pending in Congress. I gave him an outline of the steps and the attitude of this Government with respect to American shipping and the blockade up to date, which I need not repeat here.

C[ORDELL] H[ULL]

740.00112 European War 1939/349

The Secretary of State to the German Chargé (Thomsen)

WASHINGTON, November 1, 1939.

SIR: I acknowledge the receipt of your note of October 19, 1939 notifying me by direction of your Government that British or French convoys will be attacked by German combat forces and that such action will be directed not only against escorting ships but also without distinction against all escorted ships, and inviting attention to a statement that all neutral merchant ships which run at night without showing lights expose themselves to confusion with belligerent war or auxiliary vessels and consequently to danger of destruction.

With regard to the statement concerning precautionary measures by neutral merchant ships adverted to in your note under reference, I refer to my acknowledgment dated October 6, 1939 of your communication of September 30, 1939 on this subject; and I am confident that you are aware of the fact that the Government of the United

States reserves, with respect to ships of American nationality, all of their rights under recognized rules of international law.

Accept [etc.]

For the Secretary of State:
SUMNER WELLES

740.00112 European War 1939/448: Telegram

The Minister in Sweden (Sterling) to the Secretary of State

STOCKHOLM, November 4, 1939—noon.

[Received 1:11 p. m.]

183. Consul at Goteborg has received confidential communication from British Consul there to the effect that British Admiralty is shortly starting convoy system between Bergen and Methil, Scotland, and invites neutral shipping to take advantage of it.

The German Government recently addressed a note to the Swedish Government warning neutral ships not to accept British offers of convoy as this would deprive them of neutral rights and if accepted they would be treated by Germany as enemy ships.

STERLING

855.001 Leopold/60

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Belgium (Davies)

No. 144

WASHINGTON, November 7, 1939.

SIR: There is enclosed a letter from the President to His Majesty the King of the Belgians in reply to a letter from King Leopold dated September 26, 1939, which was handed to the President by Monsieur Theunis.

You are requested to convey this letter to His Majesty the King.

Very truly yours,

For the Secretary of State:
SUMNER WELLES

[Enclosure]

President Roosevelt to the King of the Belgians (Leopold III)

[WASHINGTON, November 3, 1939.]

MY DEAR KING LEOPOLD: Your Majesty's letter of September 26, 1939, has been handed to me by Monsieur Theunis in fulfillment of the special mission with which you entrusted him. It was a great pleasure to receive Monsieur Theunis, who is well known to me; and I have seen to it that he will be accorded every facility.

I am especially glad to have the benefit of your personal views on the particular position of Belgium. This is in part due to the very close and intimate affection which the American people have for the memory of your Father, King Albert, whose stand for the independence of the

Belgian nation won for him in this country the highest admiration and respect. But it is also due to the fact that the Government of the United States, and I personally, have followed with very deep sympathy Your Majesty's recent inspiring efforts to preserve peace in Europe. Certainly you personally have the satisfaction of knowing that you did everything within your power to avert the calamity which has come to pass.

I am in entire agreement with your belief that peace-loving nations, like your own, cannot be satisfied that their mission ended with the outbreak of war. The search for a lasting peace based on justice must go on; indeed, the neutral nations are charged with a greater responsibility before the human race than previously, since they, more than any others, can express the desire for a world in which order in law has once more been restored.

We cordially agree that while the conflict continues, those nations still at peace must attempt to minimize the effects of economic warfare, to keep commerce flowing where possible, and to insist that the carrying on of war does not set up any right in belligerents to deprive neutral nations of the necessary economic basis for the continuance of their normal existence.

The Government of the United States is ready to discuss measures with Monsieur Theunis to achieve this end, and to examine with great care any suggestions he may have to offer. The economic position of Belgium is well understood; it is fundamentally unjust that any nation should be forced into idleness and famine because it refuses to make war; the humanitarian grounds which Your Majesty asserts are of the highest; and you may be assured that this Government will not be indifferent to the appeal which you have made.

The Government of the United States will, therefore, take great pleasure in actively searching for ways and means by which the end you seek may be brought about.

Please be assured of my warm personal regard and friendship for Your Majesty, and my cordial good wishes for your success in seeking a just solution of the grave problems confronting you.

Yours very sincerely,

[File copy not signed]

740.00112 European War 1939/490

The French Ambassador (Saint-Quentin) to the Secretary of State

[Translation]

Under date of September 21, 1939, the Ambassador of France in the United States informed His Excellency the Secretary of State of the measures which the French Government saw itself obliged to take in order to prevent goods considered as contraband from reaching the enemy in the course of the present hostilities.

However, the French authorities, solicitous of respecting the legitimate interests of neutral commerce, desire to cause, in the exercise of the recognized rights of belligerents at sea, the least hindrance possible to shipping carried on in good faith, on condition that the latter be good enough to lend itself voluntarily to the indispensable operations. They have just studied, particularly, the means of shortening the search of neutral vessels in the ports of France.

Accordingly, Mr. de Saint-Quentin has the honor to call the attention of the Honorable Cordell Hull to the interest the shipping companies of the United States would have in providing their vessels with five manifests, two of which should reach the French authorities before the arrival of the vessel in the harbor. It would be suitable, in order to hasten the sending thereof, that the two copies should be transmitted, in due time, to the French consular authority of the port of departure, who would send them, by air mail, to the Minister of the Blockade at Paris. Thanks to this preliminary formality, the duration of the control operations in France would be considerably reduced.

Mr. de Saint-Quentin is happy to avail himself of this opportunity to renew to the Honorable Cordell Hull the assurances of his very high consideration.

WASHINGTON, November 8, 1939.

740.00112 European War 1939/505

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Chief of the Division of European Affairs (Moffat)

[Extract]

[WASHINGTON,] November 8, 1939.

Participants: Mr. F. R. Hoyer Millar, First Secretary, British Embassy;
 Mr. Foster, British Embassy;
 Mr. Pierrepont Moffat, Chief, Division of European Affairs;
 Mr. John Hickerson, Assistant Chief, Division of European Affairs.

Derek Hoyer Millar and Foster came down from the British Embassy on a series of matters:

1. The British Embassy had received a telegram from London pointing out that Kirkwall was now in the combat area and that American ships under our law could no longer put in there voluntarily for examination.⁵⁵ They wished to remind us that our law

⁵⁵ For texts of Neutrality Act approved November 4, 1939, and Proclamation issued November 4, defining combat areas, see 54 Stat. 4 and 2673.

could not estop them from carrying on the war, and that their rights as belligerents under international law took precedence of other considerations. They therefore reserved the right to take American ships bound for Bergen into Kirkwall for examination. They wondered if we could not write in our regulations a provision exempting from penalty American ships which were taken into Kirkwall as a result of legal compulsion. Mr. Hickerson and I laughed gently at the use of the word "legal", but seriously speaking said that we were not impressed by the suggestion. Mr. Hoyer Millar then pointed out that during the last war at the request of some of the neutrals they had undertaken to examine cargo at Halifax. We pointed out that Halifax was as much in the combat area as Kirkwall. Yarmouth was, of course, outside the combat area, and so was Bermuda, both of which they suggested as possible points of examination. Mr. Hickerson and I said that we hoped very much that they would be as careful as possible about taking American ships into Kirkwall (1) for the legal reason that if they did so and the ship was subsequently sunk in the combat area, there would be a valid legal claim against Great Britain for the entire loss; and (2) more important, that it would probably raise an amount of public resentment here out of all proportion to the cargo involved. Mr. Foster said the situation would be eased if the navicert system was soon established, and Mr. Hickerson said he hoped to give them our reactions in a very short time.

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P[IERREPONT] M[OFFAT]

740.00112 Navicert/1

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Chief of the Division of European Affairs (Hickerson)

[WASHINGTON,] November 9, 1939.

Participants: Sir Owen Chalkley, Commercial Counselor of the British Embassy
 Mr. Keith Officer, Australian Counselor of the British Embassy
 Mr. J. G. Foster, First Secretary of the British Embassy
 Mr. Alexander Knox Helm, First Secretary of the British Embassy
 Mr. Bert L. Hunt, Legal Adviser's Office
 Mr. Jesse Saugstad, Division of International Communications
 Mr. Leroy Stinebower, Economic Adviser's Office
 Mr. John Hickerson, Assistant Chief, Division of European Affairs

Sir Owen Chalkley and his associates called at the State Department at Mr. Hickerson's request at 3:30 p. m. yesterday afternoon. Mr. Hickerson made the following verbal statement to them:

"Careful consideration has been given to Sir Owen Chalkley's verbal statement of October 16 last concerning a proposed notice to be issued by His Majesty's representatives concerning the proposed initiation in the United States of the so-called Navicert System in respect to exports from the United States to certain countries. Particular notice has been taken of the statement that the system is a purely voluntary one for the benefit of exporters who may desire to take advantage of it, and of the statement of Sir Owen Chalkley that the object of the system is to 'facilitate the legitimate trade of American exporters'.

"Attention is again invited to a part of the oral statement made by Mr. Hickerson in September to Sir Owen Chalkley as follows:

"This Government on its part desires that its trade with neutral countries proceed with the least possible disturbance due to the existence of a state of war in Europe. As regards trade of neutral countries (in particular the so-called Northern neutrals) with the United States, it should be fully understood as has already been publicly announced, that this Government reserves all rights of the United States and its nationals under international law and is not to be understood as endorsing any principle of interference with trade of genuine neutral character."

"We have been authorized to inform Sir Owen Chalkley that subject to the above quoted reservation the American Government, as such, has no desire to take a position at this time in respect to the introduction in the United States of the proposed Navicert System. At the present stage, it rather regards the proposed system as a matter between those American exporters who may desire to take advantage of it and the appropriate British authorities. These comments are however based on the assumption that the following assertions are correct:

"1. The proposed Navicert System will in no sense be used to interfere in any way with the normal volume of exports of genuine neutral character from the United States to any neutral country.

"2. The proposed Navicert System will not be used in any way to discriminate against the United States and United States exporters.

"3. The granting or rejection of a Navicert shall be conditional upon circumstances related solely to the character of the goods and conditions in the country of importation and in no respect upon conditions related to American exporters or to the United States.

"4. Whenever applications for Navicerts are rejected a clear, concise statement of the reasons for such rejections shall be given to the applicant for the Navicert."

Sir Owen Chalkley said that they would communicate this statement to their Government and would in due course let us know whether the British Government desired to make any comments on this statement.

JOHN HICKERSON

740.00111A Combat Areas/51

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Chief of the Division
of European Affairs (Hickerson)*

[WASHINGTON,] November 9, 1939.

Following a conversation with Sir Owen Chalkley and several of his associates yesterday afternoon on navicerts, I had a brief conversation with Mr. Foster of the British Embassy concerning the question of American vessels and British contraband stations. I recalled to Mr. Foster that when Mr. Moffat and I discussed this question with Hoyer Millar and himself it was largely a hypothetical question but that it had now become a very definite actuality; that I had just learned today that the Moore-McCormack vessel *Mormactide* would sail for Bergen on November 11th or 12th, and that in approximately ten or twelve days the authorities of his Government would face an actual test case.

I stated at the outset that the provisions of the Neutrality Act on the subject are unmistakable, and that the *Mormactide* could not proceed to Kirkwall without violating American law. I said that the Master of the vessel would certainly, if "invited" to proceed to Kirkwall by a blockade officer, "respectfully decline" the invitation; and that if the vessel went to Kirkwall it would be because the British naval authorities actually forced the vessel to proceed there. This, I stated, we earnestly hoped the British would not do. I said that entirely aside from the question of the British Government's assuming responsibility for any damage to the vessel or any delay caused, we hoped that they would find that as a practical matter it was not necessary to force American vessels to violate American law in this manner. I stated that it was my understanding that the Moore-McCormack Line had for some time been sending by air mail copies of their manifests to London in order to facilitate an examination of the ship's papers by the British naval authorities. I added that I also understood that the Moore-McCormack Line had given an undertaking to the British Government to hold at Bergen on board their vessels, on the request of the British Consul, any cargo which the British authorities believed to be destined to Germany, and to return the cargo to the United States if these suspicions had not been removed by the time the vessel sailed. I added that in these circumstances it was difficult for us to see why the British Government might find it necessary to take these vessels into Kirkwall.

Mr. Foster at this point remarked that surely we would not contend that our Congress could unilaterally abridge the belligerent rights of Great Britain. I replied that we were making no such contention. I said that it seemed to me to be rather a coldly practical

matter which the British Government might well decide to meet in a practical way. I said that I had not the slightest doubt that there would be some bitter press reactions in the United States if they compelled the *Mormactide*, in defiance of an Act of Congress, to proceed to Kirkwall. I said that it seemed to me that they might well wish to weigh the advantages and disadvantages and to consider whether there was enough actually to be gained from taking American vessels into the combat zone to offset the resulting unfavorable publicity in the United States, not to mention their increased liability should an American vessel entering or leaving Kirkwall be damaged.

Mr. Foster said that the Embassy had sent a telegram to London following the conversation which he and Mr. Hoyer Millar had had with Mr. Moffat and me, and that he would send a further telegram based on our talk. He said that he could not as yet give any indication of the decision of his Government, but that for his part he hoped some way could be found to avoid the necessity of taking American vessels into the combat zone by the blockade authorities.

JOHN HICKERSON

740.00112 European War/822

The British Ambassador (Lothian) to the Secretary of State

No. 471

WASHINGTON, November 9, 1939.

SIR: As you will recollect, on September 10th I had the honour to inform you that His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, while they would be compelled to use their belligerent rights to the full, intended to use their best endeavours to facilitate innocent neutral trade so far as was consonant with their determination to prevent contraband goods reaching the enemy. In order to secure their object His Majesty's Government had established contraband control bases at Weymouth, Ramsgate, Kirkwall, Gibraltar and Haifa. Vessels bound for enemy territory or neutral ports affording convenient means of access thereto were urgently advised to call voluntarily at the appropriate base in order that their papers might be examined and that when it had been established that they were not carrying contraband of war they might be given a pass to facilitate the remainder of their voyage. It was explained that any vessels which did not call voluntarily would be liable to be diverted to a contraband control base if an adequate search by His Majesty's ships at sea was not practicable.

The attention of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom has now been called to certain provisions of the joint resolution approved on November 4th—the Neutrality Act of 1939—and of the proclamation issued by the President on the same day under section 3 of the Act, defining "combat areas".

Under section 2, subsections (a) and (g) of the Act it is unlawful for any American vessels to carry any passengers or any articles or any materials to any port in a belligerent country other than those situated within the areas defined in subsection (g). Under section 3 of the Act it is also unlawful for any American vessel to proceed into or through any "combat area". These "combat areas" have now been declared by the President's proclamation of November 4th to include all the navigable waters within the following limitations:—

"Beginning at the intersection of the North Coast of Spain with the meridian of $2^{\circ} 45'$ longitude west of Greenwich;

Thence due north to a point in $43^{\circ} 54'$ north latitude;

Thence by rhumb line to a point in $45^{\circ} 00'$ north latitude; $20^{\circ} 00'$ west longitude;

Thence due north to $58^{\circ} 00'$ north latitude;

Thence by a rhumb line to latitude 62° north, longitude 2° east;

Thence by rhumb line to latitude 60° north, longitude 5° east;

Thence due east to the mainland of Norway;

Thence along the coastline of Norway, Sweden, the Baltic Sea and dependent waters thereof, Germany, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, France and Spain to the point of beginning."

His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom appreciate that the effect of the foregoing provisions is to make it unlawful under American law for any American vessel to call at any port in the United Kingdom or at any port in a belligerent country in the Mediterranean. I am, however, instructed by His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to inform you, however, that His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom feel obliged, in order to prevent contraband goods reaching the enemy, formally to reserve their rights to exercise their belligerent rights in respect of United States vessels in the manner indicated in my note of September 10th.

I have [etc.]

LOTHIAN

740.00112 European War 1939/521

The Secretary of State to the British Ambassador (Lothian)

MEMORANDUM

Certain incidents occurred recently at Montevideo, Uruguay, which involved the operation of the so-called British black list and its interference with the legitimate operations of American firms with neutral countries. An employee of the British Legation in Montevideo is reported to have informed the local agents of the American Moore-McCormack Lines that if freights were carried for firms on the British

black list, steps would be taken to see that other shippers canceled all freights already booked and refused to ship on the line. The particular service affected connects various of the other American republics with the United States. Another American firm, namely, the Sprague Line, which operates chartered Norwegian steamers, was reported to have booked a shipment for one of the Uruguayan firms on the black list. As a result, it received letters from ten Uruguayan shippers stating that they would be unable to ship on the line. It is the belief of the American Minister in Uruguay that the letters were sent as a result of the activities of the aforesaid employee of the British Legation. At a later date, the British Minister in Uruguay assured the American Minister that there had been a misunderstanding and that the scope of the activities of the employee above mentioned was merely to obtain the "voluntary" cooperation of the American lines.

These particular incidents afford an opportunity to call to the attention of the British Ambassador, informally and frankly, a matter which may well become a serious source of friction between the United States and the British Governments unless there is an informal understanding and a meeting of minds as to attitude and interpretation. It will be recalled that in the last war there was great friction, resentment, and angry correspondence between the two Governments over this subject.⁵⁶ The American Government took the position that the operation of the black list interfered with the legitimate operations of American firms with neutral countries. The British Government, on the other hand, insisted that the legislation in question was purely municipal, that the penalties provided for in connection with the black list were against British firms and individuals to be enforced in the United Kingdom. In the face of the occurrence last week in Montevideo it would appear to be somewhat legalistic to contend that the black list had not resulted in an interference in a neutral country with the operations of an American company with its regular customers in that country. It is true that the British Minister and his assistant assured the American Minister at Montevideo that there had been a misunderstanding and a misrepresentation of their attitude, but the facts remain that ten firms in Montevideo wrote to an American steamship company that they could not ship Uruguayan cargo to the United States because of the fact that this American company transported cargo to the United States for another firm in Uruguay which firm the British Government believed to have connections with an enemy belligerent.

WASHINGTON, November 9, 1939.

⁵⁶ See *Foreign Relations*, 1916, supp., pp. 328-495.

740.00112 European War 1939/516

The British Ambassador (Lothian) to the Secretary of State

MEMORANDUM

The British Ambassador has the honour to acknowledge the memorandum of the Secretary of State of November 9, 1939, regarding certain incidents which are reported to have occurred recently at Montevideo, Uruguay, involving the operation of the so-called British black list.

Lord Lothian has received incomplete copies of telegraphic reports sent by the British Minister at Montevideo to the Foreign Office on these incidents, but they do not appear to corroborate the statement in the memorandum, in regard to the first incident, that "an employee of the British Legation in Montevideo is reported to have informed the local agents of the American Moore-McCormack Lines that if freights were carried for firms on the British black list, steps would be taken to see that other shippers canceled all freights already booked and refused to ship on the line", nor the belief of the American Minister, in regard to the second, that the letters which the Sprague Line received from ten Uruguayan shippers stating that they would be unable to ship on the line were sent "as a result of the activities of the aforesaid employee of the British Legation."

The British Minister's telegrams confirm the statement in the memorandum that he and his assistant assured the American Minister at Montevideo that there had been a misunderstanding and misrepresentation of their attitude, but indicate that there was no question of pressure having been brought by his assistant on the local agents of the Moore-McCormack Lines not to accept shipments from local firms included in the British list, that decision having been taken by the local agents themselves with the concurrence of their principals in the United States.

The fact remains, as stated in the memorandum, that ten firms in Montevideo wrote to the local agents of the Sprague Line, but the tenor of the letters, according to the British Minister's reports, was not that those firms could not ship Uruguayan cargo to the United States because of the fact that this American company transported cargo to the United States for another firm in Uruguay which firm the British Government believed to have connections with an enemy belligerent, but rather that the ten wool exporting firms proposed to suspend their freight bookings with the Sprague Line pending the "clearing up of the situation". In the event it appears that the letters were cancelled.

Lord Lothian appreciates the action of Mr. Cordell Hull in calling his attention informally and frankly to this matter and is equally

anxious that there should be an informal understanding and a meeting of minds as to attitude and interpretation. But in these particular incidents more is involved than the operation of the so-called British black list. It would appear from the British Minister's telegrams that at least some part of the consignments were of wool acquired by German interests through the German clearing account with Uruguay and sold to the United States through listed firms by the local German bank acting on behalf of the above German interests; in which case the dollar proceeds of the wool are held in the end at the disposal of the German government.

Lord Lothian is sending a copy of Mr. Cordell Hull's memorandum to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and will be glad to communicate to him further information which may result from enquiries made in Montevideo.

WASHINGTON, November 15, 1939.

740.00112 European War 1939/534 : Telegram

The Minister in the Netherlands (Gordon) to the Secretary of State

THE HAGUE, November 22, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received November 22—4: 43 p. m.]

287. With respect to Chamberlain's⁸⁷ announcement in the Commons yesterday that by way of retaliation for Germany's violations of international law and the brutality of her methods of conducting war at sea an Order-in-Council is to be issued making German exports subject to seizure on the high seas as they were during the last war, the Dutch Government has today instructed its Legation in London to lodge a vigorous protest with the British Government at once before the Order-in-Council is actually issued.

The Foreign Minister has given me the text of the protest—which of course remains a strictly confidential document—which may be briefly summarized as follows.

The British Government's decision evokes comments inspired by the probability if not the certainty that Dutch interests will be injured by the putting in force of the measures announced.

Without arguing the question of whether or not the accusation against Germany has been duly proved it is to be noted that the Dutch Government which has just lost a valuable unit of its mercantile marine with the accompanying loss of several score human lives including women and children has a special interest in learning the cause of this disaster; if the British Government could make this known with certainty the Netherlands Government would be very

⁸⁷ British Prime Minister.

grateful so that it might obtain legal redress for damages and for the suffering inflicted upon a great number of innocent people.

Nor does it pertain to the Netherlands Government to go into the question of whether the British Government is entitled to take measures of reprisal against Germany or whether these measures are lawful in themselves on the hypothesis of German aggression as alleged by the British Government. However, the Netherlands Government wonders why the British Government in conformity with ethical and legal principles did not feel that it should make a formal public charge against Germany denouncing the facts against which the British Government felt that it must complain. In this connection the Netherlands Government evokes the diplomatic *démarche* of Pope Benedict XV of August 25, 1915 suggesting that belligerents refrain from any measure of reprisal without preliminary communication of the motives thereof. Such communication "recommend[ed] by good sense and very judicious even vis-à-vis an enemy" would moreover give third parties a chance to raise objections in case their interests as in the present case should be unjustly injured.

In any event the Dutch Government must protest with energy against the fact that in decreeing reprisals against Germany the British Government has had recourse to measures prejudicial not only to Germany but also to the Netherlands whose colonies regularly import German merchandise and in very special measure to Dutch shipping; the law of nations recognized by Britain as by other civilized nations and notably the Declaration of Paris of 1856 accepted by Great Britain allows such shipping freely to transport goods destined to third countries even if these goods are of German origin. The fact that the British reprisals injure not only those whom the British Government deems culpable but also innocent parties gives them an odious character which the Netherlands condemns all the more as these measures are taken by a friendly power.

The Dutch Government all the more fails to understand why Dutch along with other neutral interests must be injured even if involuntarily by the British measures inasmuch as the choice of reprisals is very large and if the British Government for reasons best known to itself decides to proceed to reprisals against the Germans it could have chosen measures not entailing injury to Holland which is already hard hit as to her means of existence by the war and especially by other means already taken by Great Britain.

The Dutch Government feels that the preceding observations are so fair and pertinent that a reconsideration of the publicly announced British decision is called for. (End of Dutch protest).

The Foreign Minister urgently requested me to ascertain the views of my Government with respect to the announced British measures of reprisal and accordingly I know he will be appreciative if you will give me an indication thereof at the earliest moment possible.⁵⁸

GORDON

⁵⁸ In telegram No. 157, December 8, 5 p. m. (not printed), the Minister in the Netherlands was informed of Department's telegram No. 1561, December 7, 2 p. m., to the Chargé in the United Kingdom, p. 786.

740.00112 European War 1939/562 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Belgium (Davies) to the Secretary of State

BRUSSELS, November 24, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received November 26—5:10 a. m.]

199. Belgian Government is today addressing identic notes to the British and French Governments, protesting vigorously against the latter's decision to establish a blockade against German exports.

In these notes the Belgian Government states that measures of reprisal taken by one belligerent against another for alleged violation of the law of war should not be directed at the neutrals. In the present instance, nevertheless, they would affect Belgium very seriously.

Notes then call attention to the declaration of Paris of 1856 signed by Great Britain and France, in the preamble of which it is declared that the neutral flag covers enemy goods. It would appear that this principle is about to be abandoned, to the great injury of the neutrals.

Text by mail.⁵⁹

Press comment while severely critical of the German mine laying activities also condemns the British and French measures of retaliation. Commercial associations of Antwerp have expressed their apprehension to the Belgian Government.

DAVIES

740.00112 European War 1939/560 : Telegram

The Minister in Sweden (Sterling) to the Secretary of State

STOCKHOLM, November 25, 1939—11 a. m.

[Received November 25—10:05 a. m.]

208. Sweden is making a strong attempt to deter Great Britain from its proposed blockade of German exports. Nevertheless, no official protest has been made and none is at present contemplated. Germany transships practically no goods through Sweden and very few Swedish manufactured exports use German raw materials so that Sweden would suffer mostly inconvenience. What is feared, however, is a German blockade of British exports in retaliation. This might paralyze Swedish shipping and seriously affect its trade with all countries. Sweden has pointed out to Great Britain that the application of this blockade to Swedish ships will place the Swedish-British negotiations now in progress on an entirely different basis.

STERLING

⁵⁹ Not printed.

740.00112 European War 1939/596 : Telegram

The Minister in Norway (Harriman) to the Secretary of State

OSLO, November 28, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received November 28—1:55 p. m.]

105. The Norwegian Foreign Office today has handed me strictly confidential memorandum protesting strongly against British plans for the seizure on high seas of cargoes of German origin and [omission?] carried by neutral merchant vessels stating that only small amounts of German goods are shipped by Norwegian vessels, that such action would contravene rules of international law and that Norway reserves the right to compensation for losses resulting therefrom. Text by next pouch.⁶⁰

HARRIMAN

740.00112 European War 1939/597 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, November 28, 1939.

[Received November 28—10:10 p. m.]

2842. Embassy's 2808, November 22, 5 p. m.⁶⁰ The Embassy has received from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs a note dated today enclosing copies of a decree dated November 27th published in today's *Journal Officiel* authorizing the seizure of all German exports on ships which clear from German or other ports after December 4, 1939. The decree contains authority to release German exports which became neutral property before November 28, 1939.

The Foreign Office note states that the decree contains the measures which the French Government finds itself obliged to take as reprisals against the acts of violence, condemned by international and humanitarian laws, to which the Reich Government has had recourse in recent weeks. The note expresses the regret of the French Government at being obliged to extend the control measures which the exercise of its belligerent rights has compelled it to adopt towards neutral ships. It states the formal intention of the French Government to reduce to a minimum the resulting inconveniences to neutral ship owners and businessmen. It concludes by stating that the latter will be advised of the precautions they may take to avoid delay of their ships and goods.

An explanatory statement preceding the decree justifies its issuance as a reprisal against recent German acts of violence namely torpedoing of French, Allied and neutral merchant ships in violation of the

⁶⁰ Not printed.

protocol of 1936 relative to submarine warfare⁶² to which protocol Germany is a party and the sinking of French, Allied and neutral ships by mines placed without notification in contravention of the Eighth Hague Convention of 1907 of which Germany was a signatory.

The text of the decree as translated in the Embassy follows:

“Article I. The competent authorities may require the discharge in a port under the jurisdiction of France or in an Allied port of goods loaded in a port situated in enemy territory if the ship has left the enemy port of embarkation after December 4, 1939.

They may follow the same procedure with respect to goods of enemy origin, source or ownership loaded in a port other than an enemy port on a ship which has left such port after December 4, 1939.

Article II. The procedure applicable to the subject of maritime prizes shall be followed to determine whether the goods discharged under application of article I above have been lawfully detained.

To this end the Inter-Ministerial Committee established by the decree of September 3, 1939 will be called in future ‘Committee of Control of Contraband and of Enemy Exports’.

Article III. The goods seized will be turned over to the service of prizes and administered by it. They may be requisitioned or sold under a decision of the Committee of Control of Contraband and of Enemy Exports.

The proceeds from these requisitions and sales will be paid into a special account in the funds for deposits and collections.

Article IV. On the conclusion of peace the Prize Council will decide, in equity and in consideration of all the circumstances, on the disposal of seized goods or when appropriate of the proceeds of their requisition of sale.

This provision will not prevent, at any time and independently of the normal procedure prescribed in article II, the Blockade Minister from deciding, with the advice of the Committee of Control of Contraband and of Enemy Exports, to release seized goods or to pay their exchange value. In particular this course may be adopted if it is established that the goods became neutrals’ property before the date of publication of this decree in the *Journal Officiel*. Execution of the decision will be the duty of the Ministry of the Navy.

Article V. The present decree does not prevent the seizure and capture of ships and goods by virtue of the general principles of international law and the provisions of regulations and instructions in force.

Article VI. For the application of the present decree the territories occupied by the enemy or placed under his control will be assimilated to enemy territory. All goods belonging to a person who is in said territories will be considered as enemy property”.

(Article VII charges several Ministries with executing this decree.)

BULLITT

⁶² See section entitled “Signature of Procès-Verbal, November 6, 1936, Relating to Part IV (Rules of Submarine Warfare), London Naval Treaty, 1930,” *Foreign Relations*, 1936, vol. 1, pp. 160 ff.

740.00112 European War 1939/611 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the
Secretary of State*

LONDON, November 29, 1939—3 p. m.
[Received November 29—11:48 a. m.]

2481. Embassy's 2420, November 22, noon.⁶³ Under cover of a circular note from the Foreign Office dated November 28, 1939, indicating that the British Government is constrained to take retaliatory measures against German illegalities and expressing regret that it has become necessary to extend the measures of control of neutral shipping beyond that already exercised, the Embassy has been furnished with copies of the Order-in-Council "framing reprisals for restricting further the commerce of Germany." The note also adds: "Every effort will, however, be made to minimize inconvenience to neutral ship-owners and merchants, and steps are being taken to bring to their notice the precautions which they can take to avoid delay to their vessels and goods." After a preamble which elaborates the Prime Minister's statement of November 21 showing cause for taking retaliatory measures, the Order-in-Council reads:

"1. Every merchant vessel which sailed from any enemy port, including any port in territory under enemy occupation or control, after the 4th day of December, 1939, may be required to discharge in a British or Allied port any goods on board laden in such enemy port.

"2. Every merchant vessel which sailed from a port other than an enemy port after the 4th day of December, 1939, having on board goods which are of enemy origin or are enemy property may be required to discharge such goods in a British or Allied port.

"3. Goods discharged in a British port under either of the preceding articles shall be placed in the custody of the marshal of the Prize Court, and, unless the court orders them to be requisitioned for the use of His Majesty, shall be detained or sold under the direction of the court. The proceeds of goods so sold shall be paid into court.

On the conclusion of peace such proceeds and any goods detained but not sold shall be dealt with in such manner as the court may in the circumstances deem just; provided that nothing herein shall prevent the payment out of court of any such proceeds or the release of any goods at any time (a) if it be shown to the satisfaction of the court that the goods had become neutral property before the date of this order, or (b) with the consent of the proper officer of the Crown.

"4. The law and practice in prize shall, so far as applicable, be followed in all cases arising under this order.

"5. Nothing in this order shall affect the liability of any vessel or goods to seizure or condemnation independently of this order.

⁶³ Not printed; it transmitted the text of the British Prime Minister's statement to the House of Commons, November 21, 1939 (see telegram No. 287, November 22, 5 p. m., from the Minister in the Netherlands, p. 778).

"6. For the purposes of this order the words 'goods which are of enemy origin' shall include goods having their origin in any territory under enemy occupation or control, and the words 'goods which are enemy property' shall include goods belonging to any person in any such territory.

"7. Proceedings under this order may be taken in any prize court having jurisdiction to which the prize court rules, 1939,* apply.

"8. For the purposes of this order the words 'British port' mean any port within the jurisdiction of any prize court to which the prize court rules, 1939, apply.

"*statutory rules and orders 1939 No. 1466."

Full text of note and Order-in-Council by mail.⁶⁵

KENNEDY

740.00112 European War 1939/643 : Telegram

The Minister in Sweden (Sterling) to the Secretary of State

STOCKHOLM, December 2, 1939—noon.

[Received December 2—8:35 a. m.]

239. The Swedish Government on November 30 made a formal protest to the British and French Governments against the blockade of German exports. This was done the Foreign Office states to support the other neutral powers that have made protests. The Foreign Office adds that it expects very shortly to have an arrangement with Great Britain whereby Swedish commerce will suffer very little.

STERLING

740.00112 European War 1939/646 : Telegram

The Chargé in Belgium (Wilson) to the Secretary of State

BRUSSELS, December 2, 1939—2 p. m.

[Received December 2—10:45 a. m.]

210. From Berlin:

2187, November 30, 10 a. m. My 2173, November 29, 1 p. m.⁶⁵ During the past few days German newspapers have given prominent attention in their news and editorial columns to protests by neutral countries to Great Britain's order for the seizure of German sea-borne exports, but they have refrained from any discussion of the attitude of the United States toward this action on the part of Great Britain.

I have received no intimation from Foreign Office official of German concern with respect to the British move or the American reaction thereto, but economic officials of the Reich in conversation have taken occasion to present the view that in Germany it was not expected that the United States would make any effective protest in regard to British

⁶⁵ Not printed.

seizure of German exports to America. Certain officials have even professed the belief that Great Britain had obtained the acquiescence of the American Government before announcing the measures in question. In developing this point of view these officials claim that the proclamation forbidding belligerent submarines to touch at American ports⁶⁶ has been extended to include merchant submarines such as the *Deutschland* type which made commercial voyages during the World War, and this alleged act is cited as an example of American support of British blockade measures. Kirk.

WILSON

740.00112 European War 1939/767

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Chief of the Division of European Affairs (Hickerson)

[WASHINGTON,] December 6, 1939.

Dr. Tannenberg⁶⁷ came in to see me at 11:30 yesterday by appointment and handed me the attached informal memorandum dealing with certain alleged arrangements for the shipment of German merchandise from neutral countries to the United States. The memorandum reads as follows:

“According to advices received from American importers and neutral European shippers, the British Government has agreed to grant free passage to merchandise of German origin destined for the United States, up to December 31, if such shipment is accompanied by a declaration made before the American Consulate and legalized by the British Consulate in the port from which the merchandise is to be shipped.

Information is being sought,

(1) Whether an arrangement to that effect has been made between the Government of the United States and the British Government and, if so, what the nature of that arrangement is;

(2) Whether the American Consulates in Germany have received instructions to render assistance in such a procedure;

(3) Whether there is a chance that shipments on that basis will be permitted free passage after December 31.

Washington, D. C., December 4, 1939.”

After reading the memorandum I told Dr. Tannenberg that the answer to his first question was “no”; to the second question “no”, and the third question we had no information as yet on the subject. I explained that since the announcement that the British Government proposed to endeavor to stop exports from Germany, we had been studying the question with the view to formulating the attitude of the American Government on this general question. I went on to

⁶⁶ Department of State *Bulletin*, November 4, 1939, p. 456.

⁶⁷ First Secretary of the German Embassy.

say that we had received various inquiries from individual American concerns in regard to how to get shipments of German goods passed by the British blockade authorities, but that we had felt that pending a decision on the question of our attitude respecting the proposed blockade we could not appropriately take up individual cases.

I told Dr. Tannenberg that there had thus been no communications passed between the American and the British Governments on the subject of the blockade, other than the circular note which our Embassy at London received from the British Foreign Office announcing the proposed blockade; that there had been no conversations between officials of this Government and the British Government in regard to any phase of the matter, and that with this background he could understand the answers to the three questions which I had given him.

Dr. Tannenberg said that the matter was entirely clear and he expressed his appreciation for the information which I had given him.

740.00112 European War 1939/611 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Chargé in the United Kingdom
(Johnson)*

WASHINGTON, December 7, 1939—2 p. m.

1561. Your 2481, November 29, 3 p. m. Please promptly deliver to the Foreign Office a formal note reading textually as follows:

My Government has noted with regret that by its Order-in-Council of November 28, the British Government has undertaken to intercept all ships and all goods emanating from German ports, and ports in territory under German occupation, after December 4, 1939, and all ships from whatever port sailing after December 4 having on board goods of German origin or German ownership, and to require that such goods be discharged in a British or allied port and placed in the custody of the marshal of the prize court. This order if applied literally would subject American vessels to diversion to British ports if they are found to be carrying goods of German origin or German ownership, regardless of the place of lading of such goods or the place of destination and regardless of the ownership of the goods at the time that the vessel is intercepted, the words "enemy origin", according to the order, covering any goods having an origin in any territory under enemy control, and the words "enemy property" including goods belonging to any person in any such territory.

Interference with neutral vessels on the high seas by belligerent powers must be justified upon some recognized belligerent right. It is conceded that a belligerent government has a right to visit and search neutral vessels on the high seas for the purpose of determining whether the vessel is carrying contraband of war to an opposing belligerent, is otherwise engaged in some form of unneutral service, or

has broken or is attempting to break an effective blockade of an enemy port and, if justified by the evidence, to take the vessel into port.

American vessels are at the present time prohibited by our domestic law from engaging in any kind of commerce on the west coast of Europe between Bergen, Norway, on the north, and the northern part of Spain on the south. This prohibition applies to neutral as well as to belligerent ports within that area. Consequently, justification for interfering with American vessels or their cargoes on grounds of breach of blockade can hardly arise. Likewise the question of contraband does not arise with respect to goods en route from Germany to the United States.

Whatever may be said for or against measures directed by one belligerent against another, they may not rightfully be carried to the point of enlarging the rights of a belligerent over neutral vessels and their cargoes, or of otherwise penalizing neutral states or their nationals in connection with their legitimate activities.

Quite apart from the principles of international law thus involved, the maintenance of the integrity of which cannot be too strongly emphasized at this time when a tendency toward disrespect for law in international relations is threatening the security of peace-loving nations, there are practical reasons which move my Government to take notice of the Order-in-Council here in question. In many instances orders for goods of German origin have been placed by American nationals for which they have made payment in whole or in part or have otherwise obligated themselves. In other instances the goods purchased or which might be purchased cannot readily, if at all, be duplicated in other markets. These nationals have relied upon such purchases or the right to purchase for the carrying on of their legitimate trade, industry and professions. In these circumstances, the British Government will readily appreciate why my Government cannot view with equanimity the measures contemplated by the Order-in-Council which if applied cannot fail to add to the many inconveniences and damages to which innocent trade and commerce are already being subjected.

My Government is therefore under the necessity of requesting that measures adopted by the British Government shall not cause interference with the legitimate trade of its nationals and of reserving meanwhile all its rights and the rights of its nationals whenever and to the extent that they may be infringed.

HULL

740.00112 European War 1939/718: Telegram

The Chargé in Belgium (Wilson) to the Secretary of State

BRUSSELS, December 8, 1939—3 p. m.

[Received 5:48 p. m.]

215. Embassy's 163, October 28, 10 a. m. Foreign Office informs me that agreements with Great Britain and France relating to the contraband control will probably be signed next week.⁶⁸ It will be

⁶⁸ In telegram No. 216, December 12, 4 p. m., the Chargé reported that he had been reliably informed that the agreements were signed on December 11, 1939 (740.00112 European War 1939/756).

necessary, however, to make separate arrangements with respect to certain articles such as nonferrous metals concerning which it has not been possible to reach a satisfactory understanding. It is understood that these arrangements will be similar in principle to the agreement relating to the import of French iron ore and the export of coal and coke from Belgium. (See Embassy's despatch No. 528, November 22.)⁶⁹

Embassy's telegram No. 202, November 28, noon.⁶⁹ No answer has yet been received from Great Britain to the Belgian note protesting against British control of exports from Belgium.

WILSON

740.00112 European War 1939/717: Telegram

The Minister in the Netherlands (Gordon) to the Secretary of State

THE HAGUE, December 8, 1939—4 p. m.

[Received 5:14 p. m.]

307. My 304, December 7, 6 p. m.⁶⁹ Consideration is being given to the question of the Dutch Government testing before the Permanent Court of International Justice the legality of British and French reprisal blockade measures. Although England and France on September 7 and 10 declared that they would no longer be bound by any obligation to accept a decision of the court in matters arising out of the present war the Dutch Government has now notified the Secretary General of the League of Nations that it reserves all its rights with respect to these declarations.

Inasmuch as Holland has an arbitration treaty with France it is also possible that as regards that country the question might be brought up under the procedure prescribed by the said treaty.

Copies to London, Paris, Berlin, Brussels, and Bern.

GORDON

740.00112 European War 1939/597: Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Bullitt)

WASHINGTON, December 11, 1939—6 p. m.

1509. Your 2842, November 28. Embassy at London is being requested to forward you text of note which has been addressed to British Government on this subject, upon receipt of which please transmit copy thereof to French Government by formal note stating that it represents the views of this Government in matter of the action

⁶⁹ Not printed.

proposed to be taken by French Government in unison with British Government.

HULL

740.00112 European War 1939/773 : Telegram

The Minister in the Netherlands (Gordon) to the Secretary of State

THE HAGUE, December 13, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received December 13—3:26 p. m.]

314. My 287, November 22, 5 p. m. Dutch Government is today, through its Minister in London, presenting another note of protest against the British reprisal measures. The note is again a stiff one, characterizing the British measures as the exercise of the right of the strongest, insisting that the mere labeling thereof as reprisals in no way clothes them with legality, and declaring that the Dutch Government will hold the British Government responsible for all damages resulting therefrom to the Netherlands or its subjects.

Unless the Department desires it cabled I shall send text of note (which remains confidential unless and until given to the press) by Saturday's pouch.

GORDON

740.00112 European War 1939/822

The Secretary of State to the British Ambassador (Lothian)

WASHINGTON, December 14, 1939.

EXCELLENCY: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of Your Excellency's note, no. 471, of November 9, 1939, in regard to certain provisions of the Neutrality Act of 1939 and to the President's Proclamation of November 4, issued pursuant to the terms of Section 3 of that act, in which you inform me that your Government feels obliged formally to reserve its rights in the matter of the exercise of belligerent activities in respect to United States vessels in the manner indicated in your note of September 10, 1939.

It was suggested in that note that neutral vessels en route to certain countries should voluntarily call at one of the several "contraband control" bases designated by your Government in order that the examination of their cargoes might be facilitated, by examination in port rather than on the high seas. Since, pursuant to the Act of Congress approved November 4, 1939, and the President's Proclamation of the same date, it becomes illegal for American vessels to enter the so-called combat zone about the British Isles and the Northern coast of Europe, they are thereby precluded from voluntarily entering the "contraband control" bases within the combat zone, and Your

Excellency's note is understood as undertaking to reserve a right of your Government to divert American vessels to such bases, by force if necessary, acting, in that respect, without regard to the municipal law of the United States or the rights, obligations, and liabilities of American vessels under that law.

In this connection I am impelled to bring to the attention of Your Excellency's Government the following considerations which I conceive to be of such importance as to merit most careful notice.

First. Since, under the Neutrality Act, it is illegal for American vessels to carry cargo to belligerent ports in Europe and Northern Africa, such vessels will, of necessity, be carrying only such cargo as is shipped from one neutral country to another. Such cargo is entitled to the presumption of innocent character, in the absence of substantial evidence justifying a suspicion to the contrary.

Second. It is my understanding that the American steamship companies operating vessels to European destinations, putting aside certain of their rights under accepted principles of international law, have voluntarily indicated a willingness to cooperate with the British authorities in every practicable manner intended best to serve the mutual interests of themselves and the British Government in those circumstances in which the respective rights of the two parties might be regarded by them as in some respects in conflict. It is my belief that such a spirit of liberality on the part of American shipping interests should be met by a corresponding degree of accommodation and flexibility on the part of the British Government, and that such mutual deferences should avoid giving rise to any occasion for the forcible diversion of such American vessels to those belligerent ports which they are by the law of the United States prohibited from entering.

In view of these considerations, it is difficult for my Government to foresee, as a practical matter, any occasion necessitating the entry of American vessels into belligerent ports. If, despite all of the foregoing considerations the British authorities should feel it necessary to compel any American vessel to enter the combat area or any of those belligerent ports which by the provisions of the neutrality law they are prohibited from entering, the Government of the United States will feel it necessary to examine carefully into all of the facts of the case and to take such further action as the results of such examination appear to make necessary or expedient. Meanwhile, I feel that I should inform Your Excellency that this Government, for itself and its nationals, reserves all its and their rights in the matter and that it will be expected that compensation for losses and injuries resulting from the infraction of such rights will be made as a matter of course.

Accept [etc.]

CORDELL HULL

740.00112 European War 1939/803 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, December 16, 1939—1 p. m.

[Received 3 p. m.]

2377. Department's 732, October 18, 8 p. m., and 1063, December 11, 5 p. m.⁷¹ Following a series of requests for clarification as to the status of tobacco under German contraband legislation a member of the Embassy was yesterday received by appointment in the Legal Section of the Foreign Office for a discussion of the matter. The Foreign Office official with whom the matter has finally been lodged apologized for the delay in answering the inquiry stating that the authorities had been somewhat perplexed as to the purpose of the inquiry and the possible effects of any new decision taken by the German Government in the matter. He declared that the statement issued by the German Embassy in Washington was unauthorized and incorrect since tobacco was definitely included in the second provisional contraband list issued by the Reich (see my telegram No. 1234, September 14, noon⁷²). He said that if the Embassy would make an informal but definite request to that effect the German Government would give prompt and serious consideration to exempting tobacco from the contraband list. He said that he could not state in advance what action would be taken on such a request but indicated that it would probably be favorable conditional upon the continued exemption of tobacco from the British contraband list. He added that it was conceivable that Germany might be interested in making purchases of American tobacco.

I would appreciate instruction in the event that further representations are desired.

KIRK

740.00112 European War 1939/812a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Chargé in the United Kingdom
(Johnson)*

WASHINGTON, December 16, 1939—5 p. m.

1266. Having reference to the Order-in-Council of November 28 concerning seizure of goods of German ownership or origin and to the unofficial "Notice to Traders" which has apparently been distributed informally by British authorities in the United States, request from appropriate authorities for the guidance of the Department and

⁷¹ Latter not printed.

⁷² Not printed; but see note of September 19 from the German Chargé, p. 739.

American nationals, an official statement of policy and proposed practice in the following respects:

1st. What measures are in effect or in contemplation in the direction of assurances, before shipment from German and neutral ports, of non-interference with such consignments?

2nd. Under what circumstances and on the basis of what evidence will such assurances be given?

3rd. To whom should such evidence be presented, and, generally speaking, what periods of time are likely to follow presentation of such evidence before decisions will be rendered respecting individual shipments?

4th. What is the nature of and what value will be given to such advance assurances?

Please expedite reply.

HULL

740.00112 European War 1939/836 : Telegram

The Minister in the Netherlands (Gordon) to the Secretary of State

THE HAGUE, December 21, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received December 21—3:40 p. m.]

320. Foreign Office has just given me in strict confidence text of British note replying to Dutch note of protest reported in my 287, November 22, 5 p. m. Essence of British note is claim that a belligerent's right of retaliation which inherently constitutes a departure from ordinary rules is well recognized in international law and that British reprisal measures have a similar objective, and consequently are the most appropriate counter to Germany's illegal attempts to stop all maritime trade with Britain. The Dutch assertion that these measures are of "an odious character" appears to have markedly irritated the British.

Text of note by tomorrow's pouch.⁷³

GORDON

740.00112 European War 1939/850 : Telegram

The Chargé in the United Kingdom (Johnson) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, December 27, 1939—7 p. m.

[Received December 27—3:29 p. m.]

2730. Your 1670 [1626], December 16, 5 p. m., was immediately taken up in writing with the proper authorities of the Ministry of

⁷³ Not printed.

Economic Warfare and the following reply dated December 25 has been received :

“In your letter of the 19th of December you were good enough to ask me to give you an official statement of policy and proposed practice in regard to matters arising out of the Order-in-Council published on the 28th November last.

So far as I can give them the answers to the specific questions you put to me are as follows :

1. Applications for exemption from the provisions of the Order-in-Council in certain circumstances will be entertained and if granted an assurance will be given that the consignment concerned will not be interfered with.

2. Such exemptions will only be given in very exceptional circumstances. It is not possible to define the facts on which an exception may be made because, as you will appreciate, this will depend on the particular circumstances of each case. When, however, any application for exemption is made the fullest possible information should be supplied, including in particular all details of the shipment desired, together with the names and addresses of consignor and consignee, the origin of the goods, the contract under which they were purchased, dates on which payment therefor is due, and the dates on which any payments therefor have been made.

3. All such applications should be addressed to the Ministry of Economic Warfare with any further documentary evidence that is available. It is not necessary to state how long a period of time is likely to elapse before decisions will be made in regard to individual shipments, but every effort will be made in this Department to minimize delay.

4. The nature of any assurance given, in cases where an exemption is granted, will be a communication to that effect made to the applicant. In such cases the necessary instructions will be given to all the naval and customs authorities concerned.”

JOHNSON

II. REPRESENTATIONS TO THE ALLIED GOVERNMENTS AGAINST APPLICATION OF CONTROL MEASURES INTERFERING WITH TRADE BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND NEUTRAL COUNTRIES

300.115 (39) Benecke, Alexander/5 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom
(Kennedy)*

WASHINGTON, September 27, 1939—11 a. m.

1083. The Department is beginning to receive petitions for assistance in connection with three classes of shipments and proposed shipments from Germany, namely; first, goods fully paid for; second, goods partly paid for; third, goods on order but not yet paid for or shipped. At least two such inquiries already received state that un-

less the commodities so ordered can be procured, the concerns in question will be required to go out of business. Please ascertain from the appropriate authorities what the basic policy of the British Government is with respect to shipments originating in Germany but destined for use and consumption in the United States in each of the three classes above-mentioned.

HULL

300.115(39)/1 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, September 27, 1939—6 p. m.
[Received September 27—3 : 25 p. m.]

2207. We have discussed with officials of the newly established blockade control in the Foreign Office the problems which have arisen in applying blockade measures to American ships. The officials have been sympathetic and are endeavoring to establish a system which will eliminate friction as regards legitimate neutral trade without impairing the effectiveness of the blockade control.

The steamer *City of Joliet* of the Southern States Lines has been held in Havre for about 10 days removing cargo destined for Antwerp and Rotterdam. A shipment of lead from the American Smelting and Refining Company was unloaded several days ago by order of the French authorities. Subsequently a decree provided a method for the shipper to give a guarantee that the goods would not reach an enemy country under a penalty fixed at five times the value of the goods. Such a guarantee may be arranged in a day or two but it has not been decided whether to wait for its application in this case.

The American Export Lines have been subject to blockade control in the Mediterranean as reported by the Consul at Marseille. At the instance of the Genoa office of this line assurance has been obtained that ships bound for the United States would be treated liberally, but blockade authorities desire that all bills of lading in future be nominative instead of to order.

BULLITT

300.115(39) Benecke, Alexander/6 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, September 28, 1939—7 p. m.
[Received September 28—2 : 16 p. m.]

1858. Your 1083, September 27, 11 a. m. Ministry of Economic Warfare stated that the British Government is taking no action whatever

at present against exports direct or indirect from Germany to neutral countries carried on neutral ships, the only exception being arms and munitions which there might be reason to believe it was intended to transfer to a German raider.

KENNEDY

300.115 (39) / 6 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, October 14, 1939—3 p. m.

[Received October 14—11:22 a. m.]

2475. In order to minimize delays to American ships, arrangements have been made by the French Blockade Ministry for the submission of manifests to that Ministry by the Paris representative of American ships prior to their arrival in France. The manifests will be examined within 24 to 48 hours and the ships' representatives notified as to questionable items in order that the investigation necessary to establish that the items in question are not destined to the enemy may be begun.

BULLITT

300.115 (39) / 232 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, October 19, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received October 19—2:10 p. m.]

2098. Conference took place today between officials of the Embassy and Ministry of Economic Warfare at which we endeavored to set out and clarify principal complaints of American shippers and ship owners. Ministry of Economic Warfare explained practical difficulties with which they are confronted and gave assurance that every endeavor would be made to expedite examination and release of ships cargo.

The Ministry sent me this afternoon a printed statement, copies of which will be forwarded by pouch. This statement contains several suggestions which if followed by American shipping interests should minimize the delays to which our vessels are now subjected. The Ministry promises to supply a daily list of American vessels taken to contraband control bases. Vessels now reported by the Ministry as now detained are at Kirkwall SS *Scanstates*, at Weymouth SS *Black Tern*, at Ramsgate SS *Black Falcon*.

Following is statement from Ministry.

“Contraband control has now been in force for about a month. His Majesty’s Government are carrying out their published intention of

exercising to the full their belligerent rights of visit and search. The rights they are exercising are in strict accordance with the law of nations. It is inevitable that the exercise of these rights should give rise to a certain amount of misunderstanding and friction, and His Majesty's Government regret the delay which must inevitably be caused to neutral ships. These delays are certain to be more severe at the beginning. Later it is hoped that many of the difficulties will be eliminated as the result of trade agreements which are being negotiated with the various governments concerned. In particular, the Navicert system when it is introduced will, His Majesty's Government believe, prevent many delays.⁷⁴

2. It is desired, however, to indicate one or two ways in which, apart from such wide and general agreements, delays may be much mitigated. Shipments to order inevitably cause delay. It is appreciated that this form of shipment is very widely used, and in normal times is found very convenient. It is, however, very important that at the present time shipments to order should be kept within the narrowest possible limits.

[3.] Difficulty arises with regard to shipments to a bank, the bank obviously not being the real consignee of the goods. His Majesty's Government appreciate that from a business point of view it may be important for the protection of banks that such shipments should continue. They are, in conjunction with the interests concerned, arranging system whereby shipments to a bank should continue, but the bill of lading will bear the words "notify A. B.," A. B., of course, being the real consignee. No special facilities could, of course, be given to such shipments, but no disadvantage will attach to them by reason of the fact that the consignment is to a bank where the real consignee's name is disclosed in the manner indicated.

4. In many cases where vessels sail from distant ports to European destinations it is possible to send in advance by air mail or otherwise a copy of the ship's manifest, or at least of that part of it which relates to consignments to places outside the United Kingdom. The receipt of such a copy at the Ministry of Economic Warfare would enable enquiries to be set on foot, and sometimes to be completed before the arrival of the vessel itself. In such cases instructions could be sent enabling the vessel to proceed as soon as her manifest had been checked, and she would thus be able to leave the contraband control base with the very minimum of delay.

5. In some cases it has been found possible for shipping companies to give undertakings that they will keep under their control at the port of destination any consignments regarding which the contraband authorities wish to make enquiries, and that they will return to the United Kingdom any consignments which, as the result of enquiries, the contraband authorities wish to seize. In actual experience a good deal of time and trouble has been saved by an arrangement of this sort, but it is appreciated that the legal position at the foreign port may make it difficult for the shipping companies to enter into such an undertaking, or to fulfill it if they did enter into it.

⁷⁴ See pp. 717 ff.

6. It would often help to save delay if consignees could arrange to supply the Ministry of Economic Warfare in advance with a guarantee against the export of consignments which they are expecting, such guarantees being furnished either by themselves or, on their behalf, by their government.

7. Upon the whole, it is considered that the method by which shipping companies can most effectively assist in minimizing delay, is by arranging to send manifests in advance as indicated in paragraph 4 and by furnishing guarantees as indicated in paragraph 6.

London, October 14, 1939."

KENNEDY

740.00112 European War 1939/356 : Telegram

The Consul at Gibraltar (Chapman) to the Secretary of State

GIBRALTAR, October 23, 1939—9 a. m.

[Received October 23—7:15 a. m.]

8. In reference to Germany's warning against neutral vessels being convoyed by Allied war vessels,⁷⁵ I have suggested to the Gibraltar Contraband Control Officer the hope that neither the American Export Line *Exporter* or Lykes Brothers Steamship Company's ship *Oakman* now here will be subjected to convoy to England to discharge any cargo that may be condemned. He is anxious to dispose of the cases under instructions from London without that. (See my report of September 26, first paragraph, page 4.⁷⁶) The two freighters have been at Gibraltar more than one week without an answer from the London authorities as to what disposition shall be made of cotton, coke, et cetera, for Switzerland. The former carries over 100 bags of United States mail for Mediterranean ports.

CHAPMAN

740.00112 European War 1939/381 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy)

WASHINGTON, October 23, 1939—3 p. m.

1275. Your 1858, September 28. Commercial attaché at Brussels advises in economic trade note no. 59 that shipments from Antwerp are delayed because of strictness with which British authorities are scrutinizing certificates of origin which are required in both transit and domestic goods leaving Belgian ports. Can you reconcile that report with contents of your above-mentioned telegram of September 28.

HULL

⁷⁵ See note of October 19, from the German Chargé, p. 764.

⁷⁶ Not printed.

300.115 (39)/13 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, October 24, 1939—5 p. m.
[Received October 24—3 : 48 p. m.]

2560. Embassy's telegram 2475, October 14, 3 p. m. Representatives of the Southern States Lines reported yesterday that steamers *Nashaba* and *West Hobomac* had not yet been released from Havre by the French blockade authorities and that the port was becoming congested by American cotton ships. Furthermore the contraband committee, which had shown readiness to cooperate, stated that its action was becoming purely advisory and that the Admiralty was making all decisions. Ship agents reported ships cleared by Admiralty 21st but no orders were received by Admiralty office, Havre, on 23d.

The Naval Attaché this morning reviewed the facts with Admiralty officials and requested prompt expedition of all blockade questions affecting American ships. At noon word was received from the agent that the ships had already been released. The Embassy also sent a note to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs requesting prompt decision by the blockade authorities on all questions affecting American ships.

BULLITT

740.00112 European War 1939/382 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, October 25, 1939—5 p. m.
[Received October 25—3 : 44 p. m.]

2158. Your 1275, October 23, 3 p. m. Ministry of Economic Warfare states that certificates of origin are required and of course scrutinized only for goods consigned to Great Britain or points in the Empire. It was explained that they have to do this in order to assure that the trade is legitimate. If therefore a ship clearing from Antwerp with cargo both for the United States and for Great Britain refuses to sail until the certificates of origin for the British destined cargo have been established satisfactorily, then naturally there will be a delay in the sailing of the ship. The information contained in my 1858, September 28, 7 p. m., that at present no action whatever is being taken with regard to exports direct or indirect from Germany to neutral countries, was confirmed as correct.

KENNEDY

300.115(39)/20: Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy)*⁷⁷

WASHINGTON, October 26, 1939—6 p. m.

1302. Department is under necessity of keeping currently advised concerning movement of American vessels and cargo through belligerent controls.

Please therefore arrange that you be provided at earliest possible date with a complete statement to October 25th of all detentions of American vessels and American cargoes, showing dates of arrivals in belligerent country, places of detention and dates of requisition, release, reference to prize courts or other disposition in each case. Also arrange to have such data kept up to date and reported, not less than twice weekly to Department.

HULL

300.115(39)/21: Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, October 27, 1939—7 p. m.

[Received October 27—3:10 p. m.]

2192. Your 1203. We have asked Ministry of Economic War[fare] for information requested your cable. In informal discussion they have stated that they would endeavor to furnish us with statement showing dates of arrival at place of detention and dates of requisition, release, reference to Prize Courts or other disposition in regard to American war [*sic*] vessels, that this would entail considerable work and that they could promise no date when such information could be compiled. With regard to American cargoes they did not believe this would be humanly possible as there had been several hundred ships detained and it was in many cases difficult to tell whether the cargo consisting of many items was American owned or not, legal proceedings in Prize Court at times being necessary to determine that fact. See our cable No. 2030⁷⁸ and No. 2098.⁷⁹

KENNEDY

⁷⁷ Sent also to the Ambassador in France as telegram No. 1314, October 26, 7 p. m.

⁷⁸ Not printed.

⁷⁹ October 19, 6 p. m., p. 795.

300.115 (39) Oakman/5 : Telegram

The Consul at Gibraltar (Chapman) to the Secretary of State

GIBRALTAR, October 28, 1939—1 p. m.

[Received October 28—12:55 p. m.]

12. My telegram No. 8.⁸⁰ Both vessels mentioned and the *Meandicot*, also of Lykes Brothers, which arrived here October 21, were all released last night after I had an informal conversation with the British Admiral October 26 and made an informal visit yesterday morning with the Colonial Secretary objecting to protracted delay, especially in the case of the United States mail on the *Exporter*, including two diplomatic pouches for Athens. I found that the Contraband Control Office powers are too limited to draw prompt action from London. A part of the condemned cargoes was removed here but two of the three American vessels left with orders to proceed to Marseille and Oran respectively to unload.

CHAPMAN

.740.00112 European War 1939/453a : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Minister in the Netherlands (Gordon)

WASHINGTON, October 28, 1939—5 p. m.

134. Although British authorities long since advised Ambassador at London that British Government is not interfering with goods shipped directly or indirectly from Germany to the United States in neutral vessels with the exception of munitions which might be delivered to German raiders at sea, the Embassy at London now advises that "As a matter of practical experience neutral ships will not load merchandise destined for the United States in Rotterdam unless they are reasonably sure that the goods will be passed by the British authorities." Please investigate carefully and report fully just what circumstances induce shipping concerns to decline shipments for United States and precise nature of action taken by British authorities in Dutch ports or elsewhere in connection with neutral vessels and their cargoes destined for United States.

HULL

⁸⁰ October 23, 9 a. m., p. 797.

300.115(39)/35 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom
(Kennedy)*

WASHINGTON, October 28, 1939—9 p. m.

1320. Washington attorneys representing American Cotton Shippers Association, a national trade association of exporters of cotton, file protest regarding "the unreasonably long detention at Gibraltar of ships carrying American cotton to Mediterranean neutral ports." Protest further reads:

"About twelve ships have been so detained and as the cotton carried is largely on a 'cash on arrival' basis, increased costs have been imposed on the members of this Association.

As an example, the Lykes Bros. ship, S. S. *Oakman*, has been detained for more than 10 days. It carries 10,300 bales of cotton for Barcelona shipped in accordance with arrangements between the Export-Import Bank and the Spanish Government, and 839 bales for Genoa, Italy. Apparently the only other cargo of this vessel was 2,000 tons of petroleum coke booked for Genoa long before the outbreak of the war."

Communicate these facts to the appropriate British authorities and request full statement of the circumstances which they rely upon as justification for the action complained of.

HULL

300.115(39)/41 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the
Secretary of State*

LONDON, November 1, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received November 1—12: 45 p. m.]

2236. Your 1320, October 28, 9 p. m., was conveyed to the Ministry of Economic Warfare and in reply the following note has been received:

"It is the case as stated in the Washington telegram that the steamship *Oakman* had on board only 2,000 tons of petroleum coke for Genoa besides a cargo of cotton. A large part of this cotton was however consigned to 15 different consignees in Switzerland and Italy which necessitated enquiries being made in those two countries as to the ultimate destination of the cotton. These enquiries were made by telegraph and as soon as replies had been received of a nature to satisfy the Contraband Committee that the cotton in question was for internal consumption in Italy and Switzerland the whole cargo was released and the steamship *Oakman* was free to proceed on her voyage.

Every effort is made by the contraband control authorities at Gibraltar and in the United Kingdom to eliminate unnecessary delay and to

avoid unduly long detention of ships at Gibraltar but it is essential that those authorities should satisfy themselves as to the ultimate destination of the cotton and other important cargo so as to ensure that it shall not reach Germany.

It would be of the greatest help to the shippers of cotton and other goods, the ship owners on whose ships the goods are carried and the authorities here, if advance information could be furnished to this Department by telegram or air mail as to the ships' cargoes, showing the commodities shipped, their quantities and the consignors and consignees, so that enquiries might at least be begun before the vessel concerned reached Gibraltar.

I should be grateful if you could convey this information to the Department of State."

As long as present conditions governing the administration of contraband control exist, American interests would be better served by cooperation with the suggestions made by the Ministry of Economic Warfare. It might be suggested to all shippers of American-owned goods to neutral countries in Europe and of American-owned ships proceeding to Europe to furnish this Embassy by air mail if possible a copy of all ships' manifests and full information as to consignees and the American interest in such American ships or American-owned cargo, with all supporting documents, as far in advance of sailing as possible. The Embassy would immediately take the necessary action on these documents in conjunction with the British Ministry of Economic Warfare with a view to speeding up the handling of these ships and cargo.

KENNEDY

300.115(39)/68 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom
(Kennedy)*

WASHINGTON, November 4, 1939—2 p. m.

1372. Your 2192.⁸¹ Department considers its request for prompt furnishing of data concerning detentions of American vessels a very modest one which should be granted with a minimum of delay.

As regards cargoes, while it is recognized that providing the information which we have requested would entail more work than in the case of ships, it would not appear to be a difficult matter to organize a system for centralized reporting of facts concerning all shipments claimed by American concerns. We feel that if the British authorities detain such shipments the least that they could do would be to provide us with current information regarding such detentions. We therefore hope that you will press the British sufficiently on this matter to over-

⁸¹ October 27, 7 p. m., p. 799.

come their objections not only because of our belief that we are entitled to such information but also because of our feeling that the necessity for the British authorities reporting such facts may have a salutary influence in the matter of the treatment accorded cargoes.

HULL

300.115(39) Oakman/8: Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom
(Kennedy)*

WASHINGTON, November 4, 1939.

1374. Your 2236, November 1, 5 p. m. Statement of Ministry of Economic Warfare seems to concede that the *Oakman* was delayed 10 days or more while British authorities were bringing themselves to accept facts evidenced by ship's papers which showed innocent character of cargo and vessels and that therefore there was no "probable cause" for seizure or detention. Manifestly the damages resulting from such acts of British Government should not be allowed to fall on the innocent neutrals involved. Therefore please request statement from Ministry as to what is contemplated by it in the way of compensation to innocent parties for damages resulting in this manner.

In this connection you may also call to the attention of the Ministry the fact that the Gulf Mediterranean Ports Conference representing shipping companies operating vessels from United States to Mediterranean ports has filed complaint regarding interferences with vessels at Gibraltar, from which complaint the following is an extract:

"Shortly following the outbreak of War the British Contraband Control Committee began taking vessels into Gibraltar for examination, and latterly those belonging to American and Italian owners have suffered serious detention. Our members are cooperating to the extent of issuing only straight bills of lading (this practice became effective about October 12th), and since that time also copies of manifests have been sent by Clipper Ship to London to the Ministry of Economic Warfare with the object of having them conduct any necessary investigation prior to the arrival of vessels at Gibraltar.

"Striving as we are to meet British requirements we should like to see inspection expedited at Gibraltar, and to this end shall appreciate it if you will use your good offices with the British Government. We would state that the Lines have been endeavoring to secure some expression from the British authorities as to the requirements which must be met in order to avoid or minimize detention of vessels but no definite information has been obtained up to this time.

"We foresee that unless speedy handling can be had at Gibraltar, sailing schedules from this side will be seriously interrupted with consequent injury to American commerce."

The foregoing seems to indicate that the difficulties complained of are resulting despite the fact that the cooperative procedure suggested by the Ministry has been observed by shippers in the past.

You may advise Ministry that it is the view of this Government that the situation at Gibraltar is a serious one which it is believed merits the British Government's prompt and effective efforts to rectify.

HULL

740.00112 European War 1939/454: Telegram

The Minister in the Netherlands (Gordon) to the Secretary of State

THE HAGUE, November 4, 1939—4 p. m.

[Received November 4—12: 56 p. m.]

254. Department's 134, October 28, 5 p. m. Thorough inquiry made throughout the week of Government authorities in The Hague and of shipping officials in Amsterdam and Rotterdam seems completely to negative—up to date at least—the quoted statement from the London Embassy concerning the present practice of neutral ships in loading in Rotterdam merchandise destined for the United States.

The shipping officials in question say that their companies have not declined and do not now decline to take shipments—more specifically shipments of German origin—with the thought that the British authorities may not permit them to pass. Some of the shippers state that they take all shipments offered but place German goods on top so that if the British decide to take them the ship will not be long delayed; others take all shipments offered without differentiation as to loading on account of origin.

Several shippers express the opinion that a blockage on German exports would involve so many difficulties for the British authorities that they will hesitate to institute it; others feel that some system for restricting or at least supervising German exports on neutral ships will be forthcoming fairly soon. Some shippers say that their outbound ships are controlled in the Downs but that the delays occasioned thereby have so far been negligible.

To sum up, all shippers agree that so far no measures have been taken by British authorities in Dutch ports or elsewhere (except for the non-vexatious measures referred to in the preceding paragraph) in controlling exports from Dutch ports to the United States or to other neutral destinations.

On the other hand the Department will have noted that the British Board of Trade has issued an order to the effect that as of November 2nd goods imported from certain neutral countries in Europe must be accompanied by a certificate of origin proving that such goods are

not of German origin and do not serve any German interests. Also the following item appeared in the *London Telegraph* of November 2nd:

“Move to stop Nazi exports shipped by neutrals.—Germany is still exporting considerable quantities of goods to neutral countries, particularly to South America. This trade has so far been ignored by the British Ministry of Economic Warfare because the goods are sent through other neutral countries. In many cases, however, the goods could be easily detected and seized to prevent Germany from accumulating foreign exchange. The matter is being discussed in some political quarters and the Government will be asked to make a statement next week.”

Copy to London.

GORDON

300.113(39) Oakman/9 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, November 8, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received November 8—1:25 p. m.]

2307. Department's 1374, 4th. Ministry of Economic Warfare anticipates that since the Neutrality Act²² is in force there will be no more difficulty at United Kingdom ports of control, but they expect an increase in difficulty at Gibraltar because Germany will intensify her efforts to get American goods through Italy, Switzerland and southern Europe and it will be necessary to investigate goods and consignees very closely.

Tentative suggestions have been made as to the possibility of having control established at Marseille or Oran instead of Gibraltar. Would this be better for American ships?

KENNEDY

300.115(39)/101 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, November 13, 1939—4 p. m.

[Received November 13—10:35 a. m.]

2333. Department's No. 1372, November 4, 2 p. m. Ministry Economic Warfare has furnished list 36 detentions of American vessels brought up to November 8. The list gives only the date of arrival at port of control, destination of the vessel, nature of the cargo car-

²² Passed by Congress and approved November 4, 1939; 54 Stat. 4. For correspondence, see pp. 656 ff.

ried such as "large mixed cargo" and a general statement such as "after preliminary enquiries and decisions vessel free to depart after September 24 on undertaking given by American steamship lines agency that certain items would be returned to Great Britain if necessary". List is being forwarded by mail. List covers following steamers: *Black Condor*, *Black Eagle* (two voyages), *Black Falcon*, *Black Gull*, *Black Hawk*, *Black Heron*, *Black Osprey* (two voyages), *Black Tern*, *Collingsworth*, *Cranford*, *Ethan Allen*, *Exminster*, *Exporter*, *Gateway City*, *Hybert*, *Lehigh* (two voyages), *Liberator*, *Manhattan*, *Meamticut*, *Oakman*, *Patrick Henry*, *President Hayes*, *Saccarappa*, *Scanpenn*, *Scanstates*, *Shickshinny*, *Sundance*, *Tampa*, *Tulsa*, *Wacosta*, *Warrior*, *West Tacock*, *Yaka*. Ministry state that hereafter a statement will be furnished weekly.⁸⁸

KENNEDY

300.115 (39)/233 : Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy)

WASHINGTON, November 17, 1939—5 p. m.

1446. Your 2098, October 19, 6 p. m. We have carefully considered your telegram and the public statement from the Ministry of Economic Warfare. We have the following observations to make in reply.

In view of the conditions to which shipping and cargoes have been subjected during the first 2 months of war, we regret that we are unable to concur in the statement of the Ministry of Economic Warfare that belligerent rights in this respect are being "exercised in strict accordance with the law of nations". In this connection it is to be borne in mind as a fundamental principle that cargo moving from one neutral country to another neutral country has in its favor the presumption of legitimate character, whereas the suggestions of the Ministry of Economic Warfare seem to proceed from the hypothesis that all such commerce has an obligation to prove such legitimate character to British authorities as a condition to being allowed to proceed to neutral destination. That is to say, the British authorities are apparently seeking to reverse the legal presumption and to consider all such commerce illegitimate until the contrary is proved by the interested persons or concerns. It seems inevitable that many just claims must result from such procedure and the attitude of the

⁸⁸ Other lists not printed. See tabulations issued by the Department of State showing American vessels reported as having been detained by the belligerents since September 1, 1939, Department of State *Bulletin*, November 18, 1939, p. 557; December 2, 1939, p. 612; and December 16, 1939, p. 696.

United States Government must not be taken as indicating that it will not support such claims.

While this Government is disposed to do everything consistent with its neutral status to facilitate legitimate commerce with other neutral countries, it cannot of course lend its sanction to any system which would have a coercive effect in those countries. This Government takes the view that belligerents carrying on economic warfare do not thereby acquire the right to deprive neutrals of the economic basis necessary for their normal existence, and in consequence that any system leading to that end, or carried to a point which reaches that result, cannot receive the approval of this Government.

This Government naturally expects that interference by the belligerents with trade originating in the United States and destined to neutral countries will be kept at a minimum and that the British Government will be prepared to offer appropriate reparation in all specific cases in which its action results in injury to American nationals in violation of their rights under recognized principles of international law.

Please communicate the foregoing in writing to the Foreign Office⁸⁴ and to the Ministry of Economic Warfare if you consider it desirable. You may add in this connection that the suggestions of the Ministry of Economic Warfare as expressed in your telegram have been communicated as a matter of information only to American shippers and shipping interests.

WELLES

300.115 (39)/183 : Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy)

WASHINGTON, November 22, 1939—8 p. m.

1481. The following telegram from the President of the American President Lines is repeated for your information:

“American President Lines respectfully requests Department of State register protest with the British Government concerning the methods employed by the British Naval patrol at Port Said and Alexandria in searching vessels of this company. Thus far two of our steamers, the *President Hayes* and *President Polk*, have undergone these searches and as a result the *President Hayes* was delayed 3 days and the *President Polk* at least 2 days. Apparently all cargoes consigned Genoa or destined for transshipment Genoa to interior are being taken from our ships notwithstanding the fact that as far as our

⁸⁴The foregoing was communicated to the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs as the Ambassador's note No. 1569, November 20, 1939.

records show there are few if any new consignees or unusual cargoes involved. Practically all shipments thus far involved are going to consignees for whom we have carried similar cargoes for several years and there seems to be little increase these cargoes since inception of war. As example of what we consider are poor methods of operation would cite substantial consignment of rubber destined for Michelin Genoa French Company removed from *President Hayes* at Alexandria held that port 2 weeks then reloaded *President Polk*. Fact that British authorities allowed this eventual delivery indicates that shipment ought never have been interfered with in first place. Also some 1332 packages removed from *President Polk* at Alexandria about half of which shipped from Singapore, Penang, Colombo and Bombay, all of which are British ports and we at loss to understand why cargoes carried by us from British possessions subject to interference later by British contraband patrol. If we compelled to undergo inconvenience in future similar to those experienced on these two vessels tremendous expense due [to?] so many days delay and inability to maintain schedules will seriously affect whole round-world operation this line. Delay to the two vessels alone so great that whole schedule will be upset for many months from now on."

As indicated in Department's telegram no. 1374 of November 4, it is the view of this Government that the detention of vessels and cargoes for the purposes of satisfying the minds of the British authorities regarding facts evidenced by ships' papers, in the absence of substantial evidence casting doubt upon such documents, and especially when such investigation demonstrates the accuracy of the documents, gives rise to legitimate claims for damages, which claims this Government will, upon the basis of appropriate evidence, feel it necessary to support. Please discuss this matter with the Ministry of Economic Warfare in the sense of the foregoing and report whether in your opinion any substantial precautions are being taken by the British authorities to obviate claims of this kind and if so the nature of such measures.

WELLES

300.115 (39)/180 : Telegram

The Consul at Gibraltar (Chapman) to the Secretary of State

GIBRALTAR, November 24, 1939—noon.

[Received November 24—9:35 a. m.]

24. Yesterday the Gibraltar Contraband Control sent the master of the steamship *Nishmaha* to sign before me an undertaking to proceed, after calling at Barcelona, to Marseille and discharge alleged contraband cargo, as a condition precedent to release of the ship.

I declined without instructions from the Department to consent to executing agreement before me or otherwise to proceed to another belligerent port, advising master that if forced to execute agreement

elsewhere it should be done only under protested duress and logged accordingly. The agents report signing under protest and departure of ship early this morning.

The purpose of Control was to save taking ship under guard to Marseille. I have informally requested Control to endeavor to work out plan saving American masters agreeing to proceed to other belligerent ports, informing them I cannot agree to guards without instructions. They are giving the matter courteous consideration. Instructions are requested.

CHAPMAN

300.115(39)/197 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, November 25, 1939—6 p. m.
[Received November 26—3:40 a. m.]

2461. Department's 1481, November 22, 8 p. m.; Department's 1480, November 22, 7 p. m., last sentence;⁸⁵ and Department's 1374,⁸⁶ fourth paragraph. This cable and preceding cables have been thoroughly discussed with Ministry of Economic Warfare. The position taken by the Ministry of Economic Warfare is that that Ministry has the right under international law to detain ships and cargoes unless this Ministry is satisfied that specific items in the cargo will not be forwarded from destination to Germany. If their investigation convinces them that the items of the cargo will not be forwarded to Germany they will be released for forwarding. If the ship wishes to proceed pending investigation of such items as are detained, the items may be either unloaded or a guarantee given that they will be returned either to the United Kingdom or the United States but they have no obligation to accept such guaranty if they do not wish to do so although usually they are accepted. The Ministry of Economic Warfare does not feel that the detention of such vessel gives cause for legitimate claim against the British Government but states that obviously any one who feels they have a claim can make a claim against the British Government. The Ministry of Economic Warfare feels that the question as to their right to detain ships pending their own investigations as to consignees and cargo is a broad question of international law which should be taken up with the Foreign Office. Inasmuch as the contents of Department's 1446, November 17, 5 p. m., have been communicated in a note from this Embassy to the Foreign Office

⁸⁵ Telegram No. 1480 not printed; in the last sentence the Department inquired whether the Ambassador had received expression of opinion regarding *Oakman* detention (300.115(39)/188).

⁸⁶ November 4, p. 803.

and a reply is being awaited which covers this point I do not believe we can get any further examination dealing with the Ministry of Economic Warfare on this point as separate from the Foreign Office.

KENNEDY

300.115 (39)/213 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Consul at Gibraltar (Chapman)

WASHINGTON, November 27, 1939—3 p. m.

10. Your No. 24, November 24. Department approves your course of action with respect to vessels which left United States after date of neutrality act November 4 since by that act American vessels are prohibited from carrying cargo to belligerent ports in the Mediterranean, and if they are compelled to violate that law it should be under such circumstances as clearly constitute *force majeure*, which fact should be recorded by protest and log record.

With respect to vessels which left United States before November 4, if any, you might witness relative documents in purely administrative capacity, making clear by necessary official record that your action is not to be interpreted as in any manner indicating official sanction of the action of belligerent authorities.

HULL

300.115 (39)/219 : Telegram

The Chargé in the United Kingdom (Johnson) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, December 1, 1939—1 p. m.

[Received December 1—8:45 a. m.]

2502. Procurator General states that from now on he will furnish this Embassy with copies of all writs of summons of cargo which has been seized and which has come before the prize division. We have today received particulars of goods which have been seized from 14 ships. Examination indicates as far as we are able to determine only 2 cases of American goods seized, namely 100 drums of pine oil on the S. S. *Wacosta* from Gulf Port to Rotterdam consignor Hercules Powder Company consignee to order. Local representative Hercules Powder Company Inc. advised and is communicating with his company. The other case nearly 4,000 tons of rock phosphate from Coronet Phosphate Company; local representative London advises this shipment now released. We will advise you of all cases in which apparently American interests are affected.

JOHNSON

300.115(39)/245: Telegram

The Ambassador in Italy (Phillips) to the Secretary of State

ROME, December 5, 1939—4 p. m.

[Received December 5—2:11 p. m.]

539. The Genoa manager of the American Export Line has brought to my attention the serious inconveniences to the line resulting from the detention of their ships at Gibraltar. I have this morning discussed the situation with the British Ambassador⁸⁷ making it clear that I was doing so without instructions from Washington and only with a view to avoiding serious complaints in the future. Loraine assured me that he had expressed himself forcibly on the subject to the control authorities in London during his recent visit there and would take the matter up with them again. Furthermore, he was spending next week end in Malta with the British Admiral and together they would discuss the situation in the hope of obtaining the necessary relief.

PHILLIPS

300.115(39)/270: Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Chargé in the United Kingdom
(Johnson)*

WASHINGTON, December 8, 1939—8 p. m.

1570. Lykes Bros. Steamship Co., Inc. advises that S. S. *Nishmaha* is still detained in Marseilles pending decision by Contraband Committee in London concerning certain portions of its cargo. Understand this vessel has now been detained about 25 days, which would appear to be a most unreasonable detention. Please, therefore, request British authorities to release this vessel without delay.

HULL

300.115(39)/365

The Consul at Gibraltar (Chapman) to the Secretary of State

No. 149

GIBRALTAR, December 11, 1939.

[Received January 13, 1940.]

SIR: I have the honor to submit the information that follows in regard to the detention of American vessels by the British Contraband Control Authorities with the suggestion that the Department consider addressing to the British Government a complaint with a view to lessening the delays now imposed upon American ships.

⁸⁷ Sir Percy Loraine.

In the weekly telegraphic report of Saturday, December 9, 1939,⁸⁸ concerning the detention here of American ships by the British Contraband Control, I said it was felt the Department should protest strongly to London against delaying American passenger vessels. The reason for need to protest to London is not because of any fault of which I am aware on the part of the Gibraltar Contraband Control authorities, but because the delay is in London. The Gibraltar authorities are bound under London instructions to detain at Gibraltar all ships having on board cargo carried in the British Contraband List. They must then report the detention to the Ministry of Economic Warfare at London and await the Ministry's instructions as to what disposition shall be made of the case. Then days and even weeks pass without a word from London. Meanwhile our ships are sitting out in Gibraltar Bay waiting and waiting at heavy expense and being put off their sailing schedules. This position is bad for all of our ships which are brought into this Port, of course, but especially bad for our passenger vessels. American and other passengers on board have obligations to meet, in which time is an important element. Hundreds and sometimes thousands of bags of United States mail are being delayed, to say nothing of the dragging of many mail bags off the ships and bringing them on shore to be censored and further delayed.

I have on numerous occasions requested the Colonial Secretary and others in high authority to do all they can to expedite release of this ship or that. The answer is always the same, that only instructions from London authorizing release will permit them to act.

It is clear, therefore, that it is a waste of time for me to try to get action, except in so far as the Colonial authorities may use my complaints as a basis of trying to get quicker decisions from London,—and if they do make such use of them. They are so encumbered with overwork that one cannot expect them to pass along to London every complaint I make. It should be said here, parenthetically, that my dealings with the Colonial Secretary and others are practically all informal in friendly conversations which they appreciate, and frankly say they much prefer over the ranting notes of protest received from the Italian Consul General.

My impression is that they are becoming weary of much unsuccessful effort to get the Ministry of Economic Warfare to speed up to a point of reason the despatch of Gibraltar detention cases, and that it is time for a more direct appeal for better consideration of American ships.

⁸⁸ Telegram No. 31; not printed.

It must be admitted, of course, that the ships of other neutral countries are no better treated than our own and it can not be assumed that any discrimination against American shipping exists, unless it lies in the fact that no one of the two big Italian liners has ever been held here as long as some of our Export Lines passenger vessels are being delayed on their east-bound voyages. The difference here noted does raise a question to which we are able to point in case of necessity.

The detention of our passenger vessels appears to be comparable with that imposed upon the Italian and other neutral passenger ships of the ordinary categories.

I am told by the Master of the American Export Liner *Exochorda*, which has been in this port since December 4 with over 60 passengers on board, that a careful effort was made to avoid taking from the United States any cargo that might be intended for Germany,—to save detention of the ship by the British Contraband Control, but it appears that the authorities at Gibraltar are powerless to take any such precaution into account.

It is time, in consideration of all the circumstances from the beginning of this war, that the London Ministry of Economic Warfare should take into account and lend more faith and credit to such precautions taken by American shipping companies which are endeavoring, on the face of the position at least, to oblige the British Ministry of Economic Warfare, in defence of their own company interests.

Respectfully yours,

WILLIAM E. CHAPMAN

300.115 (39)/282 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Italy (Phillips) to the Secretary of State

ROME, December 12, 1939—7 p. m.

[Received December 12—3 p. m.]

551. The S. S. *Exochorda* is being held at Gibraltar because she has on board 45 tons tin plate which is called absolute contraband. According to the captain the British authorities refuse to unload it at Gibraltar but want the ship to carry it to Marseille or to hold it at the disposal of the British Government in an Italian port. The manager for Europe of the Export Lines says the ship cannot enter Marseille east bound without violating Neutrality Act and that his contract with shippers lays him open to suit for heavy damages if he refuses to deliver the merchandise to consignee in Italy. Until this impasse is solved the British apparently will hold ship at Gibraltar.

The New York office of the Export Lines, as well as the Embassy in London, are said to be in possession of the full facts in the case.

PHILLIPS

300.115 (39)/310 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Chargé in the United Kingdom
(Johnson)*

WASHINGTON, December 14, 1939.

1609. Lykes Bros. Steamship Co., Inc. advise that steamship *Winston Salem* arrived Downs November 28; was subsequently released and proceeded to Rotterdam where it arrived December 11; that 2,782 bales of cotton were seized by British authorities who are apparently requiring vessel to return the cotton either to London or some other British port. Company advises it has no information regarding reasons for seizure. This Government is desirous of getting all American vessels out of the combat area as soon as possible. Therefore, please endeavor ascertain reasons for the seizure of the cotton in question and arrange to release vessel from obligation to return the cotton to England allowing cotton to remain in custody of company's Rotterdam representatives pending determination as to final disposition thereof. Report fully.

HULL

300.115 (39)/311 : Telegram

*The Chargé in the United Kingdom (Johnson) to the Secretary
of State*

LONDON, December 16, 1939—1 p. m.
[Received December 16—8:30 a. m.]

2647. Department's 1609, December 15. London representative Lykes Brothers advises that *Winston Salem* was released under so-called "Black Diamond" guarantee, namely that the company would return the cotton to British port at their expense but not in the *Winston Salem*; in fact the cotton is now unloaded on the dock at Rotterdam and it is planned to send the *Winston Salem* direct to the United States and to return the cotton to British port by coastal steamer. In view of this, will not approach British authorities with regard to *Winston Salem* and will await further instructions. Is it desired to make separate inquiry with regard to seizure of the cotton?

JOHNSON

300.115 (39)/317 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Chargé in the United Kingdom
(Johnson)*

WASHINGTON, December 16, 1939.

1623. Department will be glad to be advised of the results of your action on the basis of its no. 1570 of December 8 regarding S. S. *Nish-*

maha. Company's local representative states that although vessel was authorized to reload unseized shipment at Marseille preparatory to departure for destination, they were subsequently instructed to desist from such reloading, and that vessel is still held in an indefinite status. Department considers this most unsatisfactory treatment by British authorities and desires full report by telegraph of all surrounding circumstances.

HULL

300.115(39)/318 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Chargé in the United Kingdom
(Johnson)*

WASHINGTON, December 16, 1939—4 p. m.

1625. American shippers, ship-owners and others have reported to the Department that American cargo vessels have not been receiving equal treatment in British control ports with vessels of certain other neutrals, especially with reference to periods of detention and despatch.

The Embassy is requested to obtain and to report by telegraph to the Department pertinent information regarding the comparative position of American and other neutral vessels in this respect.

HULL

300.115(39)/338 : Telegram

*The Chargé in the United Kingdom (Johnson) to the Secretary
of State*

LONDON, December 19, 1939—3 p. m.
[Received December 19—11:23 a. m.]

2663. Department's 1623, 16th. The British Ministry of Economic Warfare maintain stoutly that they released the *Nishmaha* on December 14th and that the trouble lies with the authorities at Marseilles. I have telephoned twice to American Embassy at Paris asking them to investigate with French authorities and am awaiting reply to call made yesterday.⁸⁹ The real difficulty apparently is a failure of co-ordination between British and French authorities in regard to authorization to release the vessel at Marseilles and failure to agree regarding jurisdiction over the cargo when declared seized. The British Ministry admit orally that "the practice got ahead of the theory" in stating as they did to us that representations regarding seized cargo

⁸⁹ The reply from Paris, December 19, stated that the *Nishmaha* was free to sail but was being held up by port conditions and weather only (300.115(39)/342).

must be made to Attorney General at Gibraltar. They have withdrawn that statement and advise that the question of jurisdiction of seized cargo is under consideration and that we will be advised as soon as it is determined. In the meantime the British Ministry of Economic Warfare profess to be doing everything possible to straighten the matter out with the French and release the vessel.

JOHNSON

300.115 (39) / 344 : Telegram

The Chargé in the United Kingdom (Johnson) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, December 19, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received December 19—1:38 p. m.]

2666. Department's 1625, December 16, 4 p. m. Have compared notes with Italian Embassy, Dutch, Norwegian and Swedish Legations regarding periods of detention of cargo boats. Each one except the Italian think they have not received equal treatment with other neutrals. Swedish and Norwegian think United States gets better treatment than they do but all realize that it is practically impossible to prove the point. All are very dissatisfied with the delays. Longest delay so far is one Norwegian boat 7 weeks. A comparison of the statistical data formerly published by Ministry of Economic Warfare showing the number of days boats of various nationalities are detained is of no value because such data was not entirely accurate and because any question of unequal treatment is not confirmed primarily with the averages but with specific cases. It appears to us that cargoes on Italian boats through Gibraltar receive better treatment than similar cargoes on American boats. American Consul Zagreb reports that cotton shipped by McFadden Brothers consigned to the same Dugaresa firm was released when shipped on Italian boat and seized when shipped on American boat. British Ministry of Economic Warfare has promised to write a note of explanation of this specific case. Upon receipt of their note and further information from American Consul at Zagreb as to whether cotton was unconditionally released or released only on Black Diamond guarantee we shall have more definite information on which to base a complaint. Claims of unequal treatment of boats are closely involved with question of treatment of cargoes. The question is further aggravated by an apparent failure to agree with regard to jurisdiction between French and British authorities where boats are unloaded at Oran or Marseilles. See our cable No. 2663, 3 p. m. today regarding the *Nishmaha*.

JOHNSON

300.115(39)/345 : Telegram

The Ambassador in Italy (Phillips) to the Secretary of State

ROME, December 20, 1939—noon.

[Received December 20—10:21 a. m.]

564. My 551, December 12, 7 p. m. Consulate General at Naples reports *Ewochorda* arrived Naples after being held 9 days at Gibraltar on account of 45 tons tin plate which were condemned by Prize Court. The master was permitted to proceed after promising to ship these 45 tons to Marseille from Genoa. However, in the cargo were another 100 tons tin plate shipped on separate bill of lading to same consignee in Switzerland through same agent at Genoa. This shipment was put on a "detained list" and is being held in Genoa at the disposal of the British Consul.

The difference in treatment between two identical shipments goes a long way to show that the British Control is arbitrary, careless and casual. The Export Lines complain particularly of not being able to find out from the London Control Board why their ships are being held up, saying they could remedy the situation if they were properly informed.

I have taken up with the British Ambassador here this and similar cases. He is fully aware of the irritation and resentment which the Control is engendering in American commercial and shipping circles. He tells me that he has repeatedly and strongly brought the facts to the attention of the British Foreign Secretary. He even went to Malta to see the British Commander in Chief of the Mediterranean Forces to explain the situation to him. I am therefore doubtful whether anything further can be accomplished through the British Embassy here but I should be interested to know what, if any, steps are being taken through London with regard to the Mediterranean situation.

PHILLIPS

300.115(39)/347 : Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, December 20, 1939—1 p. m.

[Received 1:54 p. m.]

3007. Department's 1314, October 26, 7 p. m.⁹⁰ The Embassy's note mentioned in my 2604, October 28, 4 p. m.,⁹¹ has been answered

⁹⁰ See footnote 77, p. 799.⁹¹ Not printed.

by a Foreign Office note dated December 13 stating that American Consuls have every facility for following the movements of American ships in French ports and the operations ordered by French authorities to assure the control of contraband goods. The note adds that the Embassy will be notified in good time of the date of any proceedings in the Prize Court. In conclusion it stated that the Admiralty services will endeavor to supply the Embassy with the particulars of any individual case in which it is interested.

The Embassy will continue to rely on Consulates [for reports?] of seizures of American ships and goods. Such reports are believed complete as regards ships but incomplete as regards goods. The following additional seizures of American goods from French ships are reported by the Consul at Havre:

From steamer *Floride*, arrived November 4th, 75 tons of carbon black from Houston for Antwerp were seized December 24th.

From steamer *Michigan*, arrived November 9th, 11 tons of carbon black from Houston for Antwerp were seized November 24th.

From steamer *Indiana*, arrived November 11th, 325 tons of asphalt, oil and grease were detained but released on December 6th.

BULLITT

300.115 (39)/379: Telegram

The Chargé in the United Kingdom (Johnson) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, December 29, 1939—7 p. m.

[Received December 29—3:40 p. m.]

2747. Your 1446, November 17, 5 p. m. A note pursuant to the Department's instruction was sent to the Foreign Office on November 20th. Following reply dated December 28th received today:

"1. I have the honor to invite a reference to Mr. Kennedy's note No. 1569 of the 20th November last in which he was so good as to communicate to me certain observations of the United States Government in regard to the printed statement on contraband control issued by the Ministry of Economic Warfare on the 14th October.

2. Generally speaking, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom entirely understand, even though they cannot in all respects concur in, the point of view of the United States Government, as stated in Mr. Kennedy's note; and they are continuing to make every endeavor to minimize the inconvenience and losses to neutral traders attendant upon the exercise of contraband control. No country has shown itself in the past more concerned than the United Kingdom with the promotion of the free exchange of goods between all the nations of the world, and I need hardly emphasize that in their prosecution of the war, His Majesty's Government have always before them as their goal a return to the conditions of unrestricted

commercial intercourse which have been interrupted by the actions of the German Government.

3. While, however, His Majesty's Government are endeavoring to reduce to a minimum the inconvenience and losses caused to neutral traders and while they recognize the desirability of granting such alleviation as is possible in this respect, this cannot be permitted to override the necessity for instituting adequate enquiries into the nature and destination of all cargoes dealt with by the control. In this connection, His Majesty's Government find themselves to their regret unable to agree with the suggestion made in Mr. Kennedy's note that it is in any way a fundamental principle of international law that cargo moving from one neutral country to another has in its favor a general presumption of innocence. In the opinion of His Majesty's Government, the question whether any presumptions can be said to exist in the matter turns largely on the geographical situation, and the nature of the commerce of each individual country. So far as many countries on the western, northern and Mediterranean seaboard of Europe are concerned, it is the undoubted fact that even in time of peace, a considerable part of their imports from overseas are in transit or intended for re-export to other countries in Europe. With regard to a country so situated, there can certainly be no presumption that all imports from overseas are necessarily destined for the use of that country itself. There is indeed a definite presumption that a part of these imports (great or small according to the circumstances) has an ulterior destination; and this presumption is very greatly strengthened when the circumstances of the war render direct imports by sea from certain countries into the enemy country impossible. That at least a part of such traffic should now proceed, or endeavor to proceed, through adjacent neutral countries, becomes a virtual certainty.

4. Moreover, since the laws of war and neutrality in no way forbid neutrals to sell goods to a belligerent (though the other belligerent is entitled to stop the passage of contraband if he can), and since in consequence such trade is in no way illegitimate, there does not exist any ground on which neutrals can claim that a belligerent is bound to assume that they are not sending goods to the enemy until the contrary is proved. It is indeed just as likely that a given neutral, who in time of peace is in the habit of exporting, re-exporting or facilitating the transit of goods to a belligerent country, is still doing or endeavoring to do so in time of war, as that he is not.

5. The action of His Majesty's Government, therefore, rests on the broad ground that they are entitled, in the exercise of their lawful belligerent rights, to examine and enquire into the destination of every cargo passing through their contraband control, with a view to ascertaining whether it is of such a nature and has such a destination as would justify placing it in the Prize Court; and that they are entitled to do this irrespective of the fact that the goods may ostensibly be consigned to a neutral country.

6. It would appear that the preoccupations of the United States Government have arisen largely from the construction which they have put upon paragraphs 6 and 7 of the memorandum of the 14th October, referred to above, from which it seems to have been inferred that His Majesty's Government intend to regard everything as suspect

that is not covered by a satisfactory guarantee. This is a misapprehension, which His Majesty's Government are happy to be able to correct. The true position in regard to guarantees is as follows. As already stated, His Majesty's Government must make enquiries into all cargoes of a contraband character passing through their control. Such enquiries necessarily take time and delays may be considerable. If importers in neutral countries are in a position to give satisfactory guarantees (and they are under no compulsion to do so) and if these guarantees appear to be reliable, it may be possible to release goods without instituting all the enquiries which would otherwise have been necessary, thereby avoiding much delay. The absence of a guarantee, however, save in exceptional circumstances will not of itself render a consignment suspect, though it would compel His Majesty's Government to make enquiries, with the result that release might not be effected for a considerable time. The system of guarantees, therefore, affords a means whereby in suitable cases traders can obtain an early release of goods, which might otherwise have to be detained for a possibly prolonged period. It does not in any way imply the existence of a general suspicion attaching to goods consigned to neutral countries. Each case is one for separate enquiry and appreciation, in the light of all the circumstances, but the system of guarantees is intended as a concession to traders, not as an imposition. Its absence would result almost certainly in a greater number of seizures than at present occur, and quite certainly in releases taking much longer to effect than at present.

7. On the question of reparation, which Mr. Kennedy mentioned at the conclusion of his note, His Majesty's Government cannot admit any claims arising out of the legitimate exercise of their belligerent rights. If however, parties interested in any ship or cargo consider that they have good grounds for a claim, it is open to them to make it in the Prize Court in accordance with the procedure prescribed in the Prize Court Rules, 1939. The Court has full jurisdiction to award damages in cases where it holds the claim to be well founded.

8. It is nevertheless, as I have already indicated, the firm intention of His Majesty's Government to interfere as little as possible with United States trade destined for neutral countries, and they feel sure that the United States Government will, for their part, appreciate that their action in this connection is wholly dependent upon the question whether any given trade is or is not so destined. In these circumstances, His Majesty's Government must reserve the right, in accordance with recognized principles, to employ such means of establishing the facts in individual cases as the circumstances may require; but it is their earnest hope that the practical outcome of these measures will prove less onerous to United States trade than Mr. Kennedy would seem to expect."

III. REPRESENTATIONS TO THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT AGAINST DETENTION OF NEUTRAL SHIPS AND CARGOES DESTINED FOR THE UNITED STATES

300.115 (39) Korsholm/5 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Chargé in Germany (Kirk)

WASHINGTON, October 5, 1939—2 p. m.

639. Department is advised that Swedish M/S *Korsholm*, also Estonian SS *Minna* and Norwegian SS *Brott*,⁹² each with a cargo of wood pulp or wood pulp products, consigned to various concerns in the United States, have been detained at Swinemünde, Kiel, and Sivinemünde, respectively.

In the general interest of American commerce, ascertain the reasons for such detentions and what action German authorities contemplate taking with reference to the cargoes.

HULL

740.00112 European War 1939/237 : Telegram

*The Consul General at Hamburg (Keblinger) to the Secretary
of State*

HAMBURG, October 5, 1939—9 p. m.

[Received October 6—9:26 a. m.]

134. The following information obtained today in interview with Reichs Commissioner for the German Prize Court.

Although unable to state the exact number of ships and cargoes the belligerent governments held pending possible Prize Court proceedings, he stated that to date out of approximately 72 vessels officially reported to have been visited and searched since September 30, 25 have been brought to German ports. A number of these have been released by order of the Reichs Commissioner after investigation and discharge of contraband cargo. (From another source it is learned that at least two vessels were released only after masters certified ships would not again be used in trade with enemy.) The Reichs Commissioner indicated that commanders of German war vessels have been instructed to seize all vessels carrying absolute contraband suspected of intending to touch enemy territory before reaching destination.

Article 23 of prize law of September 9, 1939, reads in part "Enemy destination of absolute contraband is considered proved if the vessel is to touch at an enemy port or make contact with the enemy forces

⁹² By telegram No. 1658, October 10, 5 p. m., the Chargé in Germany reported that the steamship *Brott* and cargo had been released (300.115 (39) Korsholm/9).

before it reaches the neutral harbor to which the cargo according to the papers are consigned.”

A plan is to be communicated to neutral governments within next 48 hours to institute system of consular certificates issued jointly by German and appropriate neutral consuls for presentation to German searching parties certifying non-enemy destination of any contraband on board.

To date the Reichs Commissioner has completed his investigation of only two cases involving the seized cargoes of a Danish vessel and the Panamanian ship *Evelyn Marion*: he has turned them over today to the Prize Court. Hearings can begin only after a 4 weeks' period for filing of claims has elapsed. The Reichs Commissioner stated that no case[s] of neutral vessels sunk by German warships have been turned over to his jurisdiction. He indicated that such cases would reach him only after current diplomatic negotiations concerning them had been concluded.

To his knowledge only three vessels bound for the United States have thus far been seized. Two of them, the Finnish ship *Wilja* and the Swedish ship *Korsholm*, bound respectively for Portland and Wilmington carrying cellulose, are being released with cargoes. The Estonian-seized *Minna* also carrying cellulose from Kotka to Southaven is still being held and may be turned over for Prize Court proceedings on the ground that it intended to call at a Scottish port.

KEBLINGER

300.115 (39) Korsholm/11 : Telegram

The Consul General at Hamburg (Keblinger) to the Secretary of State

HAMBURG, [undated.]

[Received October 11, 1939—4:17 p. m.]

149. Your 107, October 10, 6 p. m.⁹³ See my telegrams 134, 140, and 142.⁹⁴ No decision on *Minna* yet reached. Reich's Prize Commissioner indicates cargo in all probability will be turned over to Prize Court pending this decision. Release of cargo cannot be hastened if case goes to Prize Court. Owners should be represented by officially recognized attorney. An Estonian attorney with full powers for ship and cargo expected to reach Hamburg from Tallinn tonight. I will maintain contact with him and will inform Department of any steps I believe owners should take. It is now reported but not yet confirmed that the Estonian steamship *Willk* also bound for the United States with cellulose has been seized. The Department is being kept fully informed.

KEBLINGER

⁹³ Not printed.

⁹⁴ Telegrams Nos. 140 and 142 not printed.

300.115(39) Young, Inc., Daniel F./3 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Minister in Latvia (Wiley)

WASHINGTON, October 13, 1939—6 p. m.

122. There have been presented to the Department by Daniel F. Young, Incorporated, affidavits executed by buyers of the following mentioned cargo loaded on board the Latvian steamship *Andrejs Kalnins* which is understood to be ready to sail from Riga but is detained on account of uncertainty with respect to the ultimate destination of such cargo. Each affidavit states in substantially the same language that the commodities in question are for consumption in the United States and will in no circumstances and in no form be re-exported from the United States. Articles covered by such affidavits are as follows: [The list of articles is here omitted.]

Endeavor to utilize the foregoing information with a view to facilitating the shipment of the indicated commodities as soon as possible.

HULL

300.15(39) Manistique Paper and Pulp Co./1 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Chargé in Germany (Kirk)

WASHINGTON, October 16, 1939—7 p. m.

719. We have been informed that the Finnish vessel *Margareta* is being detained by German authorities at Swinemünde. The Washington representative of the *Minneapolis Tribune* informs us that the entire cargo is sulphite pulp purchased by the Manistique Paper and Pulp Company of Michigan, 3 months ago. This company is owned by the *Minneapolis Tribune* and this cargo represents the regular 6 months supply of pulp for that newspaper. Please inquire informally concerning the reasons for the detention of this cargo destined to an American concern. Telegraph reply.

HULL

300.115(39) Korsholm/26 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Consul General at Hamburg (Keblinger)

WASHINGTON, October 17, 1939—6 p. m.

116. Your October 11, Steamship *Minna*. Contracts furnished Department show Parsons & Whittemore shipments to be bona fide and made to fulfill contracts signed before war. 700 tons were sold Nekoosa Edwards Paper Company, Port Edwards, Wisconsin, under contract dated April 1, 1939. 1000 tons were sold Wolf River Paper

& Fiber Company, Shewano, Wisconsin, under contract dated August 5, 1939. Urge prompt release in order that shipments will arrive in time to enter the Great Lakes before navigation closes in November.

HULL

300.115(39)/32

Memorandum of Conversation, by Mr. Hugh S. Cumming, Jr., of the Division of European Affairs

[WASHINGTON,] October 18, 1939.

Mr. Solanko⁹⁶ called this morning and said that the Legation had received a telegram from the Foreign Office at Helsinki asking that the assistance of the American Government be obtained in endeavoring to secure the release of eight Finnish vessels carrying cargoes of cellulose, etc., for the United States, which are now being held by Germany at Swinemünde.

Mr. Solanko said that these eight vessels represented a relatively high percentage of the total tonnage of the Finnish merchant marine, and it was important to Finnish commerce, particularly with the United States, that the vessels be released as soon as possible. He said that his Government felt that the United States also had an interest in the matter since the cargo was destined to this country.

After consulting Mr. Hickerson⁹⁷ I telephoned Mr. Solanko and told him that this Government had already addressed an inquiry to Berlin regarding two of the vessels, namely, the *Minna* and the *Marghareta*.

300.115(39) Korsholm/27: Telegram

The Consul General at Hamburg (Keblinger) to the Secretary of State

HAMBURG, October 18, 1939—4 p. m.

[Received 7:14 p. m.]

166. Contents your cable No. 116, October 17, 6 p. m., personally communicated to Prize Commissioner this morning. He stated that he had already decided to turn the case of *Minna* over to Prize Court for adjudication on the ground that the master of *Minna* allegedly has explained he might fuel at Scottish port. Prize Court proceedings will last at least one month. Results of such delay due to closing of Great Lakes for navigation explained to Commissioner without effect. Possibility of *Minna* and cargo being released immediately on bail roughly estimated at 200,000 reichsmarks is being communicated to Estonian owners by their attorney.

KEBLINGER

⁹⁶ Secretary of the Finnish Legation.

⁹⁷ John D. Hickerson, Assistant Chief, Division of European Affairs.

300.115(39)/9: Telegram

The Consul General at Hamburg (Keblinger) to the Secretary of State

HAMBURG, October 18, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received 6:50 p. m.]

167. Reference is made to my telegram No. 163, October 17, 1 p. m.,⁹⁸ Prize Commissioner today confirmed statements of his assistant reported in the first paragraph of my telegram No. 163, to the effect that nothing short of Government guarantee would suffice to release ships with cargoes of cellulose for the United States now detained. He suggested that in future before any cellulose is shipped to the United States documents containing Government assurances should be sent to port of departure and verified by American and French Consuls there. Such documents would be recognized as *laisser-passeurs* by German war vessels enforcing prize law.

Has the Department received from the Embassy Berlin translation prize law of September 3 transmitted in the Embassy's despatch No. 1389, September 11, 1939.⁹⁹

KEBLINGER

300.115(39) Manistique Paper and Pulp Co./2: Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, October 19, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received 10:49 p. m.]

1762. Department's 719, October 16, 7 p. m. The Consulate General at Hamburg informed the Prize Commissioner of the ultimate destination to the *Minneapolis Tribune* of the cargo of sulphite pulp on board the detained Finnish vessel *Margareta*. The Commissioner stated that nothing short of an official Government guarantee of non-reexportation would be acceptable to effect release. (See telegram 163 from the Consulate General at Hamburg.⁹⁸ There appears to be no other grounds at present for the detention.

KIRK

300.115(39)/12: Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Chargé in Germany (Kirk)

WASHINGTON, October 20, 1939—7 p. m.

739. Please refer to telegrams 163, October 17, 1 p. m., 167, October 18, 5 p. m., addressed to the Department by the Consul General at Hamburg.

⁹⁸ Not printed.

⁹⁹ Not printed; but see telegram No. 1143, September 8, 4 p. m., from the Chargé in Germany, p. 721.

The American consignees are in urgent need of the cargoes of wood pulp on board Finnish and other foreign vessels now detained for examination by the German authorities. The Department is informed that the cargoes include consignments to such well-known newspapers as the *Minneapolis Tribune*, the *New York Herald-Tribune*, Hearst papers, the *Boston Tribune* [*Boston Herald*], as well as to various paper mills, box board manufacturers, etc.

There is no legal authority for this Government to give the assurances required by the German Prize Commissioner that these shipments of "cellulose" if released will not be reexported. The Department desires you, however, to discuss the matter with the appropriate German authorities on the basis of the following background:

We assume that the detained cargoes which the Germans call "cellulose" consist largely of what is known in this country as "chemical woodpulp." Woodpulp is in heavy demand in the United States for use in the production of newsprint, magazine, writing and wrapping paper, paper bags, etc. and the highly purified grades of bleached sulphite pulp in the production of rayon.

Although the United States is the world's largest producer of woodpulp, its production is sufficient to meet only about 70 percent of its domestic requirements for all purposes. For the last 10 years it has been dependent on imports for almost half its total paper requirements. Accordingly, the United States in recent years has taken about one-third of the total woodpulp entering international trade.

During 1938 U. S. imports of woodpulp from Scandinavian sources were as follows:

Sweden	808,000 tons
Finland	259,000 tons
Norway	69,000 tons
Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania	40,000 tons

In addition to these imports large quantities of all kinds of woodpulp are imported from Canada, amounting in 1938 to 468,000 tons.

Due to the heavy domestic requirements, United States exports of woodpulp are relatively insignificant and mainly of special types such as bleached sulphite for rayon exported to Japan. During 1938 total imports were 1,711,000 tons. Exports of chemical pulp to Japan, the largest buyer, were 61,000 tons and exports to all European countries only 37,000 tons.

While this Government has no legal authority to guarantee against the re-export of the woodpulp now detained, we think it inconceivable that the trend of our woodpulp trade will be reversed within a foreseeable period. We would, therefore, be very surprised if it should develop that woodpulp imported for our domestic needs were subse-

quently reexported. We hope that after careful consideration of the practical aspects of this problem the German authorities will be able to modify the Prize Commissioner's requirements and permit the release of woodpulp cargoes now held in order that American importers may have the earliest possible use of these badly needed supplies.

HULL

300.115 (39) Young, Inc., Daniel F./4 : Telegram

The Chargé in Latvia (Packer) to the Secretary of State

RIGA, October 23, 1939—1 p. m.

[Received 1:40 p. m.]

277. Department's 122, October 13, 6 p. m. Latvian steamer *Andrejs Kalnins* sailed from Riga October 19. Its departure was made possible by the execution at this office of a certified copy of a paraphrase of the Department's telegram under reference. Subsequently it has been learned that such a document will not be considered satisfactory to Latvian authorities in determining similar cases.

Gundega, Latvian steamship, now loading wood pulp and general cargo in Riga is scheduled to sail for the United States early this week. Local steamship agent has been informed by Latvian Consul in Hamburg that the German authorities have warned him that the recent increase in wood pulp shipments from Baltic countries to the United States is regarded suspiciously and that it must not be continued. He added that the German contraband regulations require a certificate issued by the Government of the country to which the cargo is destined certifying that the merchandise is going there and that it will not be reexported therefrom. According to the steamship agent such certificates are being issued by the Legations of Belgium and the Netherlands. He stated that in the circumstances Latvian vessels cannot sail for the United States without similar certificates executed by this office.

In the case of the *Gundega* and of other vessels requesting this service in the future it is assumed that evidence will be presented to the Department similar to that presented in the case of the *Andrejs Kalnins*.

The following alternative possibilities are suggested: that the Department inform the Legation (1) that it is satisfied that the cargo is destined for the United States and that it will not be reexported, at the same time authorizing the execution of a certificate to that effect by this office, or (2) issue a standing instruction authorizing this office to issue certificates on the basis of the evidence submitted in each case, such evidence to be telegraphed in each case by the Department.

Department's instruction respectfully requested.¹

The Legations in Tallinn and Helsinki also interested and will be informed of the Department's reply. If certificates are to be issued please indicate under what tariff number in the schedule of fees the service should be performed.

PACKER

300.115(39)/14 : Telegram

The Consul General at Hamburg (Keblinger) to the Secretary of State

HAMBURG, October 25, 1939—10 a. m.

[Received 1:45 p. m.]

174. The substance of the Department's telegram No. 739, October 20, 7 p. m., to Berlin, has been communicated to the Prize Commissioner. The following arrangement for release of cargoes of wood pulp now being detained was agreed upon provisionally pending approval by the Department and German consular officers: Consignee should present to a German Consul in the United States contracts of purchase and, if he is not the consumer, contracts of resale to American consumer. The German Consul should cable American Consul General at Hamburg for communication to the Prize Commissioner the following facts: (1) that he has personally examined the contracts; and (2) that he is satisfied shipments are destined for an American consumer. The arrangement to telegraph this office was specifically recommended by the Prize Commissioner in order to expedite action. In case of future shipments the Prize Commissioner suggested that masters of vessels carrying cargoes of pulp wood to the United States provide themselves with certificates from German Consuls in the United States containing statements (1) and (2) above.

The Prize Commissioner suggested that the American Government endeavor to obtain from the British Government assurances that the latter does not intend to seize neutral cargoes of wood pulp bound for the United States. Although such assurances are not essential to release of detained cargoes, the Prize Commissioner explained that they would be helpful in judging cases in which suspicion had arisen that with connivance of owners or masters the British might seize cargoes of wood pulp skirting the British Isles en route to the United States.

The Prize Commissioner made it clear, however, that every case must be examined individually and that he could give no blanket assurances

¹ In telegram No. 137, October 28, 4 p. m., the Department suggested that the Chargé obtain from the Consul at Hamburg full information regarding procedure concerning detained and future shipments (300.115 (39) Young, Inc., Daniel F./11).

that in future cargoes of wood pulp bound for the United States would not be detained even if evidence of bona fide American destination and British assurances were presented.

Prize Commissioner urgently requests examination of contracts for cargoes of any kind steamship *Vilk* (see my 163, October 17, 1 p. m.²), steamship *Petsamo* and steamship *Koura*. Pulp Sales Corporation of New York is consignee of cargoes of last two names. These three vessels will be released if examination of contracts proves satisfactory. Examination may be carried out by Department as in case of *Minna* (see Department's telegram to me No. 116, October 17, 6 p. m.) or by German Consul as outlined in first paragraph. The steamship *Margareta* is now free. Investigations continue in other cases mentioned in my 163, October 17, 1 p. m.,³ with exception of steamship *Minna* already committed for Prize Court proceedings. The steamship *Karin Thorden* with wood pulp allegedly for the United States is also being detained. Pulp Sales Corporation is consignee of all these cargoes except that of Norwegian vessel *Korsnes* for which Gottesman; Pagel, Horton and Company; and Perkins, Goodwin are said to be consignees. Their addresses are unknown. Most of these ships will probably be committed for Prize Court proceedings on the charge that they never intended to proceed to the United States inasmuch as they are too small for North Atlantic crossings and are insured only for European waters.

KEBLINGER

300.115(39)/17: Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, October 26, 1939—8 a. m.

[Received 11:30 a. m.]

1835. Department's [telegram] 758, October 24, 7 p. m.² Following the receipt of the Department's 739, October 20, 7 p. m., I made an appointment with the State's Secretary for Foreign Affairs and submitted to him the observations contained therein. I also left with him an *aide-mémoire* on the subject and requested that action be expedited.

In the course of a conversation yesterday afternoon with Lohman, a Foreign Office official and member of the Prize Court, he stated emphatically to a member of the Embassy that the Foreign Office in the interests of good relations was endeavoring to expedite as rapidly as possible the decisions in the cases of detained vessels with cargoes of wood pulp destined for the American market. Certain vessels

² Not printed.

³ Other cases mentioned were: *Greta*, *Hulda*, *Thorden*, *Keila*, *Asturias*, *Korsnes*, and *Minna*.

however had allegedly admitted their intention of stopping at British ports or of transiting through the St. Lawrence waterway and had thereby violated a provision of the German prize law which made intention to enter the territorial waters of an enemy country grounds for seizure of the ship.

At time the prize law was written no one had given thought to the fate of neutral shipping by way of the St. Lawrence waterway but he asserted that it is not now possible to change the law to accommodate shipping utilizing this route.

He said that, whatever the ideas and suspicions of the German Prize Commissioner who fulfilled the functions of a prosecuting attorney might have been, the members of the Prize Court did not believe that wood pulp cargoes consigned to the United States would be seized by the British blockade authorities. He said he understood the inability of the American Government under existing law to certify that wood pulp cargoes would not be reexported and that the monthly foreign trade statistics would enable the German authorities to verify that no unusual exports or reexports of cellulose from the United States were occurring and indicated agreement with the proposition that such export was unlikely.

He further said that the Foreign Office was endeavoring to find a way to permit wood pulp cargoes to proceed to the United States with a minimum delay and interruption. The schemes thus far proposed had not been entirely practical but that he hoped that it would shortly be possible to devise some satisfactory system.

At the Economics Ministry it was pointed out to a member of the Embassy that while the Ministry was not competent in the matter it was interesting itself unofficially and the suggestion was made briefly and informally that with a system of notification to the German naval authorities prior to the departure of the ship as to the character of the cargo, the route to be followed and the names and addresses of the consignees much of the delays complained of might be avoided.

KIRK

800.115 (39) Korsholm/32: Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, October 26, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received 6:08 p. m.]

1850. My 1676, October 11, 6 p. m.,⁵ and previous. The German Foreign Office in a *note verbale* dated October 25, received today, has ad-

⁵ Not printed.

vised the Embassy that preliminary Prize Court proceedings have been ordered and already initiated against the Estonian steamship *Minna* and its cellulose cargo consigned to the United States. The note states that this action has been taken on the grounds that the cargo is considered absolute contraband and that since the ship was to touch at a British port en route to the United States enemy destination is considered established (under article No. 23 of the prize law code).

KIRK

300.115 (39) / 23 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Consul General at Hamburg (Keblinger)

WASHINGTON, October 27, 1939—7 p. m.

121. Referring to your telegram 174, October 25, section 2,⁶ American Ambassador London has been instructed to explain circumstances concerning these shipments of wood pulp, their necessity to the paper and related industries in the United States and to express the hope of this Government that these shipments will not be seized or molested.

Interested importers have been advised of proposed procedure but find German consular officers without instructions in the matter.

HULL

300.115 (39) / 24 : Telegram

The Consul General at Hamburg (Keblinger) to the Secretary of State

HAMBURG, October 28, 1939—2 p. m.

[Received 6 p. m.]

178. With reference to second paragraph of Department's telegram 121, October 27, 7 p. m., it is suggested that if German Consuls unable to follow proposed procedure, the Department examine contracts of resale or affidavits from purchasers and cable this office to that effect. The Prize Commissioner's Office exhibited a copy of Department's telegram of October 13, 6 p. m. to American Legation Riga concerning cargo of steamship *Andrejs Kalnins*, which, it was said had been quite satisfactory, and surprise was expressed that similar evidence had not as yet been made available for the numerous ships now detained at considerable cost to owners of vessels and cargoes.

KEBLINGER

⁶ i. e., the second paragraph of the telegram.

300.115(39)/36: Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Consul General at Hamburg (Keblinger)

WASHINGTON, October 30, 1939—3 p. m.

122. Your 178 and Embassy's 1876, October 28.⁷ Department discontinued telegraphing substance of affidavits because of your no. 167, October 18, stating that nothing short of this Government's guarantees would suffice. Your 174 of October 25 was understood as indicating that a satisfactory compromise procedure had been agreed upon. Numerous purchasers in various parts of the United States were thereupon promptly advised by telegraph to follow that procedure, presenting their contracts to German consuls. Legations at Helsinki and Riga were also advised accordingly. Much time would now be lost if that procedure were again to be changed. It is suggested therefore that in line with your no. 174 of October 25 you arrange to have German consuls appropriately instructed by cable at once if this has not already been done. Meanwhile Ambassador Kennedy has advised as follows:⁸

"Ministry of Economic Warfare states that under existing practice there will be no interference with the cargo of these Finnish vessels destined to the United States except that they will probably be boarded for identification.

The Ministry took occasion to reiterate that they are not now interfering with any exports from Germany to the United States whether direct or in transit to the United States from other neutral countries through Germany."

Repeat to Embassy, Berlin and Legation, Riga.

HULL

300.115(39)/33: Telegram

The Consul General at Hamburg (Keblinger) to the Secretary of State

HAMBURG, October 30, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received October 30—5:24 p. m.]

181. Referring to my telegram No. 178 October 28, 2 p. m., steamship *Frode* belonging to United Steamship Company at Copenhagen with a cargo wood pulp bound for consignees unknown is now detained by German authorities. Prize Commissioner requests evidence of American destination of this cargo as in the case mentioned in my telegram 174. He is also holding following vessels pending receipt of similar

⁷ Latter not printed.

⁸ By telegram No. 2202, October 28, 4 p. m.

evidence for their cargoes: *Hulda Thorden*, *Karin Thorden*, *Vilk*, *Petsamo*, *Koura*, *Greta*, and *Asturias*.⁹

KEBLINGER

300.115 (39)/56 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, November 2, 1939—10 a. m.
[Received November 3—7 : 25 a. m.]

1914. My 1835, October 26, 8 a. m. Upon receipt of the repetition of Department's telegram to American Consul Hamburg No. 122, October 30, 3 p. m., the Embassy made oral representation to the Foreign Office and urgently suggested that in accordance with the provisional arrangement worked out between the Prize Commissioner and the American Consul General at Hamburg German Consuls be instructed by cable at once to examine purchase contracts and resale contracts of American pulp importers at least those covering cargoes now being held and cable their findings to Hamburg. A list of the names of vessels now being detained and of the American consignees of their cargoes was left at the Foreign Office. The official handling prize matters said that the suggestion would be discussed at a Foreign Office conference to be held at noon yesterday. The Embassy later inquired as to the results of the conference whereupon the official stated that no decision had been reached in the matter and upon being pressed as to when a decision might be expected he had said that he doubted that any answer would be forthcoming before 3 or 4 days at the earliest.

In view of this statement it is suggested that the Department in the interest of expediting the release of these cargoes should request the American importers to submit to it documentary evidence of the American destination and consumption of the detained cargoes and cable its findings to the American Consul General at Hamburg. Upon the submission to the Prize Commission at Hamburg of reports such as the Department sent in the case of the *Andrejs Kalnins* the Consulate General may be able to effect the release of certain of the cargoes (see Department's telegram October 13, 6 p. m. to the American Legation in Riga).

Repeated to American Consulate in Hamburg.

KIRK

⁹ By November 2 the *Delaware*, *Aagot*, *Everoja*, *Eros*, *Geisha*, and *Keila* had been added to the list of detained vessels; and by November 14 a total of 23 vessels and one cargo destined for the United States was being detained.

300.115 (39)/85 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, November 9, 1939—2 p. m.

[Received 7 p. m.]

1998. My 1914, November 2, 10 a. m. A member of the Embassy called yesterday on a competent official of the Foreign Office with regard to the continued detention of wood pulp cargoes consigned to the United States. The official admitted that it would not be very difficult to prove the American destination and consumption of these cargoes. Concluding previous conversation the same official had indicated that the fears previously expressed by the Prize Commissioner to the Consul at Hamburg that British naval authorities might seize and divert these cargoes to England were not shared by the members of the Prize Court (my number 1835 October 26, 8 a. m.). The official indicated that the question of destination of the wood pulp was only one and the smallest element of the problem the solution of which despite continual study had not been found. He declined to set even an approximate date when a solution might be expected but the indication was quite clear that there will be a considerable period of delay. He also declined to elucidate the considerations and reasons which were determining the German Government to hold these cargoes beyond stating with an air of sincerity that the delay was not in any way intended to injure any American interests and that it had nothing to do with German-American relations. He indicated furthermore that the possibility that the detained ships might be used to carry supplies from the United States to England was a relatively minor element of the German problem in connection with the detained ships and cargoes and closed the interview by saying that he could not communicate an explanation of the matter but gave the impression that larger issues were involved. It is to be noted that the above indications are not in accord with the Prize Commissioner's statements to the American Consul in Hamburg that certain of the ships would be promptly released as soon as satisfactory evidence of the American consumption of their cargoes was forthcoming. It is impossible to predict what decision may be taken or when it will be forthcoming but in view of this statement and of the apparent unlikelihood that the Foreign Office will textually instruct German Consuls in America to examine the evidence, it is again suggested that the procedure followed in the *Andrejs Kalnins* case be followed, namely that the Department request the American importers to submit to it documentary evidence of the American destination and consumption of the detained cargoes and cable its findings to the American Consul General at Ham-

burg for submission to the Prize Commissioner so that evidence as to American consumption will be available to the German authorities.

KIRK

300.115(39) Pulp Sales Corp./10 : Telegram

The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State

HELSINKI, November 9, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received November 9—1:20 p. m.]

319. My telegram No. 318, today.¹¹ A member of Foreign Office this afternoon expressed great concern at continued detention by German authorities of shipments to the United States intimating growing belief here that Finland may soon have to face almost complete stoppage of exports to the United States since every effort made to expedite these shipments had so far apparently failed. He also referred to document issued by American Consulate at Riga on the basis of Department's telegram No. 122, October 13, 6 p. m., to the Legation at Riga, and inquired why it had not been possible to issue similar documents for shipments from Finland.

For the reasons mentioned in the second paragraph of my telegram number 196, September 25, 3 p. m.,¹¹ it seems desirable to prevent growth of impression here that the United States may not cooperate with northern countries to maintain necessary exports to the United States especially at a time when at least Finnish trade policy is being reconsidered in the light of import license system, exchange control and bilateral balancing as reported in recent telegrams and despatches.

Would it not be possible pending inauguration of procedure mentioned in your No. 138, October 27,¹² to authorize issuance of documents for shipments from Finland including those now held in German ports similar to those authorized in your telegram above mentioned to Riga?

SCHOENFELD

300.115(39)/90 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Chargé in Germany (Kirk)

WASHINGTON, November 9, 1939—5 p. m.

846. Your 1914, November 2, 10 a. m. The vessels carrying Finnish pulp for American consumption have now been detained for varying periods up to and exceeding one month. The continued detention of

¹¹ Not printed.

¹² Not printed. It repeated information contained in telegram No. 174, October 25, 10 a. m., from the Consul General at Hamburg, p. 828.

these cargoes is working great injury to American importers whose stocks are already depleted almost to the point of exhaustion. The recent detention of the *Geisha*, *Eros*, and *Frode* with their cargoes of Swedish pulp will aggravate this already serious situation.

Since important American industries, including newspapers, are vitally dependent upon a reasonably free flow of imported pulp, it is obvious that unless these detained shipments can come forward without further delay, and unless a procedure can be devised to expedite the passage of future shipments from Scandinavia, American importers may be driven to seek supplies in the nearest substitute market, Canada, which up to a few years ago was the United States' principal pulp supplier.

We have on no occasion raised any objection to absolutely necessary delays by the German authorities in examining cargoes destined to the United States and have sought to work out a mutually satisfactory procedure to expedite the clearance of such cargoes. We thought that there was considerable merit in the procedure proposed by the Prize Commissioner. We are still of the opinion that this procedure, providing as it does for a determination by German consular officers of the ultimate destination of the shipments, would be most satisfactory from the German standpoint.

We cannot understand, therefore, the continued delay of the German authorities in putting into effect a procedure which was suggested by the German Prize Commissioner himself as a means of expediting action.

This whole question, which incidently involves the only instance up to the present time of interference by any belligerent with innocent cargoes destined for the United States, has become so pressing that you are requested again to urge upon the Foreign Office the desirability of issuing early instructions in the premises to the German consular officers in the United States or of proposing a satisfactory alternative method of handling these shipments.

In your discretion you may use the foregoing considerations in your conversations with the Foreign Office.

HULL

300.115(39)/86: Telegram

The Consul General at Hamburg (Keblinger) to the Secretary of State

HAMBURG, November 9, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received 10:08 p. m.]

192. I have been informed by office of Prize Commissioner that the Finnish steamship *Asta* bound for the United States with a cargo of

wood pulp consigned to Pulp Sales Corporation was yesterday detained pending evidence of American destination for domestic consumption referring to my telegram No. 178, October 28, 2 p. m., and to telegram No. 1914, November 2, 10 a. m., from the Embassy at Berlin suggesting that the Department cable contents of affidavits or contracts showing evidence of American destination for domestic consumption of 15 wood pulp cargoes which Prize Commissioner has agreed to release on receipt of evidence in this form.

The Consuls General of Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland have for the past 2 weeks repeatedly and with increasing insistence approached the Consulate General on the institutions [*instructions?*] of their Governments to ascertain what steps are being taken in the matter by the Consulate General, pointing out that the present delay is costing ship and cargo owners many thousand dollars daily. I respectfully request to be informed when and if the Department intends to cable evidence as suggested.

KEBLINGER

800.115(39)/92: Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, November 10, 1939—6 p. m.
[Received November 10—12:10 a. m.]

2020. Before carrying out the instructions in Department's 846, November 9, 5 p. m., it would be helpful to have a decision on the recommendation contained in the last paragraph of my No. 1914, November 2, 10 a. m. and in my 1998, November 9, 2 p. m., which was that the Department should ask the American importers to submit to it documentary evidence of the American consumption of the detained cargoes of woodpulp to be cabled to the Consul General at Hamburg.

In this connection the Finnish Legation here states that it was assured by the Prize Commissioner as late as November 4 that he would promptly clear vessels on the presentation of documents similar to that furnished by the American Legation in Riga in the *Andrejs Kalnins* case. The Finnish Legation also states that it was orally informed yesterday at the Foreign Office that the German Government would not adopt the suggested procedure of having German Consuls in the United States examine and report telegraphically evidence of the American destination of the detained cargoes. The Prize Commissioner had previously informed the Finnish Legation that while he personally favored German consular reports in such cases he understood that the Foreign Office objected to the procedure.

KIRK

300.115 (39) / 110 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Consul General at Hamburg (Keblinger)

WASHINGTON, November 10, 1939—7 p. m.

136. Your 192, November 9, 5 p. m. We are telegraphing you at the request of the Pulp Sales Corporation and the New York agents of the Thorden Line the contents of affidavits submitted by them¹³ regarding the American destination for domestic consumption of certain of the pulp cargoes now being detained.

We have informed the interested parties that we cannot consider our action in this instance as a precedent and are complying with their request solely as a matter of expediency in an endeavor to expedite the release of these urgently needed cargoes.

In transmitting these affidavits, therefore, we do so without responsibility and without prejudice to the efforts we have made and will continue to make through our Embassy at Berlin to have the German authorities either put into effect the procedure suggested by the Prize Commissioner or propose a satisfactory alternative procedure.

In delivering copies of the affidavits to the Prize Commissioner you should communicate to him informally the substance of the foregoing.

Please telegraph Prize Commissioner's reaction.

Repeat to Embassy Berlin.

HULL

300.115 (39) / 93 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, November 11, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received 8:53 p. m.]

2030. My 2020, November 10, 6 p. m. In the course of a conversation at the Foreign Office today on another matter an official in the Legal Division in charge of Prize Court cases discussed the question of the detention by the German authorities of the wood pulp shipments.

He expressed his regret at the delay in reaching a decision as to the disposition of cargoes at present detained and of future wood pulp shipments but argued that it was unavoidable since it was necessary for the Foreign Office to obtain the views of other interested departments of the Reich. He said that every effort would be made to despatch the matter but he would make no prediction as to when the decision might be forthcoming. He added that before receiving the views of

¹³ Telegrams not printed.

other sections of the Reich Government he could give no indication as to whether the suggested procedure, which was briefly and informally outlined, of investigation by German consular officers in the United States of the American destination of the detained cargoes would be adopted.

From another source I am informed that a reason given for the concern of the German authorities in regard to this general question is the belief that certain wood pulp shipments routed to neutral countries have upon being released by the Germans found their way immediately to England. It is on that account that the German authorities are unwilling to accept ship documents as proof of destination and are insisting on definite guarantees.

I shall continue to keep the matter before the Foreign Office and in this connection I shall appreciate a reply to my telegram under reference.

KIRK

300.115 (39) /121 : Telegram

The Consul General at Hamburg (Keblinger) to the Secretary of State

HAMBURG, November 14, 1939—11 a. m.

[Received 11 : 25 p. m.]

198. Department's telegram No. 136, November 10, 7 p. m. Affidavits executed by consignees of wood pulp shipments in vessels now being held by the German authorities were submitted to the Prize Commissioner yesterday and at the same time he was informed of the Department's reservations as instructed. The Prize Commissioner expressed himself as satisfied with the affidavits but stated that they must be referred to his superiors in Berlin. He stated that only on November 10 he had been advised by his Ministry that in view of the Department's apparent reluctance to transmit evidence of American consumption of these cargoes the authorities in Berlin were discussing plans for a new procedure and had instructed the Prize Commission to refer to them all pending decisions on cargoes bound for the United States. He further stated that he was going to Berlin on the 16th when the whole question would be discussed and he was hopeful that he might be able to secure acceptance of the affidavits submitted. Emphatic protest was made to the Commissioner and it was stated that these affidavits had been secured only after considerable difficulty and moreover the Department had been advised several times that he had stated personally that they would be sufficient to gain the release of the steamers concerned. The Prize Commissioner was urged to bring this aspect of the question to the attention of the Berlin authorities and insist at least that the vessels covered by the affidavits be

released immediately. He agreed to do so. He again expressed regret that he was unable to fulfill his promise but naturally must bow to the decision of his superiors and it was apparent he resented the fact that the Foreign Office had intervened and his principal assistant was of the opinion that the matter had now become political.

Embassy fully informed.

KEBLINGER

300.115(39)/128 : Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Chargé in Germany (Kirk)

WASHINGTON, November 14, 1939—8 p. m.

880. Your Nos. 2020 and 2030, November 10 and November 11. Department has hesitated to suggest to large number of importers a procedure involving expense on their part and large amount of work for Department without some indication such efforts will be advantageous. However, because of your urgings they are now being requested to file such affidavits and supporting evidence in duplicate, one copy to go to Consul General at Hamburg by mail, the substance to be telegraphed to him as soon as there is any definite indication such telegraphic communications will serve any purpose. See, in this connection, Department's cables of November 10th to Consul General reply to which is being awaited with interest.

WELLES

300.115(39)/137 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, November 16, 1939—4 p. m.

[Received 8 : 41 p. m.]

2066. The Department's 880, November 14, 8 p. m. and previous. Further representations were made to the Foreign Office on November 14 and 15 in an effort to expedite the release of the detained wood pulp cargoes. Although the subject matter of the Department's 846, November 9, 5 p. m., was discussed during the conversation at the Foreign Office, (referred to in my 2030, November 11, 5 p. m.) an *aide-mémoire* containing most of the considerations set forth therein was left with a Foreign Office official in the Legal Division in charge of Prize Court cases on November 14.

Yesterday I saw State Secretary Weizsaecker and left with him a memorandum with special reference to the cargoes for which evidence as to American consumption had been submitted to the Department. It was pointed out therein that relying on the repeated assurances of

the Reich Prize Commissioner that the ships and cargoes would in all probability be released on presentation of evidence of American consumption of the wood pulp cargoes such evidence had been presented on November 13 and apparently found satisfactory by the Commissioner but that the ships had not been released. It was further pointed out that on the basis of the evidence the prompt release of the ships and cargoes covered thereby would appear to be warranted without the awaiting for the formation of a permanent procedure for dealing in the future with wood pulp cargoes. The State Secretary said that he would look into the matter at once and advise me accordingly. The Department will be kept informed.

KIRK

300.115 (39)/153 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, November 17, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received 10 p. m.]

2076. My 2066, November 16, 4 p. m. A member of the Embassy called by appointment this afternoon on Ambassador Ritter at the Foreign Office who is charged with decision so far as that Ministry is concerned on the release of ships and cargoes of wood pulp now detained by the German authorities. Ritter announced that on the basis of evidence submitted through the Department of State to the American Consul at Hamburg as to the American consumption of the cargoes the following eight vessels would be immediately released: *Karin Thorden, Petsamo, Asturias, Kowra, Hulda Thorden, Greta, Keila and Aagot.*

If these eight vessels arrive and discharge their cargo in the United States then further ships will be released provided similar evidence as to the destination of their cargoes is furnished through the State Department. If it transpires that cargoes covered by such documentary evidence are diverted to enemy countries then a new procedure will have to be devised. The captains of the released ships have been directed to report to the nearest German Consulate in the United States which will thereupon inform the German Government by cable of the arrival of the vessels. Ritter said that the Foreign Office would have preferred to have had a direct assurance from the United States Government that cargoes consigned to the United States would not be diverted to enemy use but he admitted that the United States Government had no direct power to give assurances concerning the movements of alien vessels. As regards the legal inability of the United States to guarantee against the reexport of Scandinavian wood pulp this was not important since it would be impracticable

on the ground of expense for England to import Scandinavian pulp via the United States. Ritter asserted that it was the sincere desire of the German Government not to interfere with the normal import trade of the United States and very clearly indicated that the release of the ships was motivated by a desire not to interfere with American import trade and not because of German concern for the preservation of Scandinavian exports to countries other than Germany. He asked the American Government to believe that the delay in releasing these vessels was entirely due to the fact that several ships fully provided with papers from both the exporting and importing countries showing the neutral destination of the cargo had as soon as released by the German naval authorities proceeded directly to England or France and in one case the documents had been legalized by a German Consul. He said that some thought had been given by the Foreign Office to adopting a procedure which he understood was now being practiced by the French Government of demanding that the neutral vessel give a bond of five times the value of the cargo subject to forfeiture if the cargo reached Germany but he said the Foreign Office was against burdening neutral trade with any such requirement although if it were determined that the present documentary assurances could not be depended on the Reich might be compelled to introduce some such procedure.

In conclusion Ritter repeated the suggestion that similar evidence to that furnished in the case of the Pulp Sales Corporation be provided whereupon the other cargoes would be released provided the "experiment" with the eight vessels now freed was successful i. e. that their cargoes were not diverted to enemy countries.

Repeated to Helsinki and American Consulate General Hamburg.
KIRK

300.115(30)/156 : Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld)

WASHINGTON, November 17, 1939—noon.

153. Your numbers 318, 319, and 326, November 9 and November 11.¹⁴ You may assure Finnish Government that Department is doing everything practicable to bring about release of shipments but that as yet German Government has not agreed to any form of procedure to that end. Department's efforts are being continued.

WELLES

¹⁴ Telegrams Nos. 318 and 326 not printed.

300.115(39)/157 : Telegram

The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State

HELSINKI, November 18, 1939—noon.
[Received November 18—11:43 a. m.]

336. I spoke to the Minister for Foreign Affairs this morning in the sense of your telegram No. 153, yesterday. He informed me that 3 Finnish ships long held in German ports with cargoes for the United States had now been released on guarantee by the bank of Finland as to destination. He had hopes that similarly satisfactory arrangement would shortly be possible with regard to others of some 15 Finnish ships detained. It has been suggested that the German Government was discriminating against Finnish ships but the Minister for Foreign Affairs said he had no reason to believe this is the case.

SCHOENFELD

300.115(39)/194 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, November 25, 1939—5 p. m.
[Received November 25—4:37 p. m.]

2460. Department's 1467, November 21, 6 p. m.¹⁵ Ministry Economic Warfare assure that no Finnish vessels will be detained by their authorities on the grounds that they are carrying wood pulp from Finland to the United States. This assurance is all that is forthcoming at the present time but in view of informal discussion with Ministry of Economic Warfare believe that they are not inclined to interfere with Finnish ships unless they are carrying German goods to the United States possibly even then they may not interfere but they will give no assurance beyond what is given above.

KENNEDY

300.115(39)/208 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, November 28, 1939—2 p. m.
[Received 2:48 p. m.]

2152. As stated in my 2076, November 17, 6 p. m., according to oral information received from the Foreign Office, German Consuls in the United States have been instructed to report by cable to the Prize

¹⁵ Not printed; it instructed the Ambassador to endeavor to arrange minimum of inconvenience for the vessels being released by Germany (300.115 (39)/181).

Commissioner the arrival of the wood pulp cargoes in the United States as soon as they are notified by the captains of the carrying vessels.

Since there may be delay in this procedure it is suggested that the Department on the basis of shipping reports or evidence from the interested consignees advise the Embassy by cable of the respective arrivals of the eight vessels named in my 2076. On the receipt of such information the Embassy will press for the release of other detained cargoes for which evidence concerning the American consumption has been transmitted through the Department to the American Consulate General at Hamburg for presentation to the Prize Commissioner.

KIRK

300.115(39)/253 : Telegram

The Consul General at Hamburg (Keblinger) to the Secretary of State

HAMBURG, December 6, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received December 7—2 a. m.]

222. Your 136, November 10, 7 p. m. Assurances regarding non-reexport of cargoes of 33 vessels detained by German prize control authorities have been delivered to Prize Commissioner. Assurances for Swedish SS *Werna*, consignees Cellulose Sales Company, New York, and Finnish *Airisto* and *Nagu*, consignees Pulp Sales Corporation, have not yet been received. SS *Novasli* and *Brosund* for which Department telegraphed assurances to Stockholm have now been detained.

Ten vessels including *Hulda Thorden* have now been released as reported by Embassy at Berlin. *Korsnaes* and *Everoja* committed to Prize Court proceedings. *Delaware* and *Frode* may be released shortly. Prize Commissioner has informed me that decision on conditions for release remaining vessels now rests entirely with Central Authorities at Berlin. These are the Danish *Olga S*, *Svanhild*, *Herta Maersk*, *Brosund*, *Gorm*; the Swedish *Condul*, *Trolleholm*, *Tom*, *Rita*, *Kjell*, *Vera*, *Werner*; the Finnish *Asta*, *Airisto*, *Nagu*, *Zephyr*, *Dione*; the Norwegian *Kari*, *Fana*, *Novasli*, *Geisha*; the Latvian *Gundega*, *Kegums*; the Estonian *Osmussaar*. I have ceased telegraphing names of detained vessels since ship owners are apparently informing Department without delay. Embassy at Berlin is being kept fully informed.

KEBLINGER

300.115(39)/260 : Telegram

The Consul General at Hamburg (Keblinger) to the Secretary of State

HAMBURG, December 8, 1939—11 a. m.

[Received 10:15 p. m.]

224. There are at present more than 125 vessels detained in German ports by German prize control authorities. Of these about 40 are Swedish, 12 Danish, 5 Norwegian, 40 Finnish, 14 Estonian and 14 Latvian. According to Prize Commissioner's office these comprise practically all neutral ships now leaving Baltic or Scandinavian ports carrying goods on German contraband list. Approximately 46 are bound for Holland, 40 for Belgium and 29 for the United States. Many of these vessels have been detained for a period of 2 weeks to 1 month. The loss to neutral shipowners may be judged by the fact that demurrage on an average merchantman of 1500 tons in the port of Hamburg amounts to about \$300 per day payable only in foreign currency.

Approximately 2 weeks ago the Prize Commissioner informed neutral Consuls of the imposition of new conditions for the release of neutral vessels carrying goods listed as contraband detained by prize control authorities. These conditions include (1) governmental guarantees from countries of destination that the cargoes are for domestic consumption, (2) governmental guarantees that they are not for re-exporting in finished or unfinished form, (3) the names of the processors, (4) assurances from the processors that they will not sell the goods except to persons guaranteeing not to resell to enemy countries, and (5) governmental guarantees from the countries of destination that like or smaller quantities of the same product as the released cargoes will not be exported in place of the latter to enemy countries from stocks on hand in the countries of destination.

According to information received by the Embassy at Berlin from the Foreign Office the above conditions do not apply to the 30 vessels bound for the United States. They are, however, being applied rigorously in case of European countries. The Consuls General of Baltic, Scandinavian, and channel countries state that their Governments have not yet been able to reach an agreement with the Foreign Office regarding the method of fulfillment of the new requirements. Only in exceptional cases have steamers been set free since the new conditions went into effect. The Consul General of the Netherlands states that although his Government has gone far toward meeting the new conditions he has been able to obtain the release of only 2 ships out of 46 bound for Holland in contrast with release within 3 or 4 days of vessels detained under the old conditions. The Consuls General of Norway and Finland have been unable to effect release of any vessels.

Two Estonian vessels and one Latvian have been freed since November 20. The Swedish Consul General informs me that of 58 detained Swedish vessels or cargoes, only 5 have been released in the past 2 weeks. Among those still detained are 8 sailing in ballast to England to fetch coal for Swedish consumption. He adds that his Minister at Berlin was informed by an official of the Foreign Office that it would be probably impossible satisfactorily to fulfill the new conditions in cases of shipments to Holland or Belgium and that in consequence Swedish exporters would do well to seek markets elsewhere.

The prize office alleges that the new conditions are reprisals against British seizures of German exports. However the new German conditions were first made known November 20 one day before the announcement of the British intention to seize German exports.¹⁶ The legal adviser of the prize office justifies the new requirements on the ground that any suspicion, no matter how slight that cargoes of goods on contraband list detained are bound directly or indirectly for enemy countries places on neutrals burden of proof of non-enemy destination. In the case of Swedish ships sailing in ballast to England he maintains that such seizures may be justified under article No. 23, paragraph 2, or article 38, paragraph 3, the Prize Law of 1939. However, he states that under the present prize law the legal position of the prize office is not too secure and indicates that the law may shortly be amended to remedy this situation.

Repeated to Berlin by mail.

KEBLINGER

300.115(39)/284 : Telegram

The Chargé in Germany (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

BERLIN, December 12, 1939—4 p. m.

[Received 5 : 22 p. m.]

2314. My 2152, November 28, 2 p. m. I have been orally informed by the Foreign Office that the Prize Commissioner has released the Danish ships *Delaware* and *Frode* carrying wood pulp to the United States and that several more vessels will be released in the very near future. It was stated that although German Consuls in the United States had not reported the arrival of all the eight vessels named in my 2076, November 12 [17], 6 p. m. a sufficient number of these ships had unloaded in American ports to justify the release of further vessels.

KIRK

¹⁶ See telegram No. 287, November 22, 5 p. m., from the Minister in the Netherlands, p. 778.

300.115(39)/302 : Telegram

The Consul General at Hamburg (Keblinger) to the Secretary of State

HAMBURG, December 15, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received 7 : 25 p. m.]

239. Referring to my telegram No. 235, December 14.¹⁷ I have been informed by an official of the Prize Commissioner's office that the Berlin authorities have thus far authorized him to release only Danish and Swedish vessels, as arrivals of those vessels released on November 18 are reported from the United States. The official professed inability to explain why Swedish and Danish vessels were being freed while Norwegian, Estonian, Latvian, and Finnish steamers which in many cases have been held considerably longer are still being detained. In the case of the Norwegian vessels including the steamship *Geisha* he gave as his personal opinion that the unfriendliness of the Norwegian Government in other unnamed respects might have influenced the Berlin authorities in their decision.

Repeat to Berlin.

KEBLINGER

300.115(39)/369 : Telegram

The Consul General at Hamburg (Keblinger) to the Secretary of State

HAMBURG, December 27, 1939—3 p. m.

[Received 4 : 05 p. m.]

252. All vessels detained by prize control authorities en route to the United States have now been released with the exception of steamships *Korsnaes* and *Everoja*, committed to Prize Court proceedings, and Estonian steamships *Hildur* and *Osmussar* and the Norwegian *Novasli* which are still being investigated. American bound consignments on Finnish steamship *Dione* and Estonian *Vaindlo* (see Department's telegram 207, and my telegram No. 241¹⁸) are also still being investigated.

KEBLINGER

¹⁷ Not printed.

¹⁸ Neither printed.

MEASURES TO SECURE ADEQUATE SUPPLIES OF RAW MATERIALS

I. FORMULATION OF PLANS TO ACQUIRE ADEQUATE STOCKPILES OF STRATEGIC RAW MATERIALS¹

811.24 Raw Materials/39e

*The Adviser on International Economic Affairs (Feis) to the Acting
Director of the Bureau of the Budget (Bell)*

WASHINGTON, February 2, 1939.

MY DEAR MR. BELL: Confirming what I said to you over the telephone on January 30, with respect to legislation which would authorize the purchase of stock-piles of strategic materials, I am glad to furnish you the following information in this written form.

Last spring Senator Thomas of Utah, serving as chairman of the subcommittee of the Senate Military Affairs Committee dealing with strategic materials, invited experts from the interested Departments to assist him in drafting a bill which would provide for the accumulation of reserve stocks of strategic materials. Officers of the State, War, Navy, Interior, and Commerce Departments cooperated in the drafting of a bill which was introduced in the last session of Congress by Senator Thomas as S. 4012.² That bill was submitted to the interested Departments for comment late in the last session of Congress. The Department of State and the other Departments concerned were prepared to submit favorable reports on the bill but were informed by the Bureau of the Budget that it was not in accord with the President's program.

The study of this problem has continued in the various Departments. On December 23, the Acting Secretary of State, with the approval and support of the Secretaries of War, Navy, Interior and Commerce, sent the President a copy of a report of an interdepartmental committee³ recommending legislative action along the lines of the Thomas bill. Then on January 16 the Under Secretary of State, Mr. Welles, discussed the matter with the President and found the President in agreement with continued study of the matter by the interdepartmental committee, including discussion with Senator Thomas of amendments

¹ For correspondence regarding efforts to secure stocks of rubber and tin, see pp. 858 ff. and pp. 906 ff.

² *Congressional Record*, vol. 83, pt. 6, p. 6718.

³ Not printed.

to the bill considered desirable by that committee, so that the Thomas bill might fully represent the views of the executive branch of the Government. The President said that he did not approve any effort at this time to secure the appropriations which would be authorized by the Thomas bill, since this step would upset his budget arrangements. At the President's suggestion his position on this point was made clear to Senator Thomas and also to Congressman Faddis, who had introduced in the House a bill identical with the Thomas bill.

Following the President's approval, the Secretary of State communicated with the Secretaries of War, Navy, Interior and Commerce, suggesting that the functions of the interdepartmental committee in this field be continued on a formal basis, and it is expected that this action will be taken. The amendments considered desirable by this committee have already been incorporated in a bill which Congressman Faddis has introduced as H. R. 3320,⁴ as a substitute for his earlier bill, H. R. 2643.⁵ The Thomas bill was introduced as S. 572,⁶ before these amendments had been suggested, but the bill has been referred to this and other Departments for comment and it is expected that all of these Departments will suggest substantially the same amendments in their replies.

I believe the Departments concerned, and both Senator Thomas and Congressman Faddis, are agreed that no attempt should be made to secure appropriations for purchases of strategic materials until such appropriations would meet with the President's approval. In the meantime, however, it is considered desirable to secure legislative authorization along the lines of the suggested bill, since such action would represent a definite statement of policy agreed upon by the executive and legislative branches of the Government and would serve to discourage attempts to secure legislation along less desirable lines. One of the principal advantages of the bill under discussion would be the authorization to purchase the most needed materials, of the highest quality, in the cheapest market; this arrangement would be modified only by the restrictions of the Buy-American Act,⁷ which, in practical effect, would be unlikely to result in large purchases from domestic sources. Too many of the other bills introduced in this field seek the expenditure of large sums, ostensibly in the interest of national defense, but in reality chiefly for the purpose of providing a subsidy for certain lines of domestic production.

Sincerely yours,

HERBERT FEIS

⁴ *Congressional Record*, vol. 84, pt. 1, p. 859.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 402.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 223.

⁷ 41 U. S. C. 10a.

811.24 Raw Materials/54

*The Acting Secretary of State to Senator Morris Sheppard*⁸

WASHINGTON, March 17, 1939.

MY DEAR SENATOR SHEPPARD: With further reference to the Department's letters of February 23 and March 13, 1939,⁹ with respect to the bill S. 572, which would authorize purchases of reserve stocks of strategic materials, I can now state that a report has been received from the Bureau of the Budget with regard to the relation of the proposed legislation to the President's program.

The Acting Director of the Bureau of the Budget, Mr. D. W. Bell, states that he has taken the matter up with the President and that the President does not wish to make any commitment with respect to any appropriations for this purpose at this time but that there would be no objection to the enactment of such legislation if amended so as to eliminate the years for which the appropriations are to be made available, leaving the matter within the discretion of the President as to when and in what amount estimates may be submitted therefor.

In the event that Congress enacts legislation, amended in the sense indicated above, the Department of State will be prepared to bring to the attention of the Bureau of the Budget and the President at the first proper opportunity, the great advisability of seeking an appropriation at this session of Congress for the purpose of advancing the objectives of such legislation.

Sincerely yours,

SUMNER WELLES

811.24 Raw Materials/67

*Statement Issued by the Department of State, April 10, 1939, Regarding the Proposal for the Exchange of Raw Materials Announced by Senator James F. Byrnes*¹⁰

The project, as understood at the Department of State, is that the Department should undertake to find out whether certain other governments would be willing to enter into an exchange with this Government of certain raw materials reciprocally desired for emergency stock purposes and for such purposes only. From the American point of view, it would be most useful for us to acquire for long-term storage reserve stocks of certain materials not produced within the United

⁸ Chairman, Senate Committee on Military Affairs.⁹ Neither printed.¹⁰ On April 10, 1939, Senator Byrnes announced to the press the offer to be made by the United States to the United Kingdom, Belgium, and the Netherlands to exchange surplus cotton and wheat for rubber and tin; *New York Times*, April 11, 1939, p. 1, col. 2. For correspondence with the countries concerned, see vol. II.

States or produced only in limited quantities under very disadvantageous circumstances. Various executive departments have strongly indicated this policy in their support of the several bills now before Congress for acquiring such reserve stocks by purchase. It is our sincere hope that this legislation will be passed.

The appropriations available under such legislation, however, will not be sufficient to make possible the acquisition of adequate supplies. Therefore, if it proves to be possible to secure some of these supplies by direct exchange for some of our surplus wheat and cotton which other governments might wish to store for emergencies, such interchange ought to be mutually beneficial. Such arrangements would fall completely outside of the sphere of ordinary commercial interchange and would not affect the sphere of operation of the trade agreements program or any of our other general policies.

If the President so desires, discussions of the type referred to by Senator Byrnes would be undertaken as soon as a convenient and suitable opportunity presented itself. If any agreements were reached, presumably they would be embodied in treaties to be submitted to the Congress.

*Statement Issued by the Department of State, April 14, 1939,
Regarding Proposed Exchange of Materials for War Reserve
Stocks*¹¹

Inquiries received since the statements of Senator James F. Byrnes and this Department on April 10 indicate a misunderstanding of one important aspect of the proposal to exchange surplus commodities held by this Government for stocks of strategic materials. Fear has been expressed in some quarters that markets for these commodities would be upset and prices depressed. Furthermore, comparing the plan with commercial barter deals, it has been charged that the trade-agreements program is being abandoned and commercial policies reversed.

This Government is not seeking to force American surplus commodities into the world's markets by any scheme to exchange or barter them for strategic materials. The American surpluses will be available for exchange only if foreign governments are interested in acquiring them for war reserve stocks.

The idea now being explored is confined to the acquisition of strategic materials, and strategic materials only, as reserves for national emergencies when necessary supplies of these materials from abroad might be cut off or greatly reduced, as in the case of widespread international conflict.

¹¹ Reprinted from Department of State *Bulletin*, April 15, 1939, p. 297.

One of the essential features of such an arrangement would be an agreement on the part of other governments as well as our own to hold the acquired stocks as reserves for war emergencies with entirely adequate arrangements for permanently withholding such stocks from commercial markets. Hence the plan, if any arrangements of this character can be successfully worked out, would not interfere with the trade-agreements program or conflict with our commercial policies.

811.24 Raw Materials/103

*The Secretary of State to Senator Pat Harrison*¹²

WASHINGTON, June 6, 1939.

MY DEAR SENATOR HARRISON: I am glad to furnish the following report of the views of the Department of State upon the joint resolution, S. J. Res. 121, which you kindly submitted to me for consideration under cover of your communication of April 28, 1939.¹³

The joint resolution under consideration would authorize and request the President to negotiate, if possible, an agreement with the Government of Great Britain providing for the exchange of quantities of surplus United States butter and cheese for quantities of strategic materials required by the United States which Great Britain may have available for such exchange. The joint resolution would also authorize appropriations of sums not in excess of \$10,000,000 for the purchase of such surplus butter and cheese and also such additional sums as might be necessary to enable the President to carry out the provisions of the joint resolution.

It is assumed that interest in this matter has been stimulated by the negotiations now being undertaken with respect to the exchange of surplus cotton and wheat for strategic materials. As a matter of fact, a great number of suggestions for the exchange or barter of American products for strategic or other materials have been brought to the attention of the Department since the first public mention was made of that plan. However, the negotiations which would be authorized by the joint resolution before your Committee, as well as similar proposals that have been brought forward, would differ from the plan now being negotiated in a number of respects which I believe are worthy of attention.

From one point of view the plan now being negotiated would require no new expenditures on the part of this Government, since agencies of the Government have already made financial commitments with

¹² Chairman, Senate Committee on Finance.

¹³ Not printed; for text of resolution, see *Congressional Record*, vol. 84, pt. 5, p. 4820.

respect to surpluses of cotton and wheat and must in any case arrange for ways of disposing of such surpluses. The joint resolution under consideration by your Committee, however, would authorize new appropriations for the purpose of aiding the producers of butter and cheese. This Department is not in a position to comment upon the necessity or desirability of further Government assistance to such producers, but it seems clear that such assistance would represent the major objective of the resolution and should therefore receive very full consideration.

I believe this Department is in a position to offer pertinent comment upon certain other aspects of the program which would be authorized by the joint resolution.

One of the objectives of this program would be the acquisition of reserve stocks of strategic materials required by this Government. The Department of State is on record as favoring the acquisition of adequate reserves of such materials for national emergencies. It has taken the position, however, that both in the interest of national defense and in support of a program of maintaining American neutrality, the prompt acquisition of such stocks is of major national importance and should be undertaken without the delays and uncertainties that would be occasioned by indirect methods confused by varying objectives. I am of the opinion, therefore, that the program which would be authorized by the resolution S. J. Res. 121 would not afford an appropriate or desirable means of securing needed reserves of strategic materials.

This Department would have an important interest in another aspect of the proposal. It has been noted that one of the objectives of the resolution, as stated in the preamble, would be to provide a program for the removal of surplus quantities of butter and cheese in such a way as to avoid any effect upon the normal market for such commodities for domestic consumption. Apparently there is no provision, however, for holding the supplies of butter and cheese to be furnished by this Government out of commercial markets abroad. In the case of the proposed exchange of surplus cotton and wheat for strategic materials, this Government will insist upon guarantees that the cotton and wheat will be held as reserves for national emergencies by the countries acquiring these supplies, so that these commodities may not enter into and disrupt commercial markets and the normal channels of trade. This Department would be strongly opposed to the introduction of a system of bartering or exchanging American commodities through Government agencies in such a way as to supplant normal international channels of trade or influence commercial markets.

Sincerely yours,

CORDELL HULL

811.24 Raw Materials/270

*Memorandum by Mr. Roy Veatch of the Office of the Adviser on
International Economic Affairs*

[WASHINGTON,] August 8, 1939.

This Act ¹⁴ authorizes appropriations totalling \$100,000,000 during the fiscal years June 30, 1939 to June 30, 1943, for the purchase of reserve stocks of strategic materials. The interested Departments recommended an appropriation of \$25,000,000 for the present fiscal year (beginning June 30, 1939) and finally secured the approval of the President and the Bureau of the Budget for such an estimate. This amount was cut to \$10,000,000 by the House of Representatives, acting upon the third deficiency bill during the closing days of the session, and the latter amount was approved by the Senate. There will be available, therefore, only \$10,000,000 for purchases to be made between the present time and June 30, 1940.

Purchases under this Act are to be made by the Procurement Division of the Treasury at the direction of the Secretary of War and the Secretary of the Navy. The Secretaries of War, the Navy, and the Interior, acting jointly through the agency of the Army and Navy Munitions Board, are directed to determine the quality and quantities of strategic and critical materials to be purchased and the Secretaries of State, Treasury, and Commerce are directed to designate representatives to cooperate in such determination. Dr. Feis has been appointed as the representative of this Department for this purpose and it is expected that a group representing the six Departments concerned will meet immediately after Dr. Feis' return from vacation on August 10, to advise with respect to the purchasing directions to be given the Procurement Division of the Treasury.

For the confidential information of the Department, the Army and Navy Munitions Board will recommend purchases during the present fiscal year of the following strategic materials:

tin	quinine
manganese	manila fiber
tungsten	optical glass
chromium	quartz crystal

The order in which these materials are listed also indicates roughly the relative value of the purchases recommended. It is the suggestion of the Army and Navy Munitions Board that some 40% of the total be allotted to the purchase of tin.

ROY VEATCH

¹⁴ i. e., the Strategic Materials Act, approved June 7, 1939; 53 Stat. 811.

811.24 Raw Materials/378½

Joint Statement Released by the Army and Navy Munitions Board on Strategic and Critical Raw Materials, October 11, 1939

To answer numerous queries that have been made upon the Army and Navy Munitions Board with reference to exports of strategic materials, the Honorable Charles Edison, The Acting Secretary of the Navy, and the Honorable Louis Johnson, The Assistant Secretary of War, authorized publication of the following statement issued by the Army and Navy Munitions Board :

“Under the authority of the Act of Congress relating to the purchase and storage of strategic and critical materials for national use during a war emergency, the Procurement Division of the Treasury Department has recently issued proposals for the acquisition of stocks of certain materials classified as strategic by the Army and Navy Munitions Board in consultation with representatives of the State, Treasury, Commerce and Interior Departments.

“The principal purpose of this activity is to assure, in the event war should interrupt the supply, that there will be available in the United States a sufficiency of those materials essential to the industrial economy of the Nation. The materials which will be so accumulated are those which cannot be produced in sufficient quantities in the United States to satisfy vital requirements. The most important of the materials classified by the Army and Navy Munitions Board as strategic are :

Antimony	Quartz Crystal	Silk
Chromium	Quicksilver	Tin
Manganese, ferrograde	Quinine	Tungsten
Manila Fiber	Rubber	

“Since the outbreak of the present war in Europe foreign purchasers have either obtained or are attempting to obtain for shipment abroad, supplies of these strategic materials which have been imported into this country by private interests for use by American industry.

“From the standpoint of national defense it is perhaps imprudent to ship out of the country those materials which can be replaced only by imports, especially at the present time when it is becoming more difficult and more expensive to secure even the minimum imports of many of the materials listed.

“The emergency stock program which has been recently initiated by the Government will be nullified if materials which are normally in stock in the United States not owned by the Government are re-exported. Activities of foreign buyers have resulted in the removal of some 10,000 tons of rubber and an appreciable amount of tin from the market since September 1. Attempts have also been made to obtain ferromanganese and supplies of other strategic materials, either in a raw or semi-finished form now in the United States for export.

“Such sales are condemned by the more patriotic and responsible dealers and manufacturers in the United States, who are cooperating with the Army and Navy Munitions Board in its effort to increase the supply of these materials within the Country.”

811.24 Raw Materials/378

The Canadian Legation to the Department of State

MEMORANDUM

With reference to a press statement released on October 11th 1939 by the Army and Navy Munitions Board on strategic and critical war materials, enumerating a number of products in respect of which there appeared to be particular apprehension that export sales might defeat the United States Government's efforts to accumulate adequate stocks for national use during a war emergency, the statement mentioned about a dozen primary materials of which United States production is normally less than that country's requirements, and suggested that the re-export to foreign countries of stocks of such goods which had been imported to the United States was unpatriotic and to be condemned.

It happens that Canada is also deficient in most of the primary materials described as "strategic" by the United States authorities, and in normal times procures a substantial proportion of its requirements of these goods through the United States, which had in the first instance bought them from the foreign producing countries. The enclosed tables¹⁵ show, in respect of each of the products listed in the Press Statement under reference, total Canadian imports and imports from the United States for each of the four years since 1935. The data for 1938 in each case show the value as well as the quantity of Canadian imports of these articles from the United States and from all countries, and the percentage of Canadian requirements that was secured from the former.

It will be very much appreciated if the information contained in this tabular statement could be brought to the attention of the appropriate United States authorities to indicate to them that normal imports into the United States, under peace-time conditions, of strategic commodities in which the United States is deficient include an allowance for re-exports to Canada which the Canadian authorities would not wish to have jeopardized in war time. It is considered that the United States does not wish to relinquish its important entrepôt trade in these and other commodities and in any measures which might be taken to conserve adequate domestic stocks for military purposes would bear in mind Canada's reliance upon access to supplies in the United States.

WASHINGTON, October 27, 1939.

¹⁵ Not printed.

811.24 Raw Materials/378

The Department of State to the Canadian Legation

Careful consideration has been given, by the agencies of this Government most concerned, to the memorandum of the Canadian Legation, dated October 27, 1939, presenting factual information upon the exportation from the United States to Canada during the past several years of a number of the materials listed in the statement issued by the Army and Navy Munitions Board and released to the press jointly by the War and Navy Departments on October 11, 1939.

The statement of the Army and Navy Munitions Board directed attention to the attempts of foreign purchasers since the outbreak of the present war in Europe to obtain in the United States supplies of strategic materials which have been imported into this country. The statement commented upon the fact that such sales are condemned by the more patriotic and responsible dealers and manufacturers in the United States. There was no mention of the already-existing re-export trade in many of these materials and there was no intention to eliminate that trade. It was clearly understood of course that limited quantities of materials imported into the United States are purchased in this market as a usual practice for reexport to other points on this continent, and that in the past the total United States imports of these commodities have covered such reexports. This trade may be considered "normal" and presumably may continue without conflict with the national interest of this country in safeguarding supplies of such materials so long as imports of these materials into the United States from foreign sources of supply are not unduly impeded and so long as reexports in such usual channels are not increased to abnormal amounts.

In the event that there is any misunderstanding on the part of American exporters of the intention of the statement of the Army and Navy Munitions Board on this subject, inquiries addressed to the War and Navy Departments or to this Department will, at least for the present, elicit responses along the lines indicated above.

WASHINGTON, November 6, 1939.

II. NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE INTERNATIONAL RUBBER REGULATION COMMITTEE, THROUGH THE BRITISH AND NETHERLANDS GOVERNMENTS, FOR ADEQUATE RELEASES OF RUBBER¹⁶

800.6176/79

Memorandum of Conversation, by Mr. Roy Veatch of the Office of the Adviser on International Economic Affairs

[WASHINGTON,] January 17, 1939.

Mr. Viles¹⁷ leaves on January 21 for the next meeting of the International Committee at The Hague early in February. He called on Dr. Feis¹⁸ in order to discuss problems of supply and price as affected by the control of the Committee.

In the opinion of the American industry rubber prices at around 8 pence per pound in London and 16 cents in New York give an entirely satisfactory return to rubber producers and should not be allowed by the International Committee to go higher. He feels that the International Committee has somewhat revised its price objectives downward during the recent recession but he fears that the pressure will be strong for a considerably higher range of prices when consumption improves. Preceding the last meeting of the Committee in November there was a strong press campaign in London criticizing the International Committee for not taking effective action to lift prices to the point where all producers could operate profitably even at the low quota levels imposed at the present time. This press campaign charged particularly that the International Committee was under "American influence" and was not giving sufficient attention to the interests of British producers and traders.

Mr. Viles described in some detail the difficulties he had encountered at the last meeting in persuading the Committee to increase the rate of release of rubber for the first quarter of 1939, in view of the possibility of a higher consumption rate for that period. He received strong support in this position from the Dutch, and more surprisingly, from Messrs. Hay,¹⁹ Figg²⁰ and McFadyean.²¹ At that meeting Mr. Viles had asked for a 55 percent rate of release for the first quarter of 1939, as a matter of tactics rather than the 60 percent which the Board of Directors of the Rubber Manufacturers Association (of America)

¹⁶ For previous correspondence regarding the regulation of rubber production and export, see *Foreign Relations*, 1938, vol. 1, pp. 925 ff.

¹⁷ A. L. Viles, American representative on the Advisory Panel of the International Rubber Regulation Committee.

¹⁸ Herbert Feis, Adviser on International Economic Affairs.

¹⁹ J. G. Hay, member of Malayan delegation on the International Rubber Regulation Committee.

²⁰ C. H. Figg, member of Ceylon delegation on the International Rubber Regulation Committee.

²¹ Sir Andrew McFadyean, delegate from the State of North Borneo on the International Rubber Regulation Committee.

had authorized him to request. The Committee had agreed upon an increase of the rate from 45 to 50 percent. Mr. Viles does not believe that a 50 percent rate of release throughout 1939 will be sufficient and he intends to make every effort to secure an increase to at least 55 percent the second quarter and 60 percent for the third.

Mr. Viles left with Mr. Feis the attached estimate of consumption and stocks in 1939,²² computed on bases of a number of different rates of release. He feels that stocks are already too low since the American industry believes that world stocks of at least 500,000 tons should be maintained.

Mr. Feis expressed the opinion that, taking into consideration a number of factors operating in the world, prices of rubber should over a period of time follow a downward trend from present levels. Mr. Viles was inclined to agree with this, basing the opinion principally on the known costs of production of rubber, but he said that the industry would be very much opposed to any sudden price drops since sudden price changes in either direction are upsetting to the calculations which manufacturers must make covering a considerable number of months in advance.

Mr. Feis expressed the opinion that Mr. Viles' efforts have been very effective in influencing the International Committee toward moderation. He saw no occasion for any particular activity on the part of this Government with respect to the Committee's work at the present time, but he thought it might be useful to instruct the American representatives in London and The Hague to seize a suitable opportunity if it should arise to express to the British and Dutch Governments the opinion of this Government that stocks of rubber should not be further reduced, particularly in view of world conditions as they exist today. Mr. Viles felt that such action would in no way be embarrassing to him and he suggested that if members of the Embassy staff in London should wish to talk the matter over with officials of the British Foreign Office and Colonial Office, they might wish to bring him along so that the position of American consumers with respect to the various aspects of the work of the International Committee could be discussed.

Mr. Viles commended highly the work of Mr. Butterworth²³ in London, stating that he has a very good knowledge of the rubber situation and is very effective in his discussions with British officials regarding this subject. . . .

²² Not printed.

²³ William W. Butterworth, Jr., Second Secretary of the American Embassy in the United Kingdom.

800.6176/79

*The Secretary of State to the Minister in the Netherlands (Gordon)*²⁴

No. 204

WASHINGTON, January 27, 1939.

SIR: This Government is much concerned regarding the policy to be followed by the International Rubber Regulation Committee at its February meeting with respect to the quotas for the release of rubber to be authorized for the near future. At a time when there is good prospect of expanding consumption of rubber it is considered most important that the Committee authorize releases of rubber which will be sufficiently large to meet current requirements.

It is felt that it may be useful to let the Netherland Government know, quite informally, that this Government would consider further reductions of rubber stocks unfortunate and unwise, especially in view of present world conditions. It will be appreciated, therefore, if an effort can be made to create a suitable opportunity, prior to the February meeting of the International Committee, to call this opinion orally to the attention of the appropriate officials.

Similar instructions have been despatched to London.

Very truly yours,

For the Secretary of State:
FRANCIS B. SAYRE

800.6176/80

The Minister in the Netherlands (Gordon) to the Secretary of State

No. 633

THE HAGUE, February 13, 1939.

[Received February 24.]

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of the Department's instruction No. 204 of January 27, stating our Government's view that at a time when there is good prospect of expanding consumption of rubber it is considered most important that the above-named Committee authorize releases of rubber sufficiently large to meet current requirements, and instructing me informally to point out to the appropriate Netherlands officials that our Government would consider further reductions of rubber stocks unfortunate and unwise, especially in view of present world conditions.

I received this instruction on February 10 and endeavored to see the Foreign Minister that afternoon, but as he was not in his office, I called upon him the following morning and brought these views of our Government to his attention, requesting that he in turn apprise the Dutch delegates to the Committee of these views prior to the Committee's meeting next Tuesday, February 14. This Dr. Patijn agreed

²⁴ The same, *mutatis mutandis*, on the same date as instruction No. 455 to the Chargé in the United Kingdom.

to do at once, and I have since received a personal note from him stating that he had communicated the views of our Government to Dr. Hart, who has succeeded Prof. van Gelderen as head of the Netherlands delegation to the International Rubber Regulation Committee, and that Dr. Hart had assured him that the Committee at its meeting would not fail to pay full attention to our views.

The foregoing is all right as far as it goes, but it would seem open to question as to whether the communication which I made to the Netherlands Government might not have received fuller consideration if the Department's instruction had reached me somewhat sooner. It should also be pointed out that apparently it was only by a fortunate coincidence that I even received this instruction before the meeting had taken place, the coincidence existing in the fact that fortunately last week, for the first time since I have been at this post, we received two pouches in one week from London—normally the pouch containing this instruction would not have reached me until later this week.

Respectfully yours,

GEORGE A. GORDON

800.6176/82

*The Chargé in the United Kingdom (Johnson) to the Secretary
of State*

No. 2254

LONDON, March 10, 1939.

[Received March 21.]

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith copy of Foreign Office note No. W3744/79/50 of March 9, 1939,²⁵ in which the consent of the United States Government is sought to permit the International Rubber Regulation Committee to authorize the American Rubber Manufacturer's Association to nominate the two American Rubber Consumers' representatives as sanctioned by article 18 of the amended International Rubber Regulation agreement.²⁶

It will be noted that it is pointed out that "the International Rubber Regulation Committee are required within one month of their first meeting" to arrange for the nomination of these two representatives. Since the first meeting under the amended agreement took place on February 14 inquiries were made of the Foreign Office as to the interpretation to be placed upon this provision and assurances were received that it would not be considered that the Committee had to complete its arrangements within a month but merely had to initiate action within that time and that this note constituted that step. At

²⁵ Not printed.

²⁶ Signed at London October 6, 1938, League of Nations Treaty Series, vol. cxcvi, p. 437.

the same time the hope was expressed that the answer of the United States Government would be forthcoming as soon as it could be conveniently formulated.

Respectfully yours,

HERSCHEL V. JOHNSON

800.6176/82

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom
(Kennedy)*

No. 620

WASHINGTON, April 3, 1939.

SIR: With reference to your despatch no. 2254 of March 10, 1939 and the enclosed Foreign Office note no. W3744/79/50 of March 9, 1939 regarding the nomination of representatives of United States rubber consumers on the Advisory Panel of the International Rubber Regulation Committee, you are instructed, if you see no objection, to present a reply along the following lines:

(1) This Government concurs in the expressed intention of continuing the present representation of United States rubber consumers on the Advisory Panel of the International Rubber Regulation Committee by a member nominated by the Rubber Manufacturers Association, Incorporated. This Government has noted, with satisfaction, the value which the Committee places upon the assistance rendered by this representative in the past. It has noted also the Committee's appreciation of the contacts which have been established with consumers of rubber in the United States through this plan of representation and joins with the Committee in the hope that these contacts may be continued.

(2) This Government appreciates the opportunity of commenting upon the procedure for the appointment of a second representative of rubber consumers in the United States now under consideration by the Committee, namely, an invitation to the Rubber Manufacturers Association to nominate this second representative as well as the first. In this connection it will be recalled that in the exchange of views with the British Government regarding arrangements to be made in the amended agreement for the representation of consumers, this Government suggested that the provision for membership on the Advisory Panel should be flexible so as to make it possible, during the operation of the scheme, to select a second American member who would be more directly representative of the ultimate consumers. At that time this Government expressed the view that the existing representation of American consumers had been well handled by the nominee of the Manufacturers Association, and it is of the opinion at the present time that the value of this representation has steadily increased in the intervening period. It is the view of this Government therefore that it is neither necessary to increase the representation of American rubber manufacturers nor desirable at this time to provide for alternative or supplementary representation. It would suit the judgment of this Government best if the Committee should take no action at the present time to appoint a second member to the Advisory Panel representing American consuming interests.

The following background is for your own information: Viles is quite anxious that the Rubber Manufacturers Association should be invited now to nominate the second American representative and he may have expressed this feeling to members of the Committee. The Department feels it advisable to retain a free hand in this matter indefinitely, but it does not wish in any way to embarrass or impede Viles and the Manufacturers Association in their relations with the Committee. It is desirable therefore to present our position in such a way that it shall not be interpreted as evidence of any lack of confidence in the present representation. The decision not to recommend the appointment of a second member, representing somewhat different consumer interests, at this time should indicate that we have no lack of confidence in Viles.

We have discussed this question with Viles and fully expressed our ideas and the Department's complete willingness to undertake to confer regarding the matter with him and the Rubber Manufacturers Association before suggesting supplementary or alternative representation at any future time.

A number of considerations have influenced the Department in adopting the line of policy set forth above. Any action to place the entire representation of American interests, vis-à-vis the Rubber Committee, in the hands of the rubber manufacturers would be likely to arouse criticism in the United States. It is important that this Government and also the Rubber Manufacturers Association be protected against any charge that the manufacturers have been placed in a position to cooperate in maintaining international monopoly control of the production and distribution of crude rubber. As a matter of fact, the line of action set forth above retaining indefinitely the possibility of appointing a representative of other consuming interests, should strengthen the bargaining power of the manufacturers' representative on the Advisory Panel; the argument would always be available that the manufacturers' position would be more reasonable from the standpoint of the Committee than would be the case if another American representative should be appointed. The effectiveness of the representation of American interests by the nominee of the manufacturers' association has increased so steadily that this Government would not wish at this time to encourage any move to change or complicate the character of that representation. In any event, if the desirability of appointing a second American representative were pressed at this time, it would be the judgment of this Government that a person should be chosen representing consuming interests in a much broader sense than is true in the case of the manufacturers' representative.

Very truly yours,

For the Secretary of State:
FRANCIS B. SAYRE

800.6176/93a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom
(Kennedy)*

WASHINGTON, August 31, 1939—10 a. m.

734. Viles informs us that Campbell²⁷ telephoned him from London just as he was about to leave for the September 7 meeting stating that in the judgment of the British Government the situation was so uncertain as to counsel postponement of the September 7 meeting. He told Viles however that he, Campbell, would get in touch with the Committee members and secure authorization for a 10 percent increase in the third quarter to facilitate the carrying out of the Anglo-American agreement.²⁸

Will you please check the situation at once, making clear to the British Government that it is imperative that these additional rubber releases be authorized without any unexpected delay.

HULL

800.6176/96a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom
(Kennedy)*

WASHINGTON, September 3, 1939—4 p. m.

772. The Department is informed that Mr. Viles is proposing action by the International Committee to increase the rate of release of rubber to commercial markets to 65 percent for the fourth quarter.²⁹ You are requested to see that the British Government is given a full understanding of the position of this Government regarding commercial releases, using the following as the basis of note or memorandum.

1. It is assumed that producers and the International Committee will welcome an opportunity to increase quotas if additional rubber can be sold at reasonable prices. Higher quotas should of course decrease unit costs of production and thus increase profits if prices remain stable.

2. Releases in excess of the authorized 60 percent will be required to meet estimated commercial requirements in the fourth quarter.

²⁷ Sir John Campbell, Chairman of the International Rubber Regulation Committee.

²⁸ Agreement for the exchange of rubber and cotton, signed June 23, 1939, Department of State Treaty Series No. 947, or 54 Stat. 1411. For correspondence concerning the agreement, see vol. II, section entitled "Negotiations Between the United States and the United Kingdom . . ." under United Kingdom.

²⁹ The percentages mentioned here and in later documents pertain to quotas to be fixed by the International Rubber Committee with reference to basic quotas stated in article 4 of the International Rubber Agreement signed May 7, 1934, as amended by the protocols signed June 27, 1935, May 22, 1936, and February 5, 1937, International Labour Office, *Intergovernmental Commodity Control Agreements* (Montreal, 1943), pp. 114 ff. The total basic quota for 1939 was 1,519,000 tons and for 1940, 1,541,550 tons.

3. Commercial stocks, particularly in this country, are unusually low. Should additional rubber be available at reasonable prices, there is every reason to believe that it would be taken promptly to build up manufacturers' stocks, which no doubt would then be maintained at higher levels so long as war or the danger of war continues. This Government would favor considerable expansion of commercial stocks.

4. With the prospect of protracted warfare, stocks in all consuming markets must be viewed as dangerously low. Producers as well as consumers will be harmed if limitation of export or high prices restrict the opportunity to expand these stocks.

5. For these reasons, therefore, this Government is strongly of the opinion that the Committee should provide gradually expanding quotas, beginning in the fourth quarter of this year, so that production may be increased as rapidly as practicable.

HULL

811.24 Raw Materials/308a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom
(Kennedy)*

WASHINGTON, September 6, 1939—2 p. m.

803. In view of the highly speculative and almost run-away rubber market in New York, it would be greatly appreciated if you can make an attempt to secure promptly from the British Government a statement which we could release or use otherwise, to the effect that it will continue to be their policy, through the International Rubber Regulation Committee, to support releases of rubber entirely adequate to meet world requirements.

It is recognized that the British Government and the International Committee probably will not be in a position to announce detailed arrangements for some time. It is hoped, however, that the British Government remains committed to adequate releases of rubber and will be willing to make a statement to this effect, since a speculative market and unreasonable rubber prices would appear to be contrary to their best interests as well as ours.

The need of a prompt statement of the general lines of British policy is emphasized by reliable advices to manufacturers here that there is a shortage of nearby rubber in Singapore, apparently caused by speculative holding of rubber or by the withholding of offerings pending instructions from the British Government as to its requirements, or by both.

HULL

811.24 Raw Materials/302 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

[Extract]

LONDON, September 6, 1939—8 p. m.

[Received September 6—3 p. m.]

1486. . . .

2. The Chairman of the Rubber Committee has circularized the members asking for authorization to raise the quotas for the last quarter from 60 to 70 percent to take care of the Agreement rubber. He has received the consent of all the members except the Dutch who have not replied and I gather that the British are somewhat concerned lest the Dutch withdraw from the International Rubber Agreement. If and when the consent of the Dutch is received the announced increase will be made.

Campbell states he has in mind the possibility of a further release for commercial purposes if it appears desirable and necessary. He admits that there is some danger of a speculative wave "obscuring the real truth of the situation" but feels this will shortly be dissipated, when it is realized that the rubber producing areas can and will supply sufficient rubber to meet all requirements. He points out that the demand from Germany and Poland will automatically cease and due to gasoline restrictions commercial demand in the belligerent countries will decline abruptly.

KENNEDY

811.24 Raw Materials/3002 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy)

WASHINGTON, September 7, 1939.

827. Your 1486, September 6, 8 p. m., paragraph 2. The American Minister at The Hague has been requested to press the Netherland Government for agreement to the proposed special 10 percent release for the fourth quarter and to keep you informed directly. Please keep The Hague informed regarding developments in London affecting rubber.

HULL

800.6176/97 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, September 8, 1939—4 p. m.

[Received September 8—11 a. m.]

1528. The following letter from the Colonial Secretary³⁰ speaks for itself and is the result of the representations which I have made here. Both Malcolm MacDonald and Sir John Campbell wish to prevent a speculative movement setting in and would very much appreciate a statement from Washington which would have this effect as indicated in the ultimate paragraph of his letter. I have no doubt that there will be a real temptation to interpret "a reasonable price" as meaning a reasonable dollar price but the preamble of the rubber restriction scheme defines the price aim as "a price reasonably remunerative to efficient producers" and therefore we should continue to think in terms of a sterling not a dollar price thus permitting our rubber manufacturers to benefit by the exchange advantage. The larger United States manufacturers should therefore do all that they can immediately to adjust the New York price to a sterling basis of about 10D. (which price would allow for some increase in shipping and insurance costs). Their action or inaction within the next few days may well be decisive particularly as we must recognize that as the war develops and Great Britain's foreign exchange resources decline the Government as well as the producers will have an interest in a higher dollar price for rubber. The letter reads as follows:

"I have now discussed the rubber and tin³¹ position with my advisers here. All details are available but in this letter I propose to deal with the matter only on the broadest lines.

While the rubber and tin control agreements will remain operative, increases in the quota can only be obtained with the fairly general consent of the signatory parties. If the Dutch and the British are in agreement their views as regards rubber would be decisive; as regards tin that agreement would just secure the majority required, but one opposing delegation could hold up a decision and insist on a meeting. Meetings are now quite impracticable at short notice anyhow; and the securing of consent by written and telegraphic communications would probably involve some, though we hope not material, delay.

Supplies are, we consider, adequate to meet all normal trade demands and all probable war demands at present, provided speculation does not dominate the situation, and future supplies are most fully assured. We went into the question of the position regarding both tin and rubber in the 1914-1918 war most carefully; and the broad conclusion was that the war demand for both commodities was easily

³⁰ Malcolm MacDonald.

³¹ For correspondence concerning tin quotas, see pp. 906 ff.

met without affecting prices. Towards the end of the war the dominating influence on prices was shipping difficulty. At no time in the case either of tin or rubber did inadequacy of production make any difficulty. Conditions are not the same admittedly; but we still think that war, even long continued war, should have but little effect on the trend of the total demand. The real danger is speculation and particularly speculation in the United States of America, or unfounded fears on the part of consumers there leading them to the purchase of large immediate supplies. Sir John Campbell tells me that on the latest information available to him there has been excited buying of tin from America, and he took up with Captain Oliver Lyttelton, the Metal Controller here, the question of a further substantial increase in the tin quota yesterday. He has not yet had Lyttelton's reply, but hopes that it was possible for him (Lyttelton) to discuss the proposals Campbell had made with Mr. Van Der Broek, one of the Dutch representatives who was over here yesterday, but did not come to London.

In this connection, and the point seems to me the most important of all at the moment, I enclose a summary of a telephonic conversation which Mr. Pawson, the Secretary of the International Rubber Regulation Committee, had with Mr. Butterworth yesterday. Campbell entirely agrees with the views expressed in that summary; and he hopes very much that some action will be taken at once in America in the direction suggested by Mr. Pawson as regards both rubber and tin. That to my mind would be the most useful and practically effective step which could be taken at the moment. Meanwhile the buffer stock is selling all the tin which it can be permitted, by the War Control authorities here, to sell at the fixed price of £230 a ton.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Lyttelton whose office is outside London.

As soon as the action which it seems advisable to take in respect of tin can be decided upon, Campbell proposes to attempt to obtain the consent necessary by telegraph from the delegations of the signatory countries. As regards rubber a proposal was made on the 31st of August to increase the quota for the last quarter of 1939 to 70%, to provide the first installment of the rubber required under the Exchange Agreement. All have agreed except the Dutch; despite repeated efforts we have not yet been able to obtain any reply from them. Campbell also proposes to call together such members of the Rubber Committee as may be available to discuss with them what further action if any should be taken in the light of the most recent events.

I should greatly appreciate any action that you may find it possible to take to make the facts known."

"Telephone conversation between Mr. Butterworth and Mr. Pawson, 5:50 p. m., June 9, 1939.

I rang up Mr. Butterworth hearing that he had been trying to get in touch with Sir John Campbell and myself.

I told him the present position in regard to the proposed issue of a communiqué announcing an increase in the rubber quota for the last quarter of 1939 from 60% to 70% and said we were awaiting the reply of the Dutch delegation. He asked whether any action had been taken on the proposal contained in a telegram from Mr. Viles that, in addition to the 10% increase for the purpose of implementing the agree-

ment for exchange of cotton and rubber, a further 5% increase to the general quota should be considered by the Committee. I said that Mr. Viles' telegram was being circulated to all members of the Committee with a covering letter saying that the proposal for holding a meeting of the Committee in the near future to consider the general position was being kept in mind. Mr. Butterworth stressed the fact that there was great uneasiness in America in regard to rubber supplies; he said that present stocks were low and asked if he could be assured that the Committee would be willing to release more rubber in the near future? I said that I had talked to Sir John Campbell that morning and that he had in view the possibility of the Committee releasing more rubber if any speculative movement in America should cause a run on rubber and an increase in demand leading to much higher prices.

Mr. Butterworth asked if I did not think there would be a greatly increased consumption of rubber in war time? I said that past experience did not show this and, in any case, enormous supplies of rubber were available to deal with any increased demand which might arise. It must be remembered that the production of rubber would go on unhindered by war in all producing territories and that adequate rubber supplies were only a question of shipping whereas consumption would suffer definite reduction from the prevention of enemy countries from access to crude rubber supplies, and the diminution of civilian rubber consumption in 'war' countries. The chief danger to rubber, at the moment, was from the speculator who might rush to buy rubber, and create a false demand resulting in a temporary rise in price—present indications in America showed this was a real danger at the present time. If such a situation should arise, I said that I knew it was the view of the Chairman that the Committee would do everything in their power to meet it by raising the quota but I thought that the most effective weapon would be immediate propaganda in America against this 'war' speculative psychology, which was, in our opinion, based on entirely wrong premises and could only lead to great financial losses to any of those engaged in it, and create difficulties that need never arise. Nothing seemed more certain than that all the rubber the world required could and would be supplied at reasonable prices throughout the duration of war however long it might last—the only unknown factor was the shipping position but it was reasonably certain that this could never create difficulties in the supply of rubber to America other than perhaps purely temporary difficulties at one time or another.

Mr. Butterworth asked if he could pass on the gist of my remarks to the Ambassador. I said that I was speaking on my own authority but I felt certain that I was expressing very generally the personal views of the Chairman and I thought he could make any unofficial use of my remarks on that basis that he thought fit."

811.24 Raw Materials/307 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

[Extract]

LONDON, September 8, 1939—4 p. m.

[Received September 8—11 : 16 a. m.]

1529. The following announcements will be released for publication in the English morning papers of September 9.

“The Chairman of the International Rubber Regulation Committee, acting under the specific authority of the Committee, has issued the following communiqué.

In view of a request received from His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom for the release of additional rubber to enable His Majesty's Government to implement the terms of the agreement between them and the United States Government for the exchange of cotton and rubber, Treasury Series No. 31, 1939, the International Rubber Regulation Committee, reviewing a part of the decision announced in their communiqué of the 25th of July have fixed the following revised percentage of the basis quotas for 1939 as the permissible exportable amount for the months of October, November and December 1939 :—70 percent.

Under the scheme of regulation it is open to the Committee to revise their decisions as regards the permissible exportable amount from time to time if for any reason this should in their opinion be desirable.”

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KENNEDY

800.6176/97 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy)

WASHINGTON, September 9, 1939.

884. Your 1528, September 8, 4 p. m. Viles is prepared to issue a statement along the following lines if in your judgment it will meet MacDonal'd's and Campbell's purpose:

“The Rubber Manufacturers' Association has been in touch with the American Government, which in turn it is understood has been in discussion with the British authorities, as regards the prospective supplies of rubber. We now have reliable information that all of the rubber required in consuming countries can and will be supplied at reasonable prices throughout the duration of war. It is pointed out that the production of rubber in all producing territories will go on unhindered by a European war. There is more than enough rubber available in these territories to supply all conceivable demand in war time and there is no indication whatever that the governments of the producing countries or the International Rubber Regulation Com-

mittee will have any interest in preventing, or any desire to prevent this rubber from flowing to consuming markets as required.

As for shipping, there is substantial evidence that adequate shipping is available and that it will continue to be provided regardless of adjustment of routes and lines. The United States Maritime Commission has expressed its willingness and its ability to give aid if necessary.

After a careful canvass of all factors involved, it is clear that there is at present no basis for concern regarding rubber supplies for the United States, unless such concern is created by a speculative movement. It is of course true at the present time, as at any time, that competitive bidding for limited supplies immediately available would create an unwarranted price situation, harmful chiefly to manufacturers and other consumers themselves.

This statement has been submitted to the Department of State in Washington which, while taking no responsibility for the views expressed therein, finds them in accord with the information and advices which it has received from the officials of the British Government most directly concerned.["]

You can inform the British authorities that the rubber manufacturers here are cooperating fully in efforts to prevent unwarranted price speculation. Viles sent out telegrams to the 400 members of the Association on September 6, reassuring them in such terms that they generally kept out of the market.

Viles believes it highly desirable to include in any statement he releases reference to serious consideration by the International Committee of the recommendation of the American consumers that an additional 5 percent be released for the fourth quarter in order to meet estimated consumption requirements. The Department concurs and is of the opinion that even larger releases are desirable (see the Department's no. 758, September 2, 3 p. m.³²). We are not reassured by Pawson's statement of Campbell's view that the Committee would release more rubber "if any speculative movement in America should cause a run on rubber and an increase in demand leading to much higher prices". It seems clear that what is needed now is a substantial increase in releases to prevent a run on rubber; it is unlikely that consumers will be greatly reassured unless sufficient rubber is available to enable them to build up stocks to more reasonable levels.

HULL

³² Not printed.

800.8176/100 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom
(Kennedy)*

WASHINGTON, September 11, 1939.

901. Your 1577, September 11, 1 p. m.⁸⁸ Viles is issuing his statement today. He feels, however, that speculation may still get out of hand unless there is a prompt announcement by the International Committee, or at least by the British Government, that quotas will be increased for the fourth quarter, leaving for a later announcement if necessary the extent of such increase. In addition to the considerations which Viles has already set forth in a communication to Campbell, he is now influenced in reaching this opinion by the fact that Singapore greeted the announcement of 70 percent for the fourth quarter (including 10 percent for the Agreement rubber) as a bullish factor, and by the fact that the Dutch are offering rubber only for long-term contracts and at prices above the market.

You may also wish to transmit to the British Government the information that American manufacturers have learned today that Singapore refuses to make offers on no. 1-X ribbed smoked sheets at any price on the score that all such rubber is earmarked for the British Government. It is assumed that this position is unjustified and that, so far as the Agreement rubber is concerned, the British Government will buy only rubber available after October 1 under the new 10 percent release.

If the Netherland Government is in any way delaying agreement on larger releases for the fourth quarter, please inform The Hague and the Department promptly.

HULL

811.24 Raw Materials/316a : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Minister in the Netherlands (Gordon)

WASHINGTON, September 11, 1939.

83. A statement is being released to the press by the Rubber Manufacturers' Association here passing on to buyers reassurances made by the British Government and by Campbell and Pawson to the effect that entirely adequate supplies of rubber will be released throughout the war period. The British Government is being informed, however, that it will be difficult to discourage a speculative market here unless there is a prompt announcement that additional releases will be made for the fourth quarter, leaving for a later release, if necessary, the

⁸⁸ Not printed; it stated that the Colonial Office entirely approved the statement quoted in Department's telegram No. 884, September 9, *supra*.

extent of such additional releases. The rubber manufacturers here had recommended a 5-percent increase but, in view of present consumption and stock figures, will probably change this to 10 percent within the next day or two. The Department has taken the position that the producing countries should release all of the rubber that can be produced during the next few months so as to make possible some building up of stocks.

For your own information, the Department is informed that the Dutch are offering rubber in the New York market only for long-term contracts and at prices considerably above the market. In view of this fact and of the hesitancy of the Netherlands Government in approving the additional 10-percent release for agreement rubber in the fourth quarter, it is possible that the British are having or will have some difficulty in securing the assent of the Netherlands to a further increase of quotas. Please make inquiries and give London and the Department any available information.

HULL

811.24 Raw Materials/317: Telegram

The Minister in the Netherlands (Gordon) to the Secretary of State

THE HAGUE, September 13, 1939—9 a. m.

[Received September 13—7:45 a. m.]

172. Department's 75, September 6, 8 p. m.; 78, September 8, 2 p. m.;³⁴ and 83, September 11. I have had a long talk with Dr. Hart whose statements—which he specifically requests be treated as confidential—may be summarized as follows. At July 25 meeting of rubber committee it was delegates of British producing interests who were inclined to grumble at the proposal for extra release for purposes of barter agreement. The Dutch delegation took the position that as the agreement was now a fact it must be dealt with as such and they were prepared to agree to an extra quota; as early as September 4 the Dutch delegation decided among themselves in favor of a 10% quota.

Since the outbreak of hostilities the Dutch delegations under the international tea,³⁵ sugar³⁶ and rubber regulation agreements have unanimously decided not only against liquidation of these agreements but also to do everything possible to carry on under the agreements.

³⁴ Neither printed.

³⁵ For texts of the international tea agreements, signed February 9, 1933, November 13, 1936, and August 25, 1938, see *Intergovernmental Commodity Control Agreements*, pp. 47 ff.

³⁶ International sugar agreement, signed May 6, 1937, Department of State Treaty Series No. 990, or 59 Stat. 922. For correspondence regarding the regulation of sugar, see pp. 948 ff.

In the case of rubber, delegation is of the opinion that even if the operation of the agreement should become suspended pursuant to the provisions of article 21 it is desirable to carry on rubber production in the Dutch East Indies under existing restrictive legislation even if releases should go to 150% or more.

As of collateral interest and also bearing on the general point of Hart's assertion that the Dutch do not wish to withdraw from the rubber agreement he says that with respect to sugar he hopes to get to London next week and will suggest to the Chairman of the Sugar Committee that the Dutch under Hart as Vice Chairman shall carry on as the center of communications pending hostilities at least for the time being, the idea being that as long as the Dutch remain neutral it might be easier for them to keep the agreement in operation and to induce a belligerent government not to apply for suspension of its obligations under article 51 of the sugar agreement.

With reference to Department's Number 83, Hart's attitude appears to be as follows: To effect a further 5% release for the fourth quarter would probably necessitate giving an extra 10% release to the Dutch East Indian estates and letting the small native holders catch up early next year as it is now too late to issue further licenses to native small holders their license for the last quarter having just been issued. If the question of an announcement of an additional release for the fourth quarter is put up to the Committee Hart personally would be inclined to favor action thereon and would try to secure agreement thereto in the Netherlands, but he would not be prepared to go above a 5% extra release.

Copy to London.

GORDON

800.6176/107b: Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Bullitt)

WASHINGTON, September 13, 1939—1 p. m.

899. Department's 768, September 6, 3 p. m.⁸⁷ Importers here have been informed that 20,000 tons of rubber due in October from Saigon cannot be shipped because of prohibition of rubber exports from Indo-China. In order to prevent undesirable market reactions, the Department would appreciate prompt information as to the circumstances surrounding such prohibition. Please ascertain also whether arrangements could be made to allow shipment to the United States of rubber already contracted.

HULL

⁸⁷ Not printed.

811.24 Raw Materials/317 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Minister in the Netherlands (Gordon)

WASHINGTON, September 14, 1939.

87. Your 172, September 13, 9 a. m. and Department's no. 83, September 11. You are requested to press strongly on Dr. Hart the following considerations which seem to the Department and to American consumers convincing evidence that rubber releases for commercial uses must be increased by at least 10 percent for the fourth quarter:

Viles, for the Rubber Manufacturers Association, reports that American consumption is running considerably ahead of estimates, quite aside from the new speculative demand for finished goods which is coming into the market. Without including this latter demand, it is estimated that total consumption this year will be 550,000 tons and that more than a 5-percent increase in commercial quotas will be required merely to meet current consumption requirements. The American industry badly needs additional rubber, however, to add to stocks which are now at a level (160,000 tons at the end of August) which gives rise to anxiety.

It is believed that an announcement of a 10-percent increase in the quota for the fourth quota [*quarter*] is badly needed to check speculation. Such an announcement will be helpful even if it proves to be impossible to completely fill such quotas before the end of the year. We are convinced that there will be an active demand to add rubber to stocks over a considerable period of months and that additional rubber produced by the natives in the Netherlands Indies during the first quarter of next year, in lieu of added production during the fourth quarter, will be taken up immediately at that time.

HULL

800.6176/109 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, September 15, 1939—3 p. m.
[Received September 15—9:36 a. m.]

1657. The fourth quarter rubber licenses have been issued. At the Rubber Committee meeting called for the 21st Viles' representations to Campbell will be given every consideration. The Colonial Office points out that the absence of Germany and Poland from the rubber market should mean over a 90,000-ton increase in world stocks. The Colonial Office states that Campbell expects the Dutch to be difficult

about authorizing further increases. However, the Colonial Office hopes, prior to the meeting, to be able to follow the tin procedure and tell estates to produce beyond the authorized quotas.

KENNEDY

811.24 Raw Materials/321 : Telegram

The Minister in the Netherlands (Gordon) to the Secretary of State

THE HAGUE, September 16, 1939—3 p. m.

[Received September 16—12:30 p. m.]

180. Department's 87, September 14. I have just had a long conference with Hart whose statements, which he again requested that they be treated as strictly confidential, may be summarized as follows:

He said that 550,000 tons is a conservative estimate of our consumption and that stocks are at too low a level. While he thinks that rubber prices have shown gratifying steadiness in view of the decline in sterling he admits that they might again shoot up at any time as was the case just at the outbreak of hostilities and that this should be prevented.

He said that in view of our last conversation concerning rubber (see my 172, September 13, 9 a. m.) he has again communicated with Batavia and is prepared, if the other governments party to the restriction agreement are in accord, to give an extra fourth quarter 5% release for native holders and an extra 10% release to the estates, which means a 7½% extra release for the Dutch East Indies.

Batavia does not relish this but understands the emergency necessity therefor.

If the British are really in favor of a 10 percent extra fourth quarter release all around—and Hart thinks that they are—he will be prepared to stretch the above proposal to an additional 5 percent extra release for native holders for first quarter of 1940. In practice this should result in something more than 5% production in the fourth quarter and the remainder of the native holders 10 percent production being available within the first few weeks of 1940 or at any rate well before the expiration of the first quarter. This would enable an announcement of a 10 percent increase in the fourth quarter to be made at the meeting scheduled for September 21, even if the total Dutch East Indian production would not be available until some time in the first quarter of 1940.

Campbell does not expect Netherlands delegation to be able to attend this meeting but Hart says that he has every intention of attending and in order to increase his chances of doing so has requested that the meeting be postponed 2 days.

The foregoing seems to me eminently satisfactory and I trust the Department is of the same opinion.

Copy to London.

GORDON

800.6176/110: Telegram

The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State

PARIS, September 16, 1939—4 p. m.
[Received September 16—3: 16 p. m.]

2008. Department's 899, September 13, 1 p. m. The questions raised in the Department's telegram under reference were immediately discussed with the appropriate French authorities by an Embassy representative. The pertinent French official today reiterates that the export prohibition on rubber shipments from Indochina is obviously due to the military necessity of preserving all available stocks under the existing emergency (see Embassy's telegram 1935, September 13, 1 p. m.⁸⁸). He stated that as the total annual production of rubber in Indochina is only 60,000 to 70,000 tons and which is approximately the normal needs in France it will be understood that precautionary measures are required by the military authorities to assure all available supply for France from Indochina. The French official stated that he is at a loss to understand that 20,000 tons of rubber can be due for delivery to the United States from Indochina for the month of October only as the total annual imports into the United States from Indochina have in recent years merely approximated or been less than the amount cited for delivery for the month of October and it is his belief that this amount may represent approximately the total deliveries called for from September through March or April.

The French official states that naturally every consideration will be given to avoid as far as is possible under the present emergency possible losses to American importers having bona fide contracts but that naturally the French defense needs must have priority under the colonial export prohibition restrictions over all other operations.

The French Government officials following consultations with the Rubber Control Board, the Ministry of War and the Ministry of Colonies, requests that [in view of] the situation outlined above the Department endeavor to ascertain what quantity of rubber from Indochina has been contracted for shipment since this export prohibition was imposed by American importers directly with Indochinese suppliers and not through British intermediaries.

Apparently this question is related to the policy of pool raw material resources by the British and French Control Board stationed in

⁸⁸ Not printed.

London and if these contracts were made through British intermediaries the latter's contracts have already been or may be requisitioned by this board.

The French Government representatives state that if upon investigation it is found that bona fide firm contracts have been made directly by American importers and that the tonnage represented by such contracts is not large consideration might be given to a request from the American Government for a derogation from the export prohibition thereon. The French official gave as his personal opinion that if the French Government found it possible to release any of this rubber the tonnage involved would not exceed a maximum of 4,000 or 5,000 tons.

BULLITT

811.24 Raw Materials/328a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom
(Kennedy)*

WASHINGTON, September 21, 1939.

1036. With respect to the deliberations of the Rubber Regulation Committee, the Department was informed by The Hague a day or two ago that Netherlands officials were prepared to agree to a 10-percent increase in releases if the British were favorable. The Department is now informed that Dr. Hart and his colleagues have been greatly impressed by the British argument that an additional 90,000 tons will be available during the next year due to the withdrawal of the Central Powers from the market, and that rubber prices have not fluctuated greatly to date.

The Hague is being informed that commercial stocks in this country are badly depleted and that there is every reason to believe that all of the rubber that can be released will be taken up immediately by American manufacturers, including any excess arising from lower sales in Central Europe. You may wish to press this point in London also and to seek to avert any further buck-passing between London and The Hague.

Please also stress the point that rubber prices have remained relatively reasonable only because of the strenuous efforts of American manufacturers, who have almost completely remained out of the market. Viles and the manufacturers are convinced that prices will rise inordinately when the manufacturers return to the market for their current requirements, even though they make no attempt to build up stocks, unless in the meantime the International Committee authorizes the additional releases requested.

The concern over a prospective reduction in world consumption may be justified in the long run but it seems clear that for the present

and for several months ahead there is bound to be an unusual demand for supplies, due not only to the desire to build up stocks but also to heavy advance orders for finished goods.

HULL

811.24 Raw Materials/330: Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, September 22, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received September 22—1 p. m.]

1776. An informal discussion took place with Campbell today regarding yesterday's Rubber Committee meeting and the considerations set forth in the Department's 1036, September 21. The Committee decided to authorize a 5 percent release for the fourth quarter provided it received satisfactory assurances as to the interpretation of "a major war emergency" in article 4 of the Agreement. That is to say, that they agreed only to authorize the release if the article was not now operative for the United States. In reply to an inquiry from the Ministry of Supply I gave them textually the assurance as contained in the second paragraph of the Department's 811, September 6.³⁹ The Ministry of Supply fully understands that we now have the right to use the stocks but do not intend to do so and it also understands that it will have the responsibility of dealing with the Rubber Committee. However, should you feel free to clarify our position further and make it more precise it would be of assistance to the Ministry of Supply. The Rubber Committee obviously do not want the United States to have what would in effect be a buffer stock which could be employed with commercial considerations in mind. Campbell stated quite frankly that the Committee got out of his control. He maintains that regardless of what the Dutch may have said at The Hague that without prior consultation their representative at the Committee meeting did not favor any increase but was prepared to go to 5 percent if it was deemed necessary. Campbell stated that he and the representative from India were over-ruled on the 10 percent and that the other members were impressed by the fact that 116,000 tons of rubber per year would be put onto the market by reason of the absence of German, Polish, Czech and Austrian demand. It is common gossip in rubber circles here that American manufacturers have been buying "hand over fist" in London as well as in Middle Eastern markets. If it were possible to supply any statistical information

³⁹ Printed in vol. II, section entitled "Negotiations Between the United States and the United Kingdom . . ." under United Kingdom.

in contradiction of this impression it would greatly reinforce the statement contained in the third from the last sentence of your 1036, September 21.⁴¹

KENNEDY

811.24 Raw Materials/333: Telegram

The Minister in the Netherlands (Gordon) to the Secretary of State

THE HAGUE, September 23, 1939—noon.

[Received September 23—9:48 a. m.]

192. My 187, September 22, 2 p. m.⁴² Minister of Colonies has just informed me that at present juncture he does not see his way to requesting Rubber Committee to decide on a further last quarter release; he is of the opinion that such further release is not justified either by present expectations of world consumption or by present price level.

The Minister adds that he is prepared to reconsider his standpoint at any time, if rubber prices in the United States should show evidence of a tendency to rise unduly; in such contingency the Minister states that he would not hesitate to take up question of further increase with the Committee on his own initiative.

Copy to London.

GORDON

811.24 Raw Materials/366: Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy)

WASHINGTON, October 13, 1939—9 p. m.

1220. Your 2019, October 12.⁴² The Commodity Credit Corporation agrees to meet the necessary freight charges above normal for delivery of agreement rubber through March.

This Government is concerned regarding the inability of the British rubber buyer⁴³ to secure near rubber without affecting the price. In the same way, American manufacturers are scarcely able to secure sufficient rubber to meet current requirements without putting pressure on the market. There is every indication that they would add at least 100,000 tons to stocks if adequate amounts of rubber were available.

⁴¹ *Supra*; see also telegram No. 1089, September 27, to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom, printed in vol. II, section entitled "Negotiations Between the United States and the United Kingdom . . ." under United Kingdom.

⁴² Not printed.

⁴³ John Riddell.

Additional releases for the present quarter seem to be urgently needed. You may wish to raise this issue again with the appropriate British authorities, stressing the experience the British rubber buyer is having and the expectation of this Government that agreement rubber will begin to move promptly, especially in view of the fact that cotton has already begun to move. Furthermore, within your discretion, you may refer to the agreement on the part of the British Government to deliver rubber to the Soviet Union stating that an unfortunate impression will be created here if those deliveries are carried out while deliveries to this Government and purchases by American consumers are impeded by inadequate releases by the International Committee.

HULL

811.24 Raw Materials/370: Telegram

The Minister in the Netherlands (Gordon) to the Secretary of State

THE HAGUE, October 17, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received October 17—3:43 p. m.]

226. European press referring to the President's recent appeal to American importers to refrain from re-exporting raw materials which we need for strategic reserves (Radio Bulletin No. 277 [227])⁴⁴ reports that as a result of this appeal the Rubber Manufacturers' Association last week questioned all rubber dealers and brokers as to the amount of rubber exported to Europe disclosing the fact that in September alone some 10,000 tons of rubber was re-exported most of it supposedly going to Sweden and Russia (London Embassy's 1793, September 23, 3 p. m. to the Department⁴⁵). I presume that such re-export is a new departure.

Anticipating reproaches on this score, probably when we next ask for an increase in rubber releases, it would seem to me that an adequate answer would be to point out that as a result of the President's appeal the Rubber Association has requested its members to refrain from such re-export and that the President's appeal has been reinforced by the joint statement of the Acting Secretary of the Navy and Assistant Secretary of War (Radio Bulletin No. 242).⁴⁶ For use in the contingency above mentioned, however, if the Department has any further observations it wishes advanced or could inform me that since September such re-exports have ceased I should be glad to be so instructed.

GORDON

⁴⁴ The appeal was a statement made at a White House press conference of September 26.

⁴⁵ Not printed.

⁴⁶ For text of joint statement issued October 11, see p. 855.

800.6176/122: Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, October 18, 1939—2 p. m.
[Received October 18—8:20 a. m.]

2075. Department's 1220, October 13, 9 p. m. The rubber situation was discussed at length with Pawson today. In the course of the conversation Pawson asked if the following message from Campbell to Viles could, to save time, be telephoned from Washington. Viles is meeting with the members of his committee this afternoon and Campbell wishes Viles to be able to communicate this information to them:

"Your telegram 13th October. Am informed that exports to Russia will go into immediate consumption. Quantities involved depend on quantity of timber supplied and not determinable at present but at most are likely to be within Russia's normal takings. Length of buying period is likely to be short. It seems to follow that amount of rubber being sent to Russia by British Government probably no greater than 5,000 tons estimated by Committee for last quarter Russia consumption this year and estimate of world consumption, therefore, remains unaltered. This minor addition governmental buying balanced by equivalent reduction normal market buying."

Pawson is of the opinion that it would be impossible to get the Rubber Committee to change the rate of release for the current quarter unless new and extraordinary factors could be represented as having arisen since the last meeting. I am inclined to agree and feel that before embarking on any such step we should realize and measure the antagonism which such an attempt would evoke, certainly from the commercial members of the Committee. In this connection Pawson showed me in confidence the minutes of the last meeting, a provisional copy of which was mailed to Viles about 2 weeks ago. Dr. Hart is quoted as stating:

"If the Committee agreed to 75%, he would like it made clear that the position in which this further increase was given was exceptional, and that it would be very difficult to make any further changes this quarter. Any further change could only be justified by the existence of a most serious emergency. He did not wish to change the ordinary formula as regards revision which was incorporated in all their communiqués; but he wanted to draw attention to the present position, and to avoid the possibility of the Committee being asked to reconsider their present decision because of some sudden temporary jump in price, or because of some similar situation, which did not in itself constitute a really serious emergency."

Accordingly I urged Pawson to make every effort to arrange that the Committee have its next meeting at which the quota for the first quarter will be set as soon as possible. Pawson explained that the

date was contingent upon (a) the collection and dissemination of certain statistical data which would not be available until the end of October and (b) Dr. Hart's plans because he wished to arrange to deal with his tea and other meetings in London at the same time. Pawson agreed to do what he could to ensure that a meeting be held before November 14.

Pawson expressed a personal and confidential opinion that the Committee would, on the basis of information now available, find it difficult to increase the quota beyond 75% for the first quarter and he indicated how important it was that Viles should make, preferably through personal appearance, if not in a long telegram, a complete case before the Committee meets. I feel he should not only give full particulars of probable American consumption but emphasize the fact that due to the over export situation Malaya is not in fact at present producing at a 75% rate and the fact that wintering will occur February/March. It is also important that he should deal with the final sentence of Campbell's telegram contained in my 1832, September 26,⁴⁷ indicating how far the American manufacturers are prepared to go in increasing their stocks to hold. The Committee is greatly impressed by the fact that current production runs considerably beyond current consumption and that at some point it may have to reduce production decidedly. According to Pawson it is prepared to facilitate the gradual building up of American manufacturers' stocks but cannot contemplate other than a gradual process. In this connection Pawson expressed great appreciation of the manner in which Viles had acted to dampen down the market movement in the United States and hoped that American manufacturers would continue to pursue a "reasonable policy". I will deal with the Agreement rubber situation in another telegram at a later date.

KENNEDY

800.6176/128a : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Minister in the Netherlands (Gordon)

WASHINGTON, October 18, 1939—6 p. m.

121. Your 226, October 17, 5 p. m. For your information a number of inquiries with respect to the possible exportation of rubber have come to this Department and other agencies of the Government since the President's statement on September 26, but in all cases the Government agencies have actively discouraged such exports and the Department is informed through the Rubber Manufacturers Association and the Rubber Trade Association that, so far as information is avail-

⁴⁷ Not printed.

able, no sales of rubber for export to European countries have taken place since the President's statement. It seems probable that the only exports of rubber (other than normal reexports or transshipments to nearby countries) that will take place will be the approximately 10,000 tons which was bought in September before the 26th. The great bulk of this rubber was bought for Russian account by the English dealers, Hecht, Levis and Kahn, who have a branch office in New York.

HULL

811.24 Raw Materials/373 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, October 19, 1939—midnight.

[Received October 20—4:32 a. m.]

2099. 1. Referring to my cable of yesterday,⁴⁸ the British rubber buyer states in confidence that he has completed the purchases in this market of 5,000 tons of rubber which is the now anticipated amount to fulfill the Anglo-Soviet timber for rubber-tin arrangement.

2. To date the British rubber buyer has only been able to purchase in Eastern markets about 25 tons of Agreement rubber for shipment before the end of the year. As previously reported he has pursued a cautious policy of staying out of the market whenever it firmed up and he privately expressed the opinion yesterday that if under present circumstances he attempted to obtain the requisite amount of Agreement rubber during the current quarter he would move the price up a couple of pence. As discussed in my No. 1095 of October 3,⁴⁹ this is obviously not in the broader interests of the United States. Accordingly I think we should have in mind the fact that very little Agreement rubber will be shipped from the Middle East before the end of the year.

I gather most of the rubber which would have gone to fulfill the Agreement is now passing into the hands of our manufacturers whose stocks should show an increase before the end of the year and this should act as a sedative to the market.

My own view is that we should not be disturbed by the prolongation of the period during which delivery of the rubber will take place. It was always contemplated that the cotton could be more quickly made available than the rubber because it would be regarded of the latter stock which our Government could acquire by legislative fiat whereas the rubber had to be produced and purchased under world market conditions. In any case the prolongation of the period of delivery

⁴⁸ Telegram No. 2075, October 18, 2 p. m., p. 882.

⁴⁹ Not printed.

of rubber likewise prolongs the period during which we have some leverage over the rubber situation. Insofar as the British rubber buyer can be persuaded to pursue a cautious policy so far shall we have in effect a means of making available if necessary an extra quota to American manufacturers of which the Rubber Committee does not have immediate control. It is not hard to imagine how very difficult the present position would be if this was not now being done.

KENNEDY

811.24 Raw Materials/373 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom
(Kennedy)*

WASHINGTON, October 31, 1939—6 p. m.

1339. Your 2099, October 19, midnight. There is no disposition here to urge that the British rubber buyer press the market and cause a general price rise. On the other hand, this Government must view with concern the long delay in making the agreement rubber available. The situation may become serious here, especially from a political angle, as more and more cotton is delivered while practically no rubber is moving.

There seems to be no question but that the difficulty is caused by inadequate supplies of rubber. This Department has the strongest assurances from the rubber manufacturers that all of the rubber they are securing is going into current consumption, with no increase of commercial stocks. The Department has checked with the American Consulates at Singapore and Batavia and learns that rubber is being produced at the full 75 percent rate and that there would be no appreciable labor difficulties in connection with further immediate quota increases. The evidence seems conclusive that releases at 75 percent are required to meet current consumption and that therefore at least an additional 10 percent is required to supply the agreement rubber on a basis of deliveries within a 6-months period.

Please prepare and present to the British Government a strong statement of this Government's point of view, referring to the British Government's commitment under article 5 of the agreement. The responsibility seems to rest with the British Government to secure action by the International Committee which will release sufficient rubber for the present quarter and for the first quarter of next year to supply the full amount of agreement rubber plus adequate amounts to meet commercial consumption requirements. It is the view of this Government that a quota of 85 percent for the present quarter, retroactive, and for the first quarter of next year will be required. There is also a very strong demand for increased commercial stocks

in this country so that there should be no danger of excess rubber on the market even at a rate of release above 85 percent.

You may use in any way you see fit the information that reports are circulating in the market here that the British will supply the Russian Government with rubber bought for delivery to this Government. In any event, there is bound to be criticism of the British Government, and incidentally of this Government, if rubber is delivered to the Soviet Union without adequate arrangements being made for the prompt delivery to this Government of the amounts of rubber provided in the agreement.

For your information the Commodity Credit Corporation and other agencies of the Government are already embarrassed by inquiries from members of Congress and others as to the quantities of cotton and of rubber already shipped. When it becomes generally known that only cotton is moving in quantity, this Government may be subject to such embarrassing charges as the claim that it has in fact extended credit to the British Government through the cotton-rubber agreement.

For your further information American consumers are concerned as usual at this time of year with the possibility of price reductions which would require them to write off book losses on their existing stocks when they take inventory. They are anxious therefore that a commitment should be secured from the British Government or the British rubber buyer that any additional supplies of rubber released during the present quarter will be purchased promptly for delivery to this Government.

Mr. Viles will inform Campbell tomorrow that the preliminary estimate of October consumption is 53,000 tons.

HULL

811.24 Raw Materials/373 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom
(Kennedy)*

WASHINGTON, November 2, 1939—9 p. m.

1360. Supplementing Department's 1339, October 31, 6 p. m. Viles urges the desirability of a personal presentation of the situation affecting agreement rubber to the International Committee by a representative of the Ministry of Supply. If the Committee is to vote the necessary increase in quota, the Ministry of Supply should furnish it with (1) evidence that rubber is not available for Government purchases under the present quota and (2) information regarding the period over which the total amount of agreement rubber will be purchased if it is available in the market at reasonable prices.

It is believed that the Committee cannot fail to grant a 10 percent increase at least for the present and next quarters if it also takes into consideration the careful estimates that American consumption will continue at 50,000 tons or more per month during that period, and the desire of American manufacturers to purchase for additions to stock any rubber available at reasonable prices in excess of rubber required for current consumption and delivery to this Government.

HULL

811.24 Raw Materials/392 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, November 4, 1939.

[Received November 4—6:18 p. m.]

2281. Your 1339, October 31, 6 p. m. and 1360, November 2, 9 p. m.

(1) In compliance with the instruction in your 1339 I prepared and sent to Malcolm MacDonald the strong statement.

(2) Rubber Committee yesterday deferred action on quota decision and appointed a special committee consisting of Sir John Hay, Eric Miller⁵⁰ and Dr. Hart to confer with Riddell concerning his buying policy, the conference to take place prior to the next meeting of the Committee, fixed for November 10.

This action resulted from a letter from Riddell to Pawson asking about the desires of the Committee in connection with his buying policy, whether it was their desire that he should buy rubber during the appropriate period to the amount specially released for Agreement purposes (approximately 10 percent) regardless of current market conditions or whether he should continue to pursue a cautious buying policy and permit the trade to take that proportion of the available rubber as long as the price continued to be at a reasonable level and then to come in with Agreement rubber purchases when the ordinary trade demand for re-stocking appeared to be satisfied.

Sir John Hay was deputed by the Special Committee to interview Riddell and in this interview Hay urged that it would be desirable (1) for the quota to remain at 75 percent during the fourth and first quarters, and (2) for Riddell to cease his rubber purchase operations so long as the present abnormal demands by manufacturers continue. In this connection, Hay discussed with Riddell the possibility that article 3 of the Agreement might be invoked.

In support of these proposals Hay painted a picture of what he considered would be the probable results on the rubber industry of an

⁵⁰ Member of Malayan delegation on the International Rubber Regulation Committee.

increase in the quota to 85 percent and at the same time of Riddell's continuing purchases in fulfillment of the Agreement. All sections of the rubber industry would be felt suffer by an increase in the quota, the producers by having their labor upset, the rubber market by giving incentive to the speculator to enter it, thus raising prices, and the rubber manufacturers because they would be compelled to pay high prices for their stocks.

An 85 percent release Riddell says would mean an annual supply of about 1,300,000 tons, which is considerably in excess of the present or estimated future consumption requirements; and he adds that, when the present demand for re-stocking purposes was satisfied, the price would inevitably suffer a severe fall which would suit neither the producers nor the manufacturers.

Hay asserted to Riddell that the present available labor resources are being fully used at the current quota figure and raising the quota to 85 percent would necessitate the immigration of labor.

Riddell yesterday suggested the desirability of a conference between Hay, Miller, Hart, himself and the Ambassador or other representative of the Embassy in order to discuss Hay's proposals prior to the meeting on November 10th. This morning he interviewed Campbell who, Riddell says, agrees that such a conference would serve a useful purpose in that it would offer an opportunity to bring out all the factors affecting Riddell's buying policy; but Campbell added that no representative of the Colonial Office should be present and that of course no question of invoking article 3 could be discussed in any formal sense.

We would appreciate your views regarding the response to be made to this suggestion. Since Hart will be in London only until the 10th, such a conference would have to take place before then.

(3) Incidentally the following are the shipment periods for the total purchases made by the British Government's rubber buyer up to and including October 27, which he has supplied in confidence:

October/November sellers option, 455 tons; October/December, 100 tons, November, 15 tons; November/December sellers option 1935 tons, December, 15 tons; 1940, January, 1985 tons, January/February sellers option 315 tons; January/March 75 tons, February 1995 tons; February/March sellers option 2455 tons, March, 1970 tons; total 11,315 tons.

In American ships to Boston, 2900 tons; in American ships to New Orleans, 8415 tons.

To date the Consulate General at Singapore has reported that 40 tons of rubber have been shipped.

811.24 Raw Materials/392 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom
(Kennedy)*

WASHINGTON, November 7, 1939—11 p. m.

1386. Your 2281, November 3 [4], and your 2301, November 7.⁵¹ It is the Department's opinion that the Embassy should refrain from any negotiation or "conference" with the International Committee's subcommittee although the Embassy should endeavor of course to secure and report promptly all pertinent information.

It is believed that this Government's strongest position is to insist that dealings with the International Committee are the responsibility of the British Government. The Embassy should press the following points with the appropriate British Government officials:

1. Both this Government and American manufacturers are in urgent need now of reserve stocks of rubber; any further delay in the accumulation of such stocks would be viewed with grave concern in the light of the present world situation. Furthermore, it will be difficult much longer to avoid press reports here that the British Government is backing out of the cotton-rubber agreement.

2. Apparently the only difficulty in securing the desired stocks during the next few months is the unwillingness of the International Committee to increase its rate of release at this time. The concern of producers over changes in the rate of production does not impress in view of necessary fluctuations in the rate of production in the past and the important reasons for increased production now even though a decrease might be anticipated after a period of months. An attempt to prevent increases here in the rate of production of steel, aeroplanes, and other commodities in demand for export no doubt would be considered unreasonable by the British.

3. It would seem unfortunate to concentrate buying of the bulk of the Agreement rubber in the first quarter of 1940, and in any event any great increase in production in that quarter would appear to be impossible because of the wintering season; hence, the urgent suggestion that the Committee increase the rate for the present quarter even if the distribution of the additional coupons to the Dutch natives should be delayed until the next quarter.

4. If the suggestion for quota increases in the present quarter and the next quarter is not acceptable, how does the British Government propose to make the Agreement rubber available without further delay?

HULL

⁵¹ Letter not printed.

811.24 Raw Materials/416c: Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Minister in the Netherlands (Gordon)

WASHINGTON, November 8, 1939—4 p. m.

137. This Government has urged the British Government to request an increase in the rate of release by the International Rubber Committee from 75 percent to 85 percent for the present quarter and the first quarter of 1940 primarily for the purpose of making the necessary rubber available for delivery to this Government under the cotton-rubber agreement. The British rubber buyer has so far been able to purchase only a few thousand tons for delivery to this Government during the next 5 months. Since American consumers to date have been able to secure only sufficient rubber to meet current consumption requirements there is also a demand for considerable additions to commercial stocks in this country which would take up any small excess amounts of rubber which might result from an 85 percent quota.

It has seemed important that an increase be made retroactively for the present quarter since it may prove difficult to increase production considerably during the next quarter due to wintering in the producing areas. The Department is informed that this suggestion has been blocked largely because of the opposition of the Netherlands delegation on the International Committee, on the score that it is administratively impossible or impractical to arrange for another distribution of coupons to native producers in the Netherlands Indies again this quarter. The Department recognizes that these difficulties are very real but refusal of the International Committee to increase quotas now almost certainly will prevent delivery to this Government, for a period of several months, of the reserve stock of rubber which it urgently requires without delay.

The International Committee meets again to consider the question of further releases, either November 10 or 13. Please place before the appropriate officials of the Netherlands Government a clear explanation of this Government's interest in the matter. You may express the hope that the Netherlands delegation will not maintain a position which will have the effect of withholding from this Government and from American consumers stocks of rubber which are urgently needed as minimum reserves here. It may be that the administrative difficulties in the Netherlands Indies can be overcome, perhaps through postponement of increased production by natives until the first and second quarters of next year; in any event, it is believed that the Netherlands Government will not wish to have necessary delay in these native areas used as an excuse to prevent

immediate increases in production in other areas. The position apparently taken by Dr. Hart in London gives an unfortunate impression of inflexibility in the international scheme.

HULL

811.24 Raw Materials/399 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, November 8, 1939—8 p. m.

[Received 8:17 p. m.]

2310. Department's 1386, November 7, 11 p. m.

1. No Embassy representative attended subcommittee meeting. Riddell will furnish tomorrow a statement concerning the proceedings relative to his buying policy.

2. Committee meeting postponed until 15th.

3. The Embassy has today again expressed to the Colonial Office the Department's view that the quota should be increased to 85% for the fourth and first quarters and its concern at the delay in accumulating stocks.

The Colonial Office replied that it would make an appropriate inquiry of the Committee.

Should the Committee fail to grant an increase the inquiry based upon numbered paragraph 4 will be repeated to the Colonial Office.

4. It appeared today from a brief conversation with Hay that he is resolutely opposed to a further fourth quarter quota increase; but he did not take such a pronounced stand respecting the first quarter, although arguing that the 75% rate would be adequate to cover current consumption and agreement on rubber. (He points out that accumulation of stocks is not mentioned in article 5.) Since Pawson's statement transmitted with the Embassy's 2301, November 7,⁵² also singled out the fourth quarter proposal for attack saying nothing of the first quarter, it may not be far off the mark to assume the Committee may grant some increase when it hears from the Colonial Office.

5. The difficulty in this whole situation is that we have looked with favor on the purchasing of this rubber for the Government contract in rather a slow fashion so that the price to the American manufacturer would not be entirely disturbed. The British feel that the quota increase will only result in marking down the price of rubber when instinctively everybody in England who has anything to do with the question of business, trade or money is attempting to get

⁵² Not printed.

as high a price for their exports as they can. My own belief is that Viles should be here. There is no point in trying to carry on these negotiations by long distance and through third parties.

While I note that you do not want the Embassy to sit in with the Committee, nevertheless all we have been doing for the last 2 months is negotiating with them. We may not want to call this sitting in at formal meetings but the result is the same. It strikes me that Viles should get on a plane and come over here.

My own belief is that whether or not he gets here for the next meeting which has been postponed to the 15th nevertheless he should be here until the question is settled once and for all.

KENNEDY

811.24 Raw Materials/408: Telegram

The Minister in the Netherlands (Gordon) to the Secretary of State

THE HAGUE, November 10, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received November 10—2: 18 p. m.]

263. Department's 137, November 8, 4 p. m. Foreign Office has informed me that it is telephoning Hart in London supporting our point of view.

Repeated to London.

GORDON

811.24 Raw Materials/411: Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, November 10, 1939—7 p. m.

[Received November 10—3: 57 p. m.]

2329. Embassy's 2315, November 9, 4 p. m.⁵³ Following from the Ministry of Supply:

"You were inquiring of Mr. Riddell with reference to his position in regard to purchase of rubber under the Cotton-Rubber Exchange Agreement. I have gone into the position with him and on present estimates based on a 75% release it appears that the surplus of supplies for absorption during the 6 months October to March would amount to 85,000 tons. This is equal to the quantity required by the Agreement but leaves no margin. American manufacturers have, however, been buying heavily in recent weeks and their demands exceed their current trade requirements; in other words they are endeavoring to build up their stocks. In these circumstances there

⁵³ Not printed.

can, I think, be no doubt that the persistent buying which would be necessary in order to implement the Agreement for shipment in full by the 31st March would cause prices to rise to undesirable levels. This increase could be avoided, however, if it could be agreed to allow Mr. Riddell to extend the shipment period up to say the end of September next. He would then continue to buy as rapidly as possible consistent with his avoiding undue pressure on the market. By adopting this procedure the supplies coming forward for near shipment could be made available for the ordinary trade buyers at prices which would not be subject to the pronounced influence of any enforced Government buying.

There remains the question of an increase in the quota release. I have had an informal talk with two or three members of the Regulation Committee. I gather that it is felt strongly that an increase in the current quarter is impracticable owing more particularly to administrative difficulties in the Dutch East Indies while any share increase the first quarter of 1940 would cause a corresponding heavy decrease in subsequent quarters. This would entail various disadvantages, for example dislocation in labor conditions on the estates. Further it is desirable in the interests of both producers and consumers that a reasonably steady price should be maintained and to achieve this drastic and frequent changes in the quota releases.

I feel that there is much weight in the above considerations. What I have in mind therefore is the possibility on the one hand of an extension of the shipment period for barter rubber and on the other hand (to quote the Agreement) of our "using our best endeavors" to see that the quota release should be raised to 80% during the coming quarter. This should enable stocks in the United States to be built up while avoiding any undesirable increase in price and at the same time it would lessen the danger of marked changes in demands and in the quota releases next year with their attendant disadvantages."

KENNEDY

811.24 Raw Materials/411 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom
(Kennedy)*

WASHINGTON, November 13, 1939.

1426. Your 2310, November 8, 8 p. m., 2315, November 9, 4 p. m.,⁵⁴ and 2329, November 10, 7 p. m. This entire matter is considered of great importance here and has also been discussed fully with the Secretary of Agriculture and the War and Navy Departments. Please present the following considerations in as effective manner as possible.

1. It is appreciated that it would be desirable from the producers' point of view if the purchases of agreement rubber could be used as a back log, entering the market only when the commercial demand may fall off, so that at least a 75 percent production level could be maintained throughout the year. It cannot be surprising to the British Government, however, that there is a sense of urgency here

⁵⁴ Telegram No. 2315 not printed.

regarding stocks of rubber since there exists in the country now only a 3-months supply and since there is considerable uncertainty regarding developments in the international situation. This Government is considerably alarmed therefore by the position taken by Sir John Hay against any increase in quotas above 75 percent.

2. This Government wishes to cooperate with the Ministry of Supply in meeting its purchasing problems so far as possible and will be willing therefore to extend the period in which the agreement rubber will be made available for a further 3 months, namely to the end of June, *provided* that adequate amounts of rubber will be released by the International Committee during that period to permit of a reasonable replenishment of commercial stocks in this country and the acquisition of the Government stock without causing price disturbances. This Government is convinced that at least a 10-percent increase in quotas over a 6-months period is required for this purpose but the International Committee could spread such increases in any way it considers wise; it might provide an 80 percent quota for the present quarter, accumulative for producers unable to take advantage of it, then 85 percent for the first quarter of next year and 80 percent for the second, or it may prefer 85 percent for the first and second quarters with no increase in the present quarter.

3. This Government's primary concern relates of course to the level of all stocks of rubber in this country available in case of an emergency. It was intended to hold the agreement rubber in addition to "normal" commercial stocks equivalent to 5- or 6-months consumption requirements and the manner in which these stocks were to be held was clearly and stringently defined in compliance with the suggestion of the Ministry of Supply. Total stocks in this country are now considerably lower than when the agreement was signed and this Government could not lightly regard any scheme that would prevent the delivery of the agreement rubber on a reasonably prompt schedule and the gradual replenishment of commercial stocks here merely on the plea that some estate producers would be inconvenienced by an increase in the rate of production now.

4. The International Committee should have adequate assurance that prices will be supported when quotas are increased in as much as the British rubber buyer will be able to adjust his purchases in line with these releases and American manufacturers will be fully prepared to add to their stocks here as additional rubber is available.

5. The word received from Holland that the Dutch representative on the Committee has been instructed to support the American request should be helpful in securing full Committee action along the lines suggested above. In the given circumstances if British producing interests oppose merely on the ground of a possible future necessity of again contracting production somewhat, public comment here is certain to be unfavorable. The country has expected prompt execution of the cotton-rubber agreement and agencies of this Government can defend delay in the schedule of delivering rubber only if it is limited to a reasonable time and is accompanied by a sincere effort of the Committee and producers to make available all of the rubber required. In representing the above considerations to the appropriate British authorities you will of course feel free to draw their attention to the considerations set forth in the Department's 1339 of October 31, 6 p. m.

Viles appreciated your suggestion that he fly to London but is unable to do so immediately due to the present situation within the Rubber Manufacturers' Association. He is cabling final October statistics and a full presentation of his position regarding increased quotas.

HULL

811.24 Raw Materials/408 : Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Minister in the Netherlands (Gordon)

WASHINGTON, November 14, 1939—5 p. m.

141. Your 263, November 10, 5 p. m. It should be helpful if you can furnish London promptly, and then the Department, with any details regarding the position taken by the Netherlands Government on this matter since a special effort is being made to secure the necessary action by the International Committee at its meeting tomorrow. The Department has suggested the possibility of a 3-months extension of the period of delivery of Agreement rubber, that is to the end of June, *provided* the International Committee authorizes additional releases aggregating 10 percent for a 6-months period, adjusting such additional releases, as between the present quarter and the first two quarters of next year, in whatever manner it considers preferable.

WELLES

811.24 Raw Materials/423 : Telegram

The Minister in the Netherlands (Gordon) to the Secretary of State

THE HAGUE, November 16, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received November 16—4:40 p. m.]

279. Department's 141, November 14, 5 p. m. The Legation telephoned London Embassy yesterday at 2:30 p. m. while Rubber Committee meeting was in progress and gave it the following information. Foreign Office had on November 10 telephoned Hart who stated that British members of International Rubber Committee had 2 weeks previously discussed increasing next year's fiscal quota to 80%. While no decision was reached the British were disinclined to do so and Hart agreed with their point of view. After considering the information in my note of November 9 to the Foreign Office Hart said he would try to obtain an increase in first quarter quota to 80% but could not agree to any increase in fourth quarter quota beyond 75%.

At noon yesterday the competent official of the Foreign Office informed the Legation that the Dutch Minister of Colonies was opposed to any further increase in releases for fear of disturbing

market conditions through speculative operations (*sic*). This official further stated that he thought the Department's suggestion of an extension of the period of delivery of Agreement rubber offered a new line of approach to an increase of rubber releases, that he would immediately telephone it to Hart in London with the suggestion that it be given every possible consideration though he did not feel optimistic about results as far as the present Committee meeting was concerned. This was the end of the communication to Mr. Filed [?] in London.

At 6:00 p. m. the Foreign Office official informed the Legation he had telephoned its views to the Dutch Legation in London. Hart was not there but Dutch Minister would communicate them to him that evening. This morning this official informed the Legation he had later last night talked over the telephone with the Dutch Minister in London who said meeting was finished and decision to increase first quarter quota to 80% was reached before Hart received the message.

The foregoing is but another instance of the fact that it would be preferable from every angle and more conducive to desired results if urgent instructions concerning tin and rubber were not repeatedly received here on the very day when periodic meetings of the respective control committees are being held in London, or at the best the day before. While I think the Department will admit that we do get the most rapid action possible under such conditions nevertheless it is obvious that the Dutch authorities naturally dislike constantly being urged, with respect to matters which necessarily require consultation among various officials, to take practically instantaneous action—let alone the fact that the Legation has to expend a large amount of the good-will which it has built up in pressing Dutch officials to get on the long distance telephone immediately.

GORDON

811.24 Raw Materials/428 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, [undated].

[Received November 20—1:45 p. m.]

2407. Our 2382, November 16.⁵⁵ The following just received from MacDonald:

“As you will have seen, the I. R. R. C., at the meeting held on the 15th of November, fixed the quota for the first quarter of 1940 at 80 percent of the 1940 standard tonnages.

⁵⁵ Not printed.

"I am informed that, before coming to this decision, the Committee carefully considered all the relevant factors. They had before them the latest figures of U. S. A. consumption and stocks; the shipments afloat to America; estimates of world consumption; information as to United Kingdom stocks; the views of the Ministry of Supply as to the rubber position; a communication from Mr. Riddell, the Ministry of Supply buyer; and the views of the Rubber Manufacturers Association of America, communicated by Mr. Viles.

"The situation created by the acceleration of shipments during the current quarter was also considered in detail by the Committee.

"Campbell tells me that, at this as at the previous meetings, the opinion of the other members of the Committee was practically unanimous. They were reluctant to raise the quota as high as 80 percent; but they eventually agreed to that, with the object of meeting your Government's views, as far as they considered it possible, having regard to the extension of the buying period for the 'barter' rubber.

"The Committee's decision was also influenced by the fact that Mr. Viles' estimate of United States consumption, for the last quarter of 1939, and for the year 1940, rather to their surprise, remained unchanged. His estimate of consumption for 1940 still remains below the estimate of consumption for the current year. The Committee were, as formerly, alive to the consideration that it was their duty not to sanction, if they could avoid it, undue and ephemeral increases of production, which would result in sharp quota decreases later on. The interests of the producing countries cannot be ignored, in this connection; and the Committee appreciated the disturbances to labour, and to the smooth working of the industry itself, which large increases in the quota, followed by rapid and material decreases, would inevitably involve. An average quota over the whole of 1940 of 70 percent will provide sufficient rubber to cover the barter purchases and the estimated absorption, and add over 100,000 tons to world stocks, after allowing a margin for possible losses at sea. Therefore, the elements of a difficult future labour situation already exist which will be accentuated if the absorption estimate is not realized.

"Campbell adds that every aspect of this most difficult matter has now been exhaustively discussed by the Committee at the latest or at the previous meetings; the point of view of the United States Government has been clearly explained, and the Committee's final decision—80 percent for the first quarter of 1940—was arrived at, with varying degrees of reluctance; some members were in favour of remaining at 75 percent; none were prepared to go beyond 80 percent, apart from Campbell himself.

"After discussion with my advisers here, I feel that the best plan is to see how the position works out with the shipments of the 'barter' rubber spread out over the first half of next year.

"Indeed I should like to return to the suggestion that it should be spread over the first three quarters.

"I agree that the Government buyer can come in to support the market when commercial demand weakens. But the time when such support will be needed in order to avoid a sudden falling away in demand, and to secure a more gradual transition to lower production levels, is likely to be as much in the third as in the second quarter. If barter buying is to be completed by the 30th of June, then in present

conditions a sudden drop after that date seems almost certain. It was for this reason that an extension of barter shipments to 30th September was suggested, and I still hope that your Government may find it possible to agree to some part of the shipments being made during the third quarter if this should be found desirable.

"The Committee do, I am sure, fully recognize the very great responsibilities placed upon them; they are naturally jealous of the independence of their position as plenipotentiaries under an international agreement; they are knowledgeable and experienced; and they command, in a large measure, the confidence of the industry, and of the governments of the producing territories."

KENNEDY

800.6176/139a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom
(Kennedy)*

WASHINGTON, November 24, 1939.

1496. This Government is far from reassured by the action of the International Rubber Regulation Committee and by MacDonald's letter (your 2407, November 20) in spite of its convincing tone. It is regretted that the Department must ask you therefore to press the discussion further, emphasizing the following points:

1. Rubber released during the past 3 months has merely been sufficient to meet current consumption requirements, and this has been achieved only by virtue of overexports from the production areas, and particularly the advance release of fourth quarter coupons in Malaya.

2. The "afloat" figures are not particularly significant because of the present extended shipping routes, and the heavy shipments to the United States reported for the past month or two will only serve to replace commercial stocks used up during September and October because of reduced buying to halt speculation and the lengthened shipping schedules.

3. There is now the prospect that even less rubber will be forthcoming during the rest of this year due to the near exhaustion of fourth quarter coupons in Malaya and the possibility that the International Committee may require the reduction of overexports before the end of the year; the market is already sensing this possibility and speculators are bound to run the price up unless something reassuring is done immediately.

4. The Department is informed that stocks in Malaya now exceed 70,000 tons with 30,000 tons available for immediate shipment; furthermore, it is reported that there is sufficient tonnage available to transport all the rubber that can be shipped before the end of the year and that ships will sail with only part cargoes if no action is taken to release more rubber.

5. The least that could be done to meet the immediate situation would be a release of first quarter coupons in Malaya and a decision by the International Committee to allow overexports to be carried into next year.

6. Such action would be only a palliative, however, and at best would merely serve to postpone the day when this country may be seriously affected by a shortage of rubber.

7. If the suggested action is taken now, making available much of the first quarter 80 percent for shipment before the end of the year, then quotas above 80 percent for the first and second quarters of next year should be entirely practicable and out of fairness to producers and consumers alike such action should be taken without further delay.

8. The possible inability of some small estates to produce at 85 percent or above can hardly be advanced seriously as a compelling reason for rejecting the proposal to increase quotas in as much as coupons are exchangeable and since in any event production quotas are not mandatory.

Please repeat the above to the American Legation at The Hague, which is being requested to discuss the matter with the Netherlands Government.⁵⁶

HULL

811.24 Raw Materials/448 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, November 28, 1939—1 p. m.

[Received November 28—10:38 a. m.]

2470. Replying to your 1496 November 24; and referring to my 2310, November 8, 8 p. m. I wish again to call your attention to the following situation: With all due respect to the handling of the rubber-tin situation, I believe that it is absolutely a psychological mistake to proceed the way we are proceeding. This method of practically once a week making suggestions to the Government as to what changes should take place in the production quotas fixed by a "plenipotentiary committee" is to me very bad trading policy.

I went to see MacDonald myself yesterday and he assured me that they were anxious to be of any assistance that they could but that he must point out to me that our methods were the most childish methods he had ever seen in an attempt to influence a change in Government policy and I wish to add that I think this statement is a typical British understatement. I think them worse than childish. If you want to get this thing done and done right, send Viles over here. You are not going to get the results you think you are going to get or that you are entitled to get by this constant exchange of telegrams. It is getting us no place and it is not going to get us any place. Whatever concessions we have got to date have not been the result of this type of negotiation.

⁵⁶ Department's telegram No. 147, November 24, 6 p. m., not printed.

I am again writing MacDonald today, as I told him I would, with reference to your last cable, but I urge you to get Viles on a plane and get him over here if you ever expect to get this matter satisfactorily adjusted.

KENNEDY

811.24 Raw Materials/449 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, November 28, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received 7 p. m.]

2472. My 2470, November 28, 1 p. m. and your 1496 and 1497 November 24.⁵⁷ The points given in your 1496, November 24 and in Singapore's November 25, 1 p. m. to the Department⁵⁸ were sent to MacDonald by letter today and informally discussed at the Colonial Office last night, Sir John Campbell being present. His object in attending was not only to hear and comment on the Embassy's message, but also to second MacDonald's effort of yesterday to impress upon us that the British feel strongly that the method we have used in presenting requests concerning rubber and tin is ill-chosen. This he did very frankly, attributing much of the difficulty recently experienced to our failure to take into account the Committee's pleni-potentiary status and the fact that the regulation scheme is an international treaty which is as much entitled to punctilious observation as the Exchange Agreement⁵⁹—which, incidentally, they still resent.

What the Committee want is Viles' attendance—Campbell and Figg both made kind references to the manner in which he represented rubber consumers when in London on former occasions; or, if that is not possible, then attendance by anyone else who can argue with them as the authorized spokesman of the American consumers. They want to deal on a man to man basis and not to have "four point seven diplomatic guns fired at their heads two days before meetings, telling them what quota to fix".

The conversation yesterday brought the following comments from Campbell on the points you raise.

(1) The figures given in your numbered paragraph 4 are "quite wrong", and corresponding ones printed in the *Times* yesterday appear to be correct. They are as follows: "Malayan production of rubber last month was 56,725 tons. Stocks held by estates of 100 acres or over amounted on October 31 to 35,121 tons and by dealers 8,670 tons".

⁵⁷ For telegram No. 1497, November 24, see p. 944.

⁵⁸ Latter not printed.

⁵⁹ I. e., Anglo-American rubber-cotton agreement.

(2) He wants detailed information on lengthened shipping schedules and routes. This is being obtained from Spencer.⁶⁰

(3) "All the arguments that you present were considered at the meeting of November 15, and the answer to them is that the Committee decided against them.

[“]Figg and Miller and I favored using first quarter coupons in the fourth quarter and permitting over-export but the Dutch did not agree. It was no use my casting my Malayan vote, as that would have created a deadlock.

“The Dutch were of the opinion that a 75% quota was sufficient, but conceded 80% as a gesture. I was the only one in favor of 85%. I argued that, issuing first quarter coupons in the fourth quarter, there would be no occasion actually to step up production to 85%, and that the necessities of the situation could be taken care of and the quota later reduced without trouble. This was not acceptable.”

(4) He then went on to outline three of the main reasons for the quota decision taken on the 15th, the first being resentment at our methods, mentioned above.

The other two were put as follows:

(a) “Secondly, there was the experience of last year, when American stocks were low and they could have gotten all the rubber they wanted, below cost of production. We pointed this out to Viles time and time again, urging him to buy; but he argued that they looked not only at physical stocks but also at forward contracts placed, and that so regarded they had stocks as high as they had ever carried. This argument we could not accept, and accordingly it does not go down well with the Committee now to be asked to help the Americans to restock, recalling as they do last year’s experience.

(b) “In the third place, it has struck the Committee as astonishing that, while all this argument has been going on since the war, America has actually been sending rubber abroad, a thing they have never done before. We have had information as to two shipments, of 10,000 and 7,500 tons respectively, and rumors of a third to Vladivostok. We realize that you have no export control, but that does not detract from the bad impression created.”

(5) It was made plain that Campbell does not expect the Committee to reverse its decision of the 15th, but that it may not meet at all to discuss our requests. In the face of this attitude, there appears to be nothing further that we can do, unless something happens as the result of the letter to MacDonald. If Viles were to come over, however, the Committee would doubtless be glad to meet him to discuss all the facts.

⁶⁰ W. A. Spencer, District Representative of the United States Maritime Commission at London.

(6) Campbell made the following remark on Viles' rubber consumption estimates:

"Viles' estimate for 1940 consumption is, I am convinced, an underestimate. The Americans have for a long time consistently overestimated in periods of falling consumption, and underestimated in periods of rising consumption. The Committee's estimates have always been closer than the Americans', and it is so in this case."

(7) At the end of the conversation, we referred briefly to tin, saying that we would have something on that subject soon. He made two comments on this.

"One thing that has been puzzling us and we have not been able to get any light on it from Todd,⁶¹ is exactly what has happened to make Americans want twice as much tin as formerly, before the war. We know that the demand is present, but have no idea where the increase can be going in terms of ultimate consumers. Business of the consuming industries has not, as far as we can see, increased to anything like that extent. Any details on this would be helpful."

Later he said:

"You need not worry much about tin, as Todd will probably get about what he wants, but not for the reasons that he gives; if we do not give a high quota the price might go through the roof, and after all that is what the quota is for."

A letter from Lyttelton to Campbell dated November 21st of which we have just received a copy, estimates American monthly consumption at 9,500 tons during the next 3 or 4 months, including 500 in Government purchases, and recommends 100% for the first quarter, and a retroactive increase to 120% for the fourth quarter, in order to bring into circulation some of the Nigerian stocks of 1300 tons.

In view of the above, we feel that it is probably unnecessary to take further action, and we are of the opinion that it would not serve any useful purpose to say anything about the second quarter at this time.

The above quotations are of course only approximate records of a long and rapid conversation, but they convey the sense of what was said.

KENNEDY

811.24 Raw Materials/448: Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom
(Kennedy)*

WASHINGTON, November 28, 1939—6 p. m.

1520. Your 2470, November 28. Looking back over the past few years, I must say that we have the sense that our relationships with

⁶¹ William B. Todd, representative of the Steel Export Association of America, resident in London.

the Rubber Committee have not been badly managed. The characterization upon which you and MacDonald appear to have agreed seems to us distinctly unjustified. The price of rubber has been comparatively stable compared with most raw materials, and certainly compared with the price record in the past. This has been achieved by constant and continuous discussion between ourselves, the American consuming interests, the producing interests, and the Governments of the producing countries. In this work the Embassy has played an invaluable part, which is greatly appreciated here, as well as the fact that the constant demands made by the Department on the Embassy for attention to this matter in recent weeks have added to its burdens at a difficult period.

We recognize the fact that the matter could possibly be adjusted somewhat more easily, and with somewhat less strain if Viles were in London. But in the first place, it is not easy for Viles to get to London under present conditions of transport, especially in winter-time (for one thing he is no longer a young man or a completely well man) and Butterworth agrees that a trip taken under the same conditions as Butterworth's trip here might be actually dangerous to him. Then again, according to Viles' own account, there are important reasons why this is a difficult time for him to leave the affairs of his Association. In view of all the above, and the most excellent and obliging service he has given in the past, the Department has not felt that it could press him unduly.

We have turned so continuously to the British Government because of the indubitable fact that the whole function of the international rubber regulation scheme rests on the formal action of governments and in past correspondence the British Government has accepted that sense of ultimate responsibility for the fair operation of the scheme. In therefore continuing our presentations to the British Government, we are only acting in accordance with this basic fact and responsibility and have avoided definitely accepting the idea that the regulation committee is a "sovereign body", as its members sometimes maintain. If it is a "plenipotentiary committee", then at least the plenipotentiaries may be considered to be under instructions from their governments.

This is the framework of performance and ideas within which we have operated. Certainly we do not wish to make psychological mistakes in so operating and we shall gladly be guided by you to the utmost possible extent as to how to handle the continuation of immediate negotiations. It has seemed absolutely necessary to continue such negotiations because the action of the International Committee during the past few months has consistently fallen short of the recommendations of the American consumers and this Government and

because the dangerous situation, from our point of view, has developed very rapidly.

At this time, when these international committees do not meet in session frequently and do not have the advantage of the presence of consumer representatives, it has seemed particularly important to secure the interested attention of someone within the British Government to the current problems. Apparently Lyttelton is now meeting this need in the case of tin, and it would be most helpful if you could secure the same sort of well-informed effort in the case of rubber.

HULL

811.24 Raw Materials/450 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, November 29, 1939—noon.
[Received November 29—10:20 a. m.]

2479. Replying to your 1520, November 28, 6 p. m. I assume that your relations with the Rubber Committee have not been badly managed in the past but I am assuming what we want to get is present results and not bouquets for past performance. I am not familiar with the method of negotiating the past arrangement but I have confidence in Butterworth and I assume we got all we could. It would not make any difference how good we thought we were if we were not getting the results now we should be getting.

The problem definitely is that the method of conducting these negotiations is completely wrong. You cannot fire a pea-shooter every day in the week and expect to get the results that a 16-pounder will get if you fired once in a while. If the Embassy, which of course will always cooperate with American business interests and has in this case, feels definitely that the method of procedure is wrong, you either ought to take the matter out of the Embassy's hands or follow its suggestions. What I am trying to get for you is the best results. The present procedure is definitely not the way to get them.

I am indeed sorry that Mr. Viles cannot make the trip. The indication, when this matter was mentioned before, was that he could not leave at the moment; I assumed that there was a particular reason for it at that time and that he would be able to come at another time. With all due respect to Mr. Viles, it seems to me that the interests of the rubber industry are more important than an individual's and if Viles cannot come, let somebody else come. The thing that is wrong is that the Embassy is now merely a clearing house for statements from you on one hand and MacDonald and the Committee on the other and we do not find ourselves able to make any individual arguments because we cannot answer the arguments with any degree of assurance.

I grant you that your telegrams and instructions to us seem most plausible but so do MacDonald's when he answers them. I have not any hesitancy in taking on a trading proposition and I have not any desire to pass the buck on these transactions but I expect you want me to tell you how I think you can get the best results and the mere fact that Viles cannot get here because he is an old man is to me certainly no reason why the United States Government should not urge the rubber interests to send someone who is familiar with entire proposition and our trade.

Tell Butterworth I am very cheerful about the report of his trip. I am just starting on the same one this morning.

KENNEDY

811.24 Raw Materials/449: Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Chargé in the United Kingdom
(Johnson)*

WASHINGTON, December 4, 1939—2 p. m.

1545. Your 2472, November 28, 5 p. m., numbered paragraph (4) (b). You may inform Campbell or other interested officials that this Government's export statistics show that total shipments of rubber to European countries (including Soviet Russia) for September, October, and the greater part of November were less than 6,500 tons. Approximately 5,000 tons of this amount was destined for Soviet Russia, and it is understood from the trade that it went in two shipments across the Pacific to Vladivostok. The trade also has information that the purchases for the Amtorg Corporation totaled 10,000 tons but that no arrangements have been made for shipment of the remaining 5,000 tons.

The trade also reported that all of the Amtorg purchases and a considerable proportion of all other European purchases were made through the New York branch of Hecht, Levis, and Kahn, a British concern. Viles brought this fact to the attention of Sir John Campbell, and the information also came to the attention of the British Embassy at Washington, resulting in a termination of such business by this company.

From the first, most if not all of the American rubber trading companies in New York opposed the activities of Hecht, Levis, and Kahn and themselves refused to do export business. The Department has been informed by the Rubber Manufacturers Association and the Rubber Trade Association that no new export orders have been taken since the Government's statements on the subject late in September and early in October and that the few shipments made since that time were merely on contracts previously drawn.

HULL

III. NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE INTERNATIONAL TIN REGULATION COMMITTEE, THROUGH THE BRITISH AND NETHERLANDS GOVERNMENTS, FOR ADEQUATE RELEASES OF TIN⁶²

800.6354/111

*The Secretary of State to the Chargé in the United Kingdom
(Johnson)*

No. 485

WASHINGTON, February 9, 1939.

SIR: The Department's instruction no. 397 of December 5, 1938⁶³ enclosed a draft statement of comments of this Government regarding the memorandum of July 19, 1938 on Stocks and Prices,⁶⁴ prepared by the Statistical Office of the International Tin Research and Development Council. Consideration of this draft was delayed until it could be examined by Mr. William B. Todd, the American consumers' representative on the Advisory Panel of the International Tin Committee. Mr. Todd is now in this country and has studied the draft. He is in agreement with the text presented below, which also embodies substantially the suggestions made by Mr. Butterworth⁶⁵ in a letter⁶⁶ to Mr. Veatch of the Office of the Adviser on International Economic Affairs.

Unless the Embassy wishes to suggest further changes, the following text should be incorporated in a note to the British Government.

"From the initiation of the present International Tin Agreement,⁶⁶ my Government has been greatly concerned regarding the restrictive control of stocks and prices placed in the hands of the International Committee, although it took cognizance of the fact that the Governments parties to the Agreement accepted responsibility for its operation, and it was hopeful that the interests of consumers would be given full protection.

"My Government has been forced to the conclusion, however, that the administration of the Agreement has been unduly dominated by producing interests and, from the standpoint of consumers, has been more arbitrarily administered than in the case of any of the other international control agreements. The particular form given to the arrangements for a buffer stock of tin and the method in which this stock is to be controlled have not been reassuring and have not served to modify the general conclusions set forth above.

"My Government is of the opinion that the best interests of producers as well as of consumers could be served by a considerable modification in the operation of the tin restriction scheme. It is believed

⁶² For previous correspondence regarding the regulation of tin production and export, see *Foreign Relations*, 1938, vol. I, pp. 940 ff.

⁶³ Not printed.

⁶⁴ Not printed. See note from the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, August 4, 1938, and footnote, *Foreign Relations*, 1938, vol. I, p. 943.

⁶⁵ Second Secretary of Embassy at London.

⁶⁶ Signed January 5, 1937, British Cmd. 5879, *Papers Relating to the International Tin Control Scheme*.

that the Governments parties to the International Agreement might well give fresh attention to certain phases of its administration, especially in view of the effects upon the consumption of tin resulting from the increased experimentation with and introduction of substitutes in various uses, and of the danger inherent in any action bringing stocks to low levels at a time when world conditions are as uncertain as they are today. It is believed, therefore, that it would be helpful, both to the British Government and to this Government, if an early occasion could be afforded for a discussion of this entire subject. Officers of the Embassy will be prepared to engage in such discussions in advance of the next meeting of the International Tin Committee on March 15, 1939, if such an arrangement is convenient to the British Government.

"I am instructed to express the appreciation of my Government to the British Government, and in turn to the International Tin Committee, for making available a memorandum of the International Tin Research and Development Council with respect to certain observations of this Government contained in a note presented to the British Foreign Office on June 17, 1938.

"The memorandum of the Research Council presents information which is interesting and in many ways useful in reaching an understanding of the tin situation and the operations of the International Tin Agreement. My Government believes that it would be of some value to the British Government, even in advance of the oral discussions suggested above, if brief reference and comment be made with respect to certain statements and contentions in the memorandum of the Research Council, namely,

- "1. That statistics for the year 1926, or for the period 1925-8, form a fair and reasonable basis for comparison or for determining the objectives of the governmental control scheme with respect both to prices and to stocks.

"That period has been widely recognized as a 'boom' period in tin and it would seem as reasonable to regard it as equally abnormal on one side as the later 'depression' period was on the other. From the point of view of consumers, stocks during that period were far from adequate, and prices reached an excessive level.

- "2. That large stocks 'exert a great influence upon the stability of the tin price' and that therefore stocks should be reduced to a low level in the interest of stability of price.

"It may be readily agreed that stocks affect the *level* of price and that extensive fluctuations in stocks tend to create or to accompany fluctuations in the price of tin. It would appear to be difficult, however, to maintain the contention that large stocks in themselves create instability in prices. At least it would seem to be just as logical, and perhaps more convincing, to support the contention that consistently low stocks, narrowing the margin for trading, would encourage speculation and uncertainty with respect to price, especially if traders or operators of private pools should yield to the temptation to seek control of the market.

- "3. That consumers need harbor no fear that stocks will be reduced to too low a level as the result of low quotas during 1938, especially in view of the accumulation of the buffer stock.

"The memorandum of the Research Council presents a convincing résumé of the demonstrated failure of the tin control scheme, operating without a buffer stock, to meet adequately unexpected changes in consumers' requirements. The memorandum, however, does not clarify the relation between the buffer stock now being built up and uncontrolled stocks available to the market. The experience of 1936-7 is fresh in the mind of consumers since the scheme as it was then operated (relying only on so-called 'normal' stocks and the quota system) was unable to cope adequately with the rapid increases in demand that developed during that year. It seems obvious that if the buffer stock is to form an insurance against a repetition of that experience, it must be held over and above the usual stocks available to the market and must be of sufficient size to meet unexpected demand over a period of several months while the required additional supplies from producing countries are made available by the more slowly working machinery of the scheme. Furthermore, it would appear to be obvious that the reserves of the buffer stock should be held in the principal consuming markets if they are to be made promptly available in the event of sudden increases in requirements.

- "4. That the price of tin should be stabilized in the vicinity of £220 per ton in order to bring out all of the tin required.

"It may well be argued that a particular price is required to bring out a given amount of tin over a given period of time, although changing circumstances within the tin industry and within the economic system as a whole might lead to a considerable modification of such a price over different periods of time.

"It is quite another proposition, however, to maintain that a relatively rigid price is required month in and month out, year in and year out in order to bring out all of the tin that is required. The economic system itself does not operate in such a way as to lead to stability in the requirements of tin or other materials, and as a result the demand in one period may be a mere fraction of that developed in other periods. The view that the price which would bring out the small quantity of tin, or any other material, required in a depressed period would be the same as the price needed to bring out a much larger quantity in a more prosperous period, is open to serious question.

"The statistical data presented by the Council with reference to this point indicates that in the past prices have risen whenever, due to unusual demands, or difficulties in producing areas, higher returns were necessary in order to bring out the amount of tin required. No action on the part of the international control scheme would seem to be required, therefore, to provide a price sufficiently high to bring out tin in times of unusual demand. It seems apparent that the proposed action of the Committee with respect to price is directed mainly toward maintaining prices at a comparatively high level in periods when, because of decreased economic activity or other developments,

tin requirements are relatively low. It is unconvincing, however, to maintain that such action is necessary to bring out the small amounts of tin required at such times, when the general price level is depressed.

“Apparently the position is taken in the memorandum of the Research Council that a price in the neighborhood of \$220 per ton is required to meet legitimate costs of production and returns on capital. If this point is pressed with respect to short-run periods, then the logic of the argument would lead to the contention that even higher prices should be received in time of depression than in prosperous times due to the fact that greater returns per unit of production would be required to meet full capital charges and overhead cost.

“There is no intention of challenging the desirability of securing greater order and stability in the tin industry but a program of seeking this objective by maintenance of prices at a relatively rigid and high level certainly is open to question. In this connection, however, it is considered unlikely that governments will lend support to the argument so often advanced by producers, and referred to in the Research Council’s memorandum, to the effect that prices for tin are relatively unimportant because tin forms such a small proportion of most finished products in which it is employed. If it be argued that for this reason consumers have little interest in the level of tin prices, then the same logic would appear to indicate that they should also have small interest in fluctuations of tin prices. As a matter of fact, of course, both the level of price and the movement of price, in the case of tin as in the case of other raw materials, are of definite importance to manufacturers requiring these materials.

- “5. That the desired price level is fully justified by the facts regarding the cost of production of tin presented in the memorandum.

“As the memorandum indicates, there is inadequate information regarding the costs of production of tin. Furthermore, the available information may include such a liberal estimate of certain phases of costs and of capital charges that it would be wholly unsuitable for determining a level of price which consumers might recognize as fair and reasonable.

“There appears also to be the tendency to maintain that the costs of marginal producers, those who for one reason or another may be considered the least efficient in the industry, should be regarded as the proper basis for determining prices. The most telling argument advanced in support of this thesis is usually the contention that prices must be held at a sufficiently high level to keep all mines open, even in time of relatively low production, so that all of the tin required would be forthcoming in periods of greater demand. In this regard it is understood that the actual experience of the industry under the working of the present regulation scheme has been the concentration of production in the relatively best favored mines in each area during periods of restricted demand, partly no doubt as a result of dealing in production quotas within those areas.

- “6. That the international regulation scheme should be so operated as to achieve for tin a more or less stable price level similar to that which already has existed for years past for nickel.

"International programs for the regulation of the production and marketing of essential materials have been viewed with suspicion because of the fear that their objectives might include the kind of unchecked monopolistic controls of supplies and prices achieved by private action in a limited number of raw material industries where concentration of control made such action possible. The favorable view taken in the Research Council's memorandum regarding the price practices followed in such highly 'integrated' industries as nickel and aluminum is in no sense reassuring. Unchecked private monopoly does not serve public interest. The responsibility of governments for virtual monopolies created by their action should afford more nearly adequate safeguards of the interests of consumers and of the public generally, but certain aspects of the international tin control scheme and the general record of its administration to date give rise to doubts as to the extent to which government responsibility has been accepted and exercised in this case."

It is suggested that this note be presented, either to the Secretary for Foreign Affairs or to a high official of the Foreign Office, and that arrangements for a conference with officials of the Foreign Office be discussed in a preliminary way at that time.

It is understood that Mr. Todd expects to be in London again by March 1; if there is any change in his schedule the Embassy will be informed. A special committee representing the principal tin users in this country has been established to cooperate with him, and he expects to have factual information regarding stocks and consumption requirements in this country which has hitherto been unavailable. It should be helpful if members of the Embassy staff could confer with Mr. Todd in advance of the proposed conference with the British officials. It would be desirable, however, to set a date for the conference as early in March as possible, so that there would be ample time for a readjustment of the British position before the March 15 meeting of the International Committee.⁶⁸

Additional material and suggestions will be forwarded later as a basis for the conference with British officials.

The American Legation at The Hague is being informed ⁶⁹ that you will furnish it a copy of the final text of the note you are to present to the British Government, sufficiently in advance of the presentation to make it possible for the Legation to present a similar note, with appropriate changes, to the Netherlands Government at the same time.

It is not intended that oral discussions be held in The Hague until after the outcome of the discussions in London is known. You are requested to inform the American Legation at The Hague directly regarding the results of your discussions.

Very truly yours,

For the Secretary of State:
FRANCIS B. SAYRE

⁶⁸ On February 28 the Department was informed that the meeting had been postponed to March 22.

⁶⁹ Instruction to the Minister in the Netherlands not printed.

800.6354/112: Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, February 20, 1939—7 p. m.
[Received February 20—3:39 p. m.]

254. I venture to suggest for your consideration a substitution for the last sentence of the proposed tin note contained in the Department's instruction 485, February 9, 1939. In spite of the truth of the assertion in the Department's draft the resultant reaction of the British officials concerned with the tin control scheme would probably be such as to impair the utility of the oral conversations to be undertaken. The point can, however, be made orally. The proposed substitution is as follows:

"In the case of tin the presence of governmental responsibility in the creation and administration of the international control scheme implies that consumers interests would be more adequately safeguarded than in the case of an unchecked private monopoly. However, the declared price policy being pursued by the Committee does not in the opinion of the United States Government give due regard to these interests."

In this general connection I venture to point out that the statements contained in the second and third paragraphs of the Department's draft will by no means pass unnoticed. Therefore, it is assumed that the material which was to be forwarded to the Embassy as a basis for the conference with the appropriate British officials will be specific in regard to the particular phases of the Tin Committee's administration which should undergo modification.

KENNEDY

800.6354/112: Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy)

WASHINGTON, February 24, 1939—2 p. m.

143. Your 254, February 20, 7 p. m. Your proposed substitution is approved except that it is suggested your second sentence be modified to read: "However, certain phases of the scheme and of its administration do not in the opinion of the United States Government give due regard to these interests".

Todd will arrive in London before the end of the month⁷⁰ and will be prepared to discuss the points which can be pressed in the proposed

⁷⁰ Todd sailed from New York February 25. At his request delivery of the note was postponed until after he arrived in London and conferred with the Embassy.

conference with British officials. Instructions from this Department will also be forthcoming including reference to a number of specific aspects in which the international agreement and the buffer stock scheme, and their administration, should undergo modification.

HULL

800.6354/113a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom
(Kennedy)*

WASHINGTON, March 4, 1939—1 p. m.

163. An instruction, with reference to the proposed oral discussions regarding tin, was dispatched by open mail March 2.¹ The following is a summary of the points covered :

A. Available supplies of tin.

1. Stocks immediately available to the market should not be allowed to fall below 25,000 to 30,000 tons plus (underline plus) a buffer stock of 15,000 tons or more.

2. In addition to such market stocks, reserve stocks of tin or tin ore should be held in producing countries capable of supplying unusual demand for 2 or 3 months while production at the mines is stepped up.

3. Consideration should be given to a modification of the quota system so that in time of rapidly increasing demand larger rates of release would be provided without delay for those producers able to expand production rapidly.

B. Prices.

1. Full data regarding costs of production should be provided through the International Committee.

2. Available data indicates that £200 per ton is an adequate maximum price in times of active demand. A price of £150 per ton should bring out adequate supplies of tin in periods of slack demand, with a reasonable return to the producers, and the buffer pool should not enter the market for purchases at a price above £170.

C. Consumer representation.

1. The representation of the principal consuming countries on the existing Advisory Panel should be strengthened.

The following points should be added to the mail instruction of March 2 :

Following A. 1. For the buffer stock to serve the purpose of a reserve supply immediately available to the market, it is essential that it should be held near the principal consuming markets. It seems logical, therefore, that at least one half of this supply should be stored in the United States.

A. 4. Even these provisions for meeting all probable requirements without delay would prove inadequate in the event that shipping

¹ Instruction No. 535, not printed.

services should be interrupted. In view of the unsettled international situation, the suggestions under 1. above should be pressed strongly, but in addition the United States must give consideration to the position which it would face, with only a few weeks' supply of tin on hand, in the event that supplies from abroad should be cut off or restricted.

HULL

800.6354/114 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, March 6, 1939—7 p. m.

[Received March 6—3 : 47 p. m.]

299. The tin situation was discussed with Todd yesterday. The note will be presented tomorrow; a copy has been sent to The Hague.

Todd is convinced and rightly so that if the Committee could be persuaded in due course to change its price policy it would not set a tin price which would be unprofitable to the highest cost producing area, Bolivia. The figure which was given Todd and which also Campbell ⁷² gave the Embassy (next to last paragraph No. 329, April 21, 6 p. m., 1938 ⁷³) is £189 per ton without interest charges. In view of the fact that under B-1 of the Department's 163, March 4, 1 p. m., data are asked for regarding costs of production it seems inadvisable to emphasize the specific figures given in B-2 unless Campbell's figure of £189 per ton can be called into question. Todd concurs.

KENNEDY

800.6354/116 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, March 9, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received March 9—1 : 40 p. m.]

315. The Department's instruction No. 535 of March 2nd ⁷⁴ has arrived. The Foreign Office proposes to arrange for the tin discussion to take place next week.

The opportunity presented itself both at the Foreign Office and in the course of an informal talk with Leith-Ross ⁷⁵ to ensure that the tin note and the purport of the discussion would be considered by the

⁷² Sir John Campbell, Chairman of the International Tin Regulation Committee.

⁷³ Not printed.

⁷⁴ For summary, see telegram No. 163, March 4, 1 p. m., to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom, p. 912.

⁷⁵ Economic Adviser to the British Government.

British Government as such and not merely passed on to the Tin Committee or the British members thereof for review and rebuttal.

In the meantime Leith-Ross mentioned in connection with America's need for supplies of tin in case of emergency that it would be helpful if in the discussion some definite or even tentative proposal could be made for extra market supplies of tin if that is what the United States Government really desires.

KENNEDY

800.6354/116 : Telegram

*The Acting Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the
United Kingdom (Kennedy)*

WASHINGTON, March 15, 1939—9 p. m.

188. Your 299, March 6, 7 p. m. and 315, March 9, 5 p. m. The Department considers it important to place more emphasis on adequate stocks than on prices. There is no reason, however, to avoid the question of price merely because of the reference to 189 pounds per ton as the Bolivian cost of production. This figure apparently comes from the 1937 report of Patino Mines and Enterprises. Information available here indicates that this figure included a loss on required sales of sterling exchange to the Bolivian Government totaling nearly 500,000 pounds or approximately 57 pounds per ton, more than 30 percent of the reported cost. A further 19 percent of the reported cost was represented by a sterling reserve for depletion and depreciation. All other costs and charges, including mining, transportation, smelting, overhead and all regular taxes to the Bolivian Government apparently came to less than £100 per ton.

For your information, with regard to the interest of Leith-Ross in this Government's requirements of extra market supplies of tin, Congress has as yet taken no action authorizing Government purchases of reserve stocks⁷⁶ and the prospects of large appropriations for this purpose are not bright.

WELLES

800.6354/118

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Second Secretary of Embassy
in the United Kingdom (Butterworth)⁷⁷*

A meeting was held on March 14th under the chairmanship of Sir Frederick Leith-Ross, Economic Adviser to the British Government. There were also present Sir John Campbell, chairman of the Inter-

⁷⁶ The Strategic Materials Act was approved June 7, 1939; 53 Stat. 811.

⁷⁷ Transmitted to the Department by the Chargé in the United Kingdom in his despatch No. 2282, March 17; received March 24.

national Tin Committee, Messrs. G. L. M. Clauson and J. A. Calder of the Colonial Office, and Mr. Philip Broad of the Foreign Office. The discussion, which was friendly in tone, lasted almost two hours and it followed the general outline laid down in the Department's instruction No. 535 of March 2, 1939, as supplemented by the last two paragraphs of the Department's 163, March 4, 1 p. m.

A. Available supplies of tin.

The British representatives present expressed the view that the stock requirements as suggested by the United States would prove abnormally large and would prevent the International Tin Committee from carrying out its avowed policy under the buffer stock scheme. Sir John Campbell in particular cited the fact that such a level of stocks would constitute a larger amount than existed even in 1932, when the average *per mensem* stocks were 58,427 tons and the average *per mensem* price £136 per ton. He added that during one month in 1932 stocks rose between 61,000 and 62,000 tons and the price went as low as £102 per ton. He went on to point out that if, in his capacity as a British representative on the Tin Committee, he laid before the International Tin Committee such a proposition, it would immediately be rejected because the members present would be well aware of the fact that, if stocks were allowed to accumulate to such an extent, they would overhang the market and force down prices to an undesirable level. He added that the only possible hope of getting the Committee to consider such a stock policy would be if the U. S. Government could formulate "a reasoned statistical case", not merely set forth arbitrary, unsubstantiated figures. I countered by saying that if the American suggestions as to stock requirements were regarded as unreasonable, a fact which I was not prepared to admit, what did he consider was reasonable? And after some difficulty the information was forthcoming that a figure between 12% and 17% of current annual consumption (i. e. six weeks' to two months' supply) was regarded as an appropriate level for *visible* stocks. However, this was qualified by the statement that the surrounding circumstances always had to be taken into consideration as well. Clauson and Calder, as well as Campbell, emphasized the impossibility of getting tin producers or tin smelters to hold large stocks at their own expense, and they estimated that less than a month's supply was usually in their ownership; tin producers sold spot to the smelters, and the smelters sold forward to consumers.

When the question of the level of stocks in the United States in relation to the unsettled international situation was raised, Sir Frederick Leith-Ross, as well as Sir John Campbell and Clauson, pointed to the British example of appropriating some £13,000,000 for the pur-

pose of purchasing and storing key commodities, and implied that the U. S. Government, if it wished to protect itself for such an eventuality, might take similar action as regards tin. (See the last paragraph of Embassy's 315 of March 9, 5 p. m.) In this connection, Campbell added that if a war stock of tin should be built up in the United States as the result of a particular arrangement, a condition of any such arrangement would necessarily be that the stocks would not be used as ordinary commercial stocks.

In this general connection, Campbell mentioned that about two years ago Mr. Hildt of Brown Bros., Baltimore, had come to England to see him on what was represented as a semi-official mission, in order to make specific inquiries as to what arrangements could be effected to build up a war stock of tin in the United States. Campbell stated that he had talked to Mr. Hildt at length about the matter but had since heard nothing from him.

As regards the distribution of the buffer stock of tin, Campbell stated that when he managed the last tin pool, as a matter of commercial convenience he habitually kept about half of the supply in the United States. He went on to say that under the existing arrangement the manager of the present buffer stock pool had a free hand in such matters; that even he, as chairman, did not feel he could approach him to make inquiries regarding matters which fell within the province of the manager of the pool.* But an occasion had recently presented itself, he said, when the manager sought advice of him and he had then advocated the practice of keeping about half of the stocks of the pool in the United States. This particularly applied to Straits tin for which the United States was the largest market, though some of it, due to cheaper storage facilities, was kept in Malaya. I expressed satisfaction that Campbell should also be convinced of the reasonableness of the procedure advocated, and said I hoped that a means would be found to assure the United States that the manager of the present tin pool would likewise be governed by this view.

As regards the ability of the International Tin Committee to increase without delay the rates of releases for those areas able rapidly to expand production whenever an upswing in consumer demand required a rapid expansion of production, assurances were given that the Committee was in a position to act as it did in 1936-37 by raising the standard quotas to such an extent as would compensate for any deficiencies in certain of the producing areas.

B. Prices.

In reply to the request that the British Government take steps to the end that more adequate information should be available as regards

* This legalistic attitude is due to the reaction of other member Governments, particularly Holland, to the chairman of the Committee and the manager of the buffer stock both being British. [Footnote in the original.]

costs, Campbell expatiated at length on the "impracticability" of obtaining adequate information regarding costs. (See Embassy's 329, April 21, 1938, 6 p. m.)⁷⁸ He cited the variation in capital structure, the fact that tin was a wasting asset, and regional difficulties. He indicated that the Tin Committee had considered an inquiry to ascertain an average of costs of production and had abandoned the project as impractical. He emphasized that in Malaya there were about 1,000 producing units, one-third of which were Chinese from whom it was impossible to get production figures. Furthermore, the tin producing units in Malaya employed different methods, such as dredges, sluices, lode-mining, etc.; their costs of production varied greatly, and there was no agreement as to the amount of capital required per ton of tin won. The variation on one computation was from £400 to £1,200 per ton. Furthermore, in Bolivia the only data available were in the annual reports of the Patino mines, and the last figure for cost of production was £185 per ton. Campbell said that he saw no prospect of getting any other particulars of costs from Bolivia. It was most unlikely that cost of production figures could be obtained from the Belgian Congo, Siam, and Indo-China. Campbell also maintained that the Dutch would probably be unwilling to divulge their costs; in any case, the Dutch mines were in a special category because they were to all intents and purposes worked on a unified system under a scientific mining policy whereby in times of low production the high-grade ore was used and in times of high production the low-grade ore was used; and the profits of the tin mining industry were used to balance the budget in the Netherlands East Indies. Campbell went on to point out that the only other method of computing price lay in the index number basis, and that the Tin Committee had used an American index number. He said that he had personally made computations with other index numbers, and that these also came to about £200 per ton. He went on to discuss the past price movements of tin in relation to those of other commodities. At this time, and at several other points in the discussion, I stated that price movements of commodities, either unregulated or regulated by private monopolies, did not constitute a criteria for commodities such as tin which were controlled through Government action; that when Governments voluntarily put their machinery of enforcement at the disposal of a committee set up under Government auspices, they of necessity assumed an obligation to protect the consumer and to prevent abuses, however difficult it might be to accomplish those objectives.

Campbell then asked what the United States proposed to do if these suggestions for a cost inquiry were put by the Committee to the member Governments and the member Governments turned them

⁷⁸ Not printed.

down. I said that that was a hypothetical question of a negative character which I was not instructed to answer, but what I was instructed to do was to urge consideration by the British Government of a positive course of action to the end that more convincing evidence of costs be obtained. Campbell said that he was sincerely convinced that a cost inquiry was impractical, and he felt sure that if this question were referred to the mining experts of the American Government they would agree with his conclusion.

Calder then asked why the American Government only addressed its notes to the British and Dutch Governments and not to the Bolivian Government as well, and he went on to say that he assumed that the United States would not advocate a tin price which was not profitable to Bolivia. He stated that Bolivia was the highest cost producing area, and implied that any arrangement which would satisfy the Bolivian producers should give an ample margin to the other tin producers. I said I took it that if the United States ascertained a figure which would be satisfactory to Bolivia, then the British Government would consider such a figure acceptable. At this point Campbell became somewhat perturbed at the drift of the conversation and interposed to enumerate some of the difficulties which faced the Committee in its relations with Bolivia. He said that tin constituted "85 percent. of the economic activity of Bolivia"; that the Bolivian Government was a military dictatorship and therefore unstable; that the rate of taxation and the exchange value of the boliviano were important considerations which might vary at any time and would, of course, affect other producers. He concluded by tacitly admitting that if a true cost of production figure could be ascertained which would be profitable and acceptable to Bolivia, it would provide an ample margin for the other producers and he definitely stated that "it would provide an ample margin of profit for Malaya and Nigeria." He added, however, that the currency position in Bolivia and the fact that tin ore was practically the only Bolivian export would make it necessary for the British Government to make safeguarding reservations as to its ability to accept any cost of production figure that might result from a Bolivian inquiry.

As regards the figures given in the Department's instruction, Campbell and the other British representatives merely expressed the contrary view that £150 per ton would not bring out the requirements of the market "with a reasonable return to producers during periods of slack demand", and reiterated that £200 to £230 per ton seemed, when the buffer stock scheme was formulated, the most equitable price range.

C. Consumer representation.

As regards consumer representation, Campbell gave assurances that although the Agreement merely permitted the tin consumer represent-

atives "to tender advice to the Committee regarding world stocks and consumption", in fact they participated freely in the meetings of the Committee on an equal footing with the other members, and no legalistic interpretation would be placed upon their functions.

Incidentally, Campbell referred to the published report of the American Iron and Steel Federation indicating that American tin-plate makers' stocks increased 55 percent. last year, which he said he could not believe but which certainly ran counter to the American Government's theory that stocks were low. I had already discussed this matter with Mr. Todd, so I merely said that I was glad he did not take the report seriously. Campbell then went on to comment on reports received from an American "broker" (copies of which, together with Campbell's reply, I already had in my possession through the courtesy of Mr. Todd), and this gave an opportunity to call into question the desirability of communications of this type passing back and forth despite the presence in London of an accredited American consumer representative. After the meeting I was able to have a private word with Clauson, and I expressed the hope that note had been taken of this matter; that I had not wished to give offense to Campbell by implying that he had taken any improper action, but that I did feel that in Todd the Committee had an able and straightforward representative; that efforts were being made in the United States to the end that the American Iron and Steel Federation would be in a position to supply the Committee, through Todd, with information which would be of real value in reaching quota decisions; that if the chairman of the Tin Committee carried on direct correspondence with an American broker and attached such importance to this broker's opinions as to circulate his material to the Committee, it would impair Todd's position and would lead to future difficulties. Clauson made a somewhat half-hearted attempt to defend his Chief's actions by emphasizing that the chairman could not prevent people writing to him and that the Committee should have all the information from all sources at its disposal, but in the end he admitted that he had felt "uncomfortable" about the matter.

As regards the precedent of the existing International Sugar Agreement,⁷⁹ Clauson, who acts as the consumer representative for the British Colonies, pointed out (a) that India was the third consumer representative in the case of sugar and that Soviet Russia (which in 1937 took about 25,000 tons of tin) would probably have to be the third consumer representative for tin; (b) that if more than three consumer representatives were to be authorized, several other countries would have to be included, which would make the Committee unman-

⁷⁹ Signed May 6, 1937; 59 Stat. 922, or Department of State Treaty Series No. 990.

ageable; (c) that as regards the numerical voting division between sugar consumers and producers, under the Sugar Agreement there was no power to regulate the quotas until the expiration of two years and thereafter only by unanimous consent, whereas tin quotas had to be reconsidered at each meeting.

In concluding the meeting, Sir Frederick Leith-Ross asked whether the discussions which had taken place had met the request of the American Government's note. He added that the British Government could, of course, formulate a reply, but that he doubted very much whether such a note would advance matters. I expressed the hope that in any case the British Government would give fuller consideration to the points raised. Leith-Ross promised that this would be done, and said if at any time the United States wished a further discussion, he would be glad to arrange it; that the British Government was anxious to clear up misunderstandings but that it did hope that the tin scheme would be given a fair trial.

Conclusions.

Taking into account the British methods of procedure and past experience in connection with both tin and rubber, it would seem that no decided changes will be made in the avowed policy of the International Tin Committee as a result of any representations the United States Government has made or will make. Such changes could only be brought about if the United States Government were in a position to take retaliatory action and prepared to do so. However, failing this, certain procedural methods should produce useful results.

The formation of the tin buffer stock modified the international tin control scheme. Its price aims were definitely formulated and publicly defined. The maintenance of the price of tin within the range of £200-£230 per ton, therefore, became the over-riding consideration. The question of the level of stocks is, of course, inextricably joined to the price range mechanism and it is evident that the British members of the Tin Committee will only advocate the maintenance of a level of stocks which will facilitate the carrying out of the buffer stock price policy. However, if the American consumer representative can obtain effective cooperation from the members of the American Iron and Steel Institute and thus secure significant data on American stocks and future requirements, he can do much to ensure that the Committee takes a liberal view of the stock position in regulating production quotas. By this means he can also do much to ensure that the buffer stock pool is operated with a view to keeping the price of tin nearer the lower rather than the higher level of the £200-£230 range.

As a result of the discussion recounted above, it seems reasonable to assume that a substantial percentage of the buffer stock will be kept

in the United States. The buffer stock pool, however, may well prove inadequate to cope with a rapid and sudden consumption upturn. The presence of the buffer stock pool under the existing arrangement may gradually induce consumers to hold smaller stocks than they formerly did, provided they are convinced of the ability of the Tin Committee to supply the market within the £200-£230 price range. For example, with tin at say £220 per ton, a consumer may prefer to save storage, insurance and interest charges and take the risk of paying a slightly higher price at a later date. Should such a practice begin to grow, the buffer stock might have to be enlarged, if it is to be in a position to meet all demands.

The discussion regarding Bolivia may offer a means by which the Governments party to the International Tin Agreement can be persuaded to modify the Committee's policy. If the United States could collect and formulate detailed information on Bolivian production and reach agreement with the Bolivian Government on a tin price and the maintenance of the external value of the boliviano, the British Government, and presumably the other member Governments, should find it difficult to avoid modifying the present policy of the Tin Committee. Incidentally, Mr. C. W. Wright of the Bureau of Mines, who until recently was assigned to London while making surveys of the European mineral situation, stated when he left that he was proceeding shortly to South America. It, therefore, may be practicable to assign him the task of making a survey of the tin situation in Bolivia.

As regards American tin stocks in the event of an emergency, it is evident that this problem cannot be successfully dealt with as part of the commercial stock position. Just as the British Government has made purchases of certain key commodities for storage for war purposes, so in the case of tin such a procedure offers the most practicable solution for the United States. Incidentally, it has been confidentially ascertained that tin is not one of the commodities that the British Government is now storing, because it considers that it will be able to obtain tin more readily than certain other commodities in the event of war.

LONDON, March 17, 1939.

800.6354/121 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, May 1, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received May 1—3: 10 p. m.]

586. The Embassy suggested to Todd that he call upon the Minister at The Hague after the recent meeting of the International Tin Reg-

ulation Committee in that city. Todd has now returned to London and states that he did so and gave the Minister an account of the Committee's deliberations including the statements by the manager of the buffer stock pool (*a*) that it now held 13,000 tons and (*b*) that he intended to begin selling as soon as the price reached the level of £226-£227. After the meeting, Mills⁸⁰ told Todd in reply to the latter's criticism of the high price level at which the stocks operations would begin, that he hoped in due course to work the price down.

Todd assumes that the Iron and Steel Federation will continue to pass on to the Department copies of his telegraphic and written reports. He has suggested that American buyers switch their purchases from Straits tin, which normally sells at a premium of about £7, to standard tin until the price moves down. From a tactical point of view this suggestion has merit in view of the fact that Malaya is the highest grade and cheapest cost producer and that there was an important section of Malayan tin interests which were even opposed to the formation of the buffer stock pool. Since the United States is the largest consumer of Straits tin Malaya would make its voice heard on the buffer stock policy.

Incidentally at Campbell's request all the discussion on the buffer stock was omitted from the official minutes of the meeting.

KENNEDY

800.6354/126 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, July 14, 1939—noon.
[Received July 14—11:35 a. m.]

991. The following inquiry has been received from the Secretary of the Malayan Chamber of Mines in London:

"As my Council is much concerned at the price to which Straits tin has recently risen and would value the opinion of consumers in America on the point and also on the statement which is frequently made that the American consumers are not concerned with the figure of price so long as the price is reasonably steady, I am instructed to ask if you could kindly indicate the best source in America to which I could apply in order to obtain an unbiased opinion."

This letter has been shown to Todd who fully concurs that the answering of it furnishes an unusual opportunity. As the Department is aware there is considerable dissatisfaction among Malayan tin interests as to the working of the tin control in general and in

⁸⁰ Buffer pool operator.

particular as regards the prevailing excessive price of Straits tin. Todd and I suggest that I reply to this letter by stating that it has been referred to him, that the Department get in touch with Towers⁶¹ to the end that he and his committee formulate a draft reply which should be cabled to Todd because he sails for the United States on the 26th. If this procedure recommends itself to the Department please let me know because Todd also wants to get in touch directly with Towers to emphasize the desirability of a suitable reply.

Todd states that he had a chance meeting with Mills, the buffer pool operator, who stated that he had been selling substantial quantities of the buffer stocks and had now exhausted all of his supply of Straits tin, the premium for which is now about £8. One of the Malayan representatives of the Tin Committee also expressed to Todd dissatisfaction with the operation of the tin control.

KENNEDY

800.6354/126 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom
(Kennedy)*

WASHINGTON, July 14, 1939—5 p. m.

537. Your 991, July 14, noon. The special tin committee of the American Iron and Steel Institute, set up to work with Todd, is preparing instructions for him regarding the tin market and buffer pool situation, which they consider very serious. The letter from the Secretary of the Malayan Chamber of Mines in London and your suggestion regarding the reply thereto are being communicated to Towers for discussion with the Institute's tin committee. No doubt they will prepare a reply to the Malayan Chamber and will expedite preparation of broader instructions to Todd.

The Department has been equally concerned with trends of tin stocks and particularly the report that the only tin now held by the buffer pool is low-grade Cornish and Chinese tin which would be of little or no use to American consumers. The Department has planned to request the Embassy to approach the British Government regarding this situation at the same time that Todd raises the matter through the Advisory Panel, on instructions from the Iron and Steel Institute or its tin committee. In the meantime the Department will be pleased to receive from the Embassy any further information which may be available regarding the tin situation and any suggestions with respect to the best means of remedying it.

HULL

⁶¹ Walter S. Towers, Executive Secretary, American Iron and Steel Institute.

800.6354/127 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the
Secretary of State*

LONDON, July 18, 1939—11 a. m.

[Received July 18—7:05 a. m.]

1014. (1) The inquiry mentioned in my 991, July 14, noon, has been referred to Todd who awaits instructions from the Iron and Steel Institute.

(2) Todd is of the opinion that it would be useless and unwise to take action before the next meeting of the Tin Committee on September 24 unless the price breaks through the upper range limit or unless stocks in the United States, particularly in the hands of consumers, are demonstrably at a level which is abnormal and dangerously low. I concur. Furthermore Todd feels that even in these circumstances it would be difficult to obtain a reconvention of the Committee due to the holiday period. However before the scheduled meeting of the Committee the Embassy will communicate with the Department, and Todd who sails for the United States on July 26, will also go to Washington.

KENNEDY

800.6354/127 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom
(Kennedy)*

WASHINGTON, July 24, 1939—8 p. m.

581. Your 1014, July 18, 11 a. m. The Department understands that the Chairman of the International Tin Committee has informed Todd and the American consumers that an extra meeting to reconsider the third quarter quota will not be possible. The Department is of the opinion that a critical situation in tin supplies and prices may develop before the September 24 meeting and that in any event that date is very late for a consideration of the fourth quarter quota.

You are authorized therefore within your discretion to suggest advancement of the date of the scheduled meeting to early in September, so that the Committee may be in a position at the earliest possible moment to take the necessary steps should the fears of consumers prove to be justified.

HULL

800.6354/128 : Telegram

The Chargé in the United Kingdom (Johnson) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, July 25, 1939—4 p. m.
[Received July 25—12:28 p. m.]

1063. Your 581, July 24, 8 p. m. The tenor of Todd's talk with Campbell indicates that no attempt at this time to advance the date of the next Tin Committee meeting would be successful. Since Todd has addressed a written warning to the Chairman which is being circulated to all members of the Committee the American consumers' appraisal of the situation is now a matter of record. Furthermore as Todd reported to the Institute, at the last meeting of the Committee it was agreed that the Committee would be reconvened prior to September 24 if the buffer stock appeared to be unable to maintain the price range and Campbell implied to Todd that considerable quantities of tin still remained in the stock and emphasized that the premium on Straits tin was not now unusually large.

In these circumstances the position seems to remain as set forth in the Ambassador's 1014, July 18, 11 a. m.; Todd will be in New York on August 1 and hopes to proceed to Washington shortly thereafter.

JOHNSON

800.6354/133a : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy)

WASHINGTON, August 30, 1939—11 a. m.

722. All branches of the tin-using trade in the United States are genuinely and deeply alarmed at the relative shortage of available tin stocks, especially in view of the British export control measures. Even if hostilities do not arise, the situation appears to be serious enough to warrant the immediate attention of the British Government and the International Tin Committee, and if hostilities should actually come a critical situation will present itself.

We are now consulting various interested groups in the United States and probably will send to you for presentation to the British Government a documented outline of the situation. You are requested, however, immediately to get in touch with the British Government and informally advise them of existing anxieties here and say that you are instructed to request them to take under consideration at once steps for easing the situation. Please report.

HULL

800.6354/135 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the
Secretary of State*

LONDON, August 31, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received August 31—12: 50 p. m.]

1332. Department's 722, August 30, 11 a. m. and Embassy's 1326.⁸²

1. On August 29 Campbell circularized the members of the Tin Committee, including the consumers' panel (Todd has been informed by cable) asking for immediate authorization to increase the present quota of 45 percent retroactively to 60 percent for the third quarter and to fix the quota for the last quarter at 60 percent.⁸³ He has now received the consent of all the countries except Bolivia. Minister Patino is in Italy and apparently cannot be reached. Campbell proposes to wait a day or two in the hope of getting in touch with him and if not to make the announcement anyway since he has the requisite number of votes in hand. Campbell computes that this will wipe out all over-exports and at current rate of consumption increase world stocks by about 3000 tons by the end of the year.

2. The Embassy represented strongly the situation facing American consumers and pointed out that the quota increases would not have the effect of actually increasing by a large amount the total visible stocks. In turn Campbell referred to the latest figures (to be found in the statistical bulletin of the International Tin and Research Council of The Hague) indicating that United States "stocks and landing" and "afloat" July 1939, were 5,339 and 4,480, respectively, as compared with 4,071 and 6,003 in July, 1938. The yearly average figures for 1936 were 3,103 and 6,867 respectively. The corresponding figures for the United Kingdom are 10,076 and 137, 7,472 and 270 and 1,008 and 431. The increase in the United Kingdom stocks is due to the buffer stock pool. The position of the buffer stock as of August 29 was that it contained 8,850 tons, of which 3,000 had been sold forward mostly for November delivery. The buffer stock, therefore, has 5,850 tons of tin free of claim. Both Campbell and the responsible official concerned with the issuance of export permits gave assurance that it was not their policy to stop any tin shipments to the United States from the United Kingdom. When the export license regulation was imposed there were two Strauss tin shipments,

⁸² Telegram No. 1326 not printed.

⁸³ The percentages mentioned here and in later documents pertain to quotas to be fixed by the International Tin Committee with reference to basic quotas stated in articles 11 and 12 of the tin agreement of January 5, 1937, International Labour Office, *Intergovernmental Commodity Control Agreements* (Montreal, 1943), pp. 81, 83. The standard tonnages for the territories were as follows: Belgian Congo, 13,200; Bolivia, 46,490; French Indo-China, 3,000; Malaya, 71,940; Netherlands East Indies, 36,330; Nigeria, 10,890; Siam, 18,000; total, 199,850.

one of which was aboard ship and the other at the railhead. An export license was immediately granted for the former and is now being granted for the latter. Since then another license has been applied for but has not yet been dealt with but will go through. Therefore, some delay but no prohibition of tin exports to the United States is occurring.

3. In discussing the contingency of war, Campbell stated that during the first 3 years of the last war the price of tin fell because the world demand in wartime conditions, given the blockade of the Triple Alliance Powers, declined. It was only when the shipping problem had become acute that the price rose. He stated that the United States Government had become exercised about this situation and bought a large supply of tin which was not consumed and that as a consequence after the war it had had to undertake the drastic measure of prohibiting imports of tin for over a year in order to liquidate its stock. He indicated that the British Government plans in the event of war to continue to import for smelting Nigerian and Bolivian tin which is about 72 percent concentrate and that more than an adequate supply of Middle Eastern tin would be available for American needs and far more than would be required and that the smelting facilities of the Straits Settlements were adequate to handle any such demand.

KENNEDY

800.6354/135 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom
(Kennedy)*

WASHINGTON, September 2, 1939—3 p. m.

758. Your 1332, August 31, 6 p. m. The Committee's action in increasing the present quota to 60 percent is of course a move in the right direction. The Department is strongly of the opinion, however, that if the control scheme is to be continued all quota restriction should be removed for a period of months, or at least that the Committee should move immediately to provide a further substantial increase in quotas. It is felt that the Committee would be fully justified in such action for the following reasons:

1. Commercial stocks are very generally considered too low, especially in view of the war situation, and sufficient tin should be provided to add much more rapidly to such stocks than will be possible with a 60-percent release.

2. If the buffer stock is to serve a useful purpose from the standpoint of consumers, it should be built up again to a full 15,000 tons, or near that point, and sufficient tin should be released to make this possible, in addition to the building up of commercial stocks. From the standpoint of American consumers, it is particularly important

that a fair proportion of Straits tin should be added to the buffer stock and constantly maintained in that stock.

For your information, this Government probably will wish to buy, during the next several months, a few thousand tons of tin for a war reserve stock. In the event that restriction has not been removed or liberal quotas arranged in the meantime, it would be desirable to secure a special quota release to cover such purchases. You may find a convenient opportunity to learn whether the British Government would be willing to make or to support a request for such a special quota.

HULL

800.6354/137 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, September 4, 1939—1 p. m.
[Received September 4—8:10 a. m.]

1424. Your 758, September 2, regarding tin; and your 774 [772], September 3, 4 p. m., regarding rubber.⁸⁴ The war has not only closed the Rubber and Tin Exchanges but has created great dislocation in the Government departments concerned with these and other matters. Officials are being transferred to newly created departments such as the Ministry of Economic Warfare and Blockade; in many cases they are unreachable and in any case they are snowed under by a host of problems they have no time to deal with. Further dislocation will be caused when the air bombardments begin. However, I have represented the importance to us of action as regards both rubber and tin and as soon as the position clarifies itself a little I shall do so again. In the meantime I should like to know whether we will have sufficient shipping accommodation so that if necessary we can send our own ships to Malaya to get supplies.

KENNEDY

800.6354/138a : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy)

WASHINGTON, September 9, 1939.

883. Your 1528, September 8, 4 p. m.⁸⁵ As regards tin, it is probable that the Tin Advisory Committee of the American Iron and Steel Institute will be prepared, when it meets on Monday, to issue

⁸⁴ *Ante*, p. 864.

⁸⁵ *Ante*, p. 867.

a statement with respect to tin substantially along the lines of the statement to be made by Viles respecting rubber.⁸⁸

It is understood that the manufacturers who are large purchasers of tin are doing their best to discourage speculation and are not actively in the market. The present speculative situation in the tin market is caused, however, at least to a considerable extent, by a real shortage of free spot and nearby tin. Manufacturers requiring small amounts of tin have not carried stocks and find themselves in difficulty in securing their necessary current supplies.

Apparently, speculation on such nearby supplies has been increased by the report that tin scheduled for shipment from England has been withheld or limited to very small amounts. It is generally agreed here that shipments of something like 1,000 tons from England during the next month or so, followed by even smaller shipments for another month, would make it possible to tide over the present period of stringency until larger supplies may be available from the Middle East. Such releases from England would demonstrate the determination of the British interest in avoiding speculative prices and would encourage manufacturers and others in the market here to cooperate in restoring reasonable price stability.

HULL

800.6354/139: Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, September 11, 1939—2 p. m.
[Received September 11—9: 54 a. m.]

1581. Department's 883, September 9th. The Colonial Office states in strict confidence that the Dutch are passing the word to their tin interests to produce tin freely regardless of whether they exceed the quota. The British have informally advised them that they will take no exception to this procedure and in turn they are telegraphing the Governor of the Straits Settlements to take similar action.

The Colonial Office perceives no reason why more than a thousand tons of tin could not be licensed for export from England to the United States in the near future and it is going into this question with the Metal Controller, Oliver Lyttelton.

KENNEDY

⁸⁸ See telegram No. 884, September 9, to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom, p. 870.

800.6354/141 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, September 12, 1939—noon.

[Received September 12—6:35 a. m.]

1604. Campbell states that he has received the consent of all the members of the International Tin Committee, with the exception of Bolivia, for an increase in the quota for the third quarter retroactively from 60 to 80 percent. He still cannot get in touch with Patino. The Dutch delegation has agreed, subject to the consent of the Dutch Government, and as soon as that is received the announcement will be made. Campbell still does not believe that there will be any material increase in the real consumption of tin and that the increase for the third quarter should calm the market and allow time to consider whether a change for the fourth quarter is desirable or necessary.

KENNEDY

800.6354/140 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy)

WASHINGTON, September 12, 1939.

924. Your 1598, September 11, 8 p. m.⁸⁷ The Tin Advisory Committee of the American Iron & Steel Institute, meeting with Todd today, has reached the conclusion that it would not be justified in making a public statement regarding supplies of tin based merely on the general assurances of MacDonald's letter.⁸⁸ It feels that any such general assurance would be insufficient in view of the uncertainty as to releases of tin to be authorized by the International Committee.

Todd has been informed today that the committee intends to announce an 80 percent release retroactive for the third quarter, leaving the fourth quarter open for further consideration. Such indecision regarding the fourth quarter would have an undesirable effect on the market. It is urged that at least an 80 percent rate of release be announced for the fourth quarter with consideration given later to further increases or a complete removal of restriction.

⁸⁷ Not printed; it reported that the British Government had no objection to a press release on tin similar to that approved on rubber.

⁸⁸ The letter from Malcolm MacDonald, British Colonial Secretary, is quoted in telegram No. 1528, September 8, 4 p. m., from the Ambassador in the United Kingdom, p. 867.

It will be appreciated if you will ascertain whether the British Government is having difficulty in securing full agreement through the International Committee upon more liberal releases.

HULL

800.6354/141 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom
(Kennedy)*

WASHINGTON, September 12, 1939—8 p. m.

928. Your 1604, September 12, noon. Please urge upon Campbell and the British Government the desirability of liberal tin releases, at least for the rest of this year, to enable the accumulation of stocks as well as to discourage speculative price increases; the "real consumption of tin" should not be the principal factor influencing decisions at this time.

It is hoped that the points raised in the Department's no. 758, September 2, 3 p. m., will be taken into account by the Committee. If the Committee provides sufficiently liberal quotas, there will of course be no necessity to request a special quota to cover purchases of reserve stocks by this Government.

HULL

800.6354/146 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the
Secretary of State*

LONDON, September 14, 1939.

[Received September 14—11:35 a. m.]

1641. I have again talked to Malcolm MacDonald. At the close of the tin market yesterday the buffer stock pool had apparently exhausted its resources and since there was no supply of tin available it was deemed advisable to close the market, particularly in view of the conference to be held tomorrow mentioned in my 1625, September 13.⁸⁹

KENNEDY

⁸⁹ Not printed; it stated that "the Dutch are coming over on Friday to meet Campbell and the British Metal Controller to work out a long range tin policy." (811.24 Raw Materials/318)

800.6354/146 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom
(Kennedy)*

WASHINGTON, September 14, 1939.

958. The information contained in your 1641, September 14 is only the latest in a series of developments presenting convincing evidence that the management of the tin control scheme has been short-sighted. We rely on MacDonald's assurances that it is the policy of the British Government to make adequate supplies available. We feel, therefore, that the Committee should move immediately to release to the market all of the tin that can be made available over the next few months. In our opinion all restriction should be removed until stocks in consuming markets can be restored to healthy levels and the Committee's buffer stock built up again at least to a point near 15,000 tons, including a fair proportion of Straits tin.

HULL

800.6354/147 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary
of State*LONDON, September 15, 1939—3 p. m.
[Received September 15—9:42 a. m.]

1656. It was decided today to ask the International Tin Committee to raise the quota for the third quarter to 100 percent. The Dutch have informally agreed. The Colonial Office points out that any deficit in production in the third quarter can be made up by the mines during the fourth quarter but that the mines have large stocks at the pithead which they are now releasing to the smelters rapidly. The Colonial Office is prepared to request an increase in the fourth quarter, if it later seems desirable or necessary but feels that the releases now envisaged will more than meet the markets requirements and will add over 25,000 tons to world stocks. The tin markets of London and Singapore will open on Monday with maximum prices of £230 and £227, respectively.

KENNEDY

800.6354/151 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary
of State*LONDON, September 18, 1939—4 p. m.
[Received September 18—10:55 a. m.]

1693. I have received this morning the following letter from Malcolm MacDonald:

"I have now had an opportunity to discuss your letters of the 12th and 13th of September with my advisers and I understand that Clauson has been in communication with Butterworth and brought him up to date regarding the situation both of tin and rubber.

"A discussion of the tin situation took place on Friday morning at which all those principally concerned with tin in this country were present. It had been hoped that a Dutch representative would also be present but this proved to be impossible. I am in a position to inform you confidentially that the International Tin Committee have been invited to make a further substantial increase in the tin quota for the third quarter of the present year. As both the British and Dutch are committed to agreeing to the proposal it can be taken as practically certain that it will be approved. This procedure was adopted in preference to the proposal for an increase of the quota in the fourth quarter suggested in your letter as it meant earlier action and left room for an increase in the quota for the fourth quarter at a later date if that should prove necessary. The effect of the proposal will be to allow practically unrestricted export of tin for several weeks to come.

"You will no doubt have heard that arrangements have been made to re-open the London and Malayan tin markets today and simultaneously to fix a maximum price in those markets.

"With this action it seems to me that everything in the power of the British Government has been done to increase the supply of tin and to hold down the price. If it is not successful it will only be because purchasers and speculators insist on pressing quite unreasonable demands for tin.

"As regards rubber, the position is much less serious as the price has never risen as wildly as the price of tin but the British representatives on the International Committee are fully alive to the need for seeing that adequate supplies reach the markets. As a first step action has already been taken to issue in advance the export licences in Malaya for the fourth quarter so as to fill up some shipping space which is now available. The International Committee or such members of it as can be present are to meet on the 21st and Viles' ⁹⁰ proposal for an increase in quota will then be considered. It is clear that American consumption is increasing and full account will, I have no doubt, be taken of that fact by the International Rubber Regulation Committee. Against that however must be set the fact that Germany and Poland, neither of which are in a position to obtain more than very small supplies of rubber at present, normally take nearly 100,000 tons a year. However, I have asked the British representatives on the Committee to use their influence with the Committee to go as far as possible to meet Viles' wishes."

KENNEDY

⁹⁰ American representative on the Advisory Panel of the International Rubber Regulation Committee.

800.6354/155 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom
(Kennedy)*

WASHINGTON, September 27, 1939—10 p. m.

1094. The following telegram has been sent by Mr. Todd through his office in London to Sir John Campbell:

"We reiterate our request September 12th urgent unrestricted production be instituted at once for fourth quarter. Survey indicates U. S. consumption will approximate 30,000 gross tons during fourth quarter this year and loss of one large cargo would have disastrous effect on American production. Furthermore American consumers should be permitted to build up reserves due to war emergency and should be given opportunity to acquire brands desired by them. Consider it imperative produce as much Straits Tin as possible regardless attitude other signatory countries."

HULL

800.6354/156 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary
of State*

LONDON, October 10, 1939.

[Received October 10—10:30 a. m.]

1987. After informal consultations with the Dutch and in view of Todd's telegrams which the Embassy has also brought to the attention of the Colonial Office, the Chairman of the Tin Committee has circularized its members for approval of the issuance of a modification of the quotas to 120 percent for the third quarter, with retroactive effect, and 70 percent for the fourth quarter. Campbell expects to be able to obtain formal concurrences so that announcement can be made tomorrow morning.

The Colonial Office gave assurances that in the case of Malaya, Dutch East Indies and Nigeria the 120 percent quota would not merely constitute a paper gesture but a reality. The Colonial Office explained that this course had been adopted to avoid the possibility of lowering the quota for the first quarter of next year below the level of the last quarter of this year. The tin producers are convinced that at some point American buying will slow down decidedly and therefore they wish to avoid an abrupt contraction of production; in this connection they cite the fact that American tin futures are at "pre-war levels". Be it here noted that if American tin consumers expect to obtain exchange advantage they had better get the American market on to a sterling price basis.

The Colonial Office states that there should be no shortage of Straits tin since the Dutch have closed down their Holland smelter

which is only 10 miles from the German border (no doubt due to pressure brought by the British in restricting coal exports) and Dutch tin is being smeltered in the Straits Settlements and Liverpool. Sir John Bagnall has stated that the Straits Settlements smelters will be working at almost capacity.

Copy to The Hague.

KENNEDY

800.6354/162 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom
(Kennedy)*

WASHINGTON, October 17, 1939—7 p. m.

1237. Todd telegraphed Sir John Campbell on October 14 urging that British Government take steps to induce larger offerings of tin in the East, due to the fact that only small amounts of tin have been available here for several days. Todd considers the availability of pig tin as the critical point since releases of ore do not benefit consumers. Please discuss the matter with the appropriate British officials and reinforce Todd's request.

HULL

800.6354/163 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom
(Kennedy)*

WASHINGTON, October 18, 1939.

1247. For your information, Todd sent the following cable directly to Campbell last night.

"American Consumers have only been able to buy this month to date a small portion of the quantity of tin they have been consuming. If this condition continues American production tin products will be jeopardized. Request immediate steps be taken to relieve this condition American Consumption now running at rate of 120,000 gross tons per annum. If desirable to maintain restriction scheme by establishing quota then such quota should be fixed at percentage equivalent to unrestricted production. We repeat opinion our cable September 26 viz consider it imperative produce as much Straits tin as possible regardless attitude other signatory countries. Conditions warrant that Malaya and Nigeria should exercise right under section 1 paragraph 24 and apply to committee to be allowed to export temporarily more than their permissible output."

HULL

800.6354/162 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom
(Kennedy)*

WASHINGTON, October 23, 1939—5 p. m.

1277. Reference Department's 1237, October 17, 7 p. m. There still is no improvement in offerings of tin in the East and the situation for consumers here is becoming critical. Todd still has no reply to his two direct cables to Campbell. Please discuss the situation with appropriate officials. It should be in the interest of producers to grant the consumers' demand for unrestricted production for there can be little doubt that all the tin that can be produced over the next several months would be purchased without delay. American consumption continues at the rate of 120,000 tons of tin per year.

HULL

800.6354/159 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary
of State*

LONDON, October 24, 1939—midnight.

[Received October 25—12:42 a. m.]

2150. Todd's assistant had a long talk with Campbell this morning the substance of which he has cabled to Todd. As a result of my intervention MacDonald had a meeting this afternoon with Campbell and other Colonial Office officials. The Colonial Office states in confidence that Malaya and the Dutch East Indies are now producing "all requisitioned" given the present labor force which they consider adequate on a long view and which they do not wish temporarily to increase during wartime. They emphasize the manner in which tin production has been stepped up from an average of 40 per cent for the first half of the year to an average of 95 per cent for the second half. They also reiterate the considerations which I have previously reported that war will not produce a large net increase in tin consumption and when the restocking movement comes to a halt a serious problem would have been created for producers if they had temporarily stepped up production unduly through the acquisition of further labor, et cetera. Campbell states that his latest figures indicate that whereas the normal stocks afloat to the United States run to 4,500 tons there is afloat to the United States 7,800 tons and that between 20,000 and 25,000 tons is either on its way to the United States or has been sold forward and is in the process of smelting. The Colonial Office has heard that some of the Malayan Chinese miners have been reluctant to sell their ore hoping for a further rise in price and instructions

have been despatched to the Governor of Malaya with a view to accelerating the movement of this ore to the smelters.

The Colonial Office states that although "no foreigners will be present" a meeting will be held on Friday at which will be present the Controller of Metals, officials of the Ministry of Supply and others concerned with tin.

The size of the American consumption figure quoted in the Department's 1277, October 23, 5 p. m. made an impression that I felt they were skeptical of its verity. Any further details which can be supplied before the Friday meeting might prove useful.

KENNEDY

800.6354/160 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, October 25, 1939—3 p. m.
[Received October 25—10:22 a. m.]

2156. As requested the Colonial Office has supplied more precise figures of tin movements to the United States than those given in my 2150, October 24, midnight. They are as follows: September, 4,900 tons; estimated October, 13,000 tons; estimated November, 10,000 tons. The Colonial Office indicated that the increase in October was due to the availability of mine head stocks.

I pointed out that on the basis of the annual American consumption of 120,000 tons the above figures were in no way reassuring. The Colonial Office asked whether our figure included September and if not what was rate of American consumption in that month.

KENNEDY

800.6354/160 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy)

WASHINGTON, October 25, 1939—6 p. m.

1294. Your 2150, October 24, midnight, and 2156, October 25, 3 p. m. Todd is wiring information regarding consumption rate here to his office in London for the information of Campbell and the Embassy.

With respect to the statistics on "tin movements" to the United States in your no. 2156, please clarify as to whether these represent estimated arrivals in the United States during those periods. The consumers are certain that shipments from Malaya in November

cannot be as much as 10,000 tons on the basis of the present very limited offerings in Singapore.

Please make every effort to get the British Government and the International Committee to recognize the essential facts that for several weeks consumers here have not been able to buy sufficient tin in the East to meet present consumption rates and that there is without doubt a ready market in the United States for much more tin than is now available. Certain factors in the present "restocking movement" indicate that it will continue for a considerable period of months, and in addition there is the definite desire on the part of this Government and American consumers to increase stocks substantially. Naturally there is cause for alarm here because current releases and the rate of release so far mentioned for the first quarter of 1940 will provide insufficient rubber [*tin?*] to meet consumption requirements, with no surplus available for stocks.

The labor considerations mentioned by Campbell and others should be offset by the clear indications that large additional amounts of dollar exchange could be secured during the next several months merely by making available enough tin to meet American requirements.

HULL

800.6354/161 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, October 26, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received October 26—3:13 p. m.]

2176. Your 1294, October 25, 6 p. m. was most helpful as the Colonial Office's figures were for departures from the Middle East. Consequently I again strongly pressed the point respecting the experience of our consumers and asked for an explanation. I had previously informally inquired whether the Colonial Office or the Tin Committee had any information about the possible action of vested interests through pools or otherwise to hold up supplies in the hope of an increased maximum price. I again raised this question.

The Colonial Office assures me that these and other relevant matters will be given every consideration at tomorrow's meeting.

KENNEDY

800.6354/164: Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, October 27, 1939.
[Received October 27—2 p. m.]

2190. In response to a question in the House of Commons yesterday as to whether the attention of the Minister of Supply "has been drawn to the danger to the tin-smelting industry caused by the order fixing prices at a level substantially below those ruling in the United States of America; and whether he will state what action he proposes to take to safeguard the industry?" Mr. Burgin replied:

"Orders fixing maximum prices for tin were issued simultaneously here and in Singapore as a temporary expedient to meet the wholly abnormal situation created by the sudden and violent expansion of demand in America and elsewhere which followed the outbreak of war and to avoid a dangerous disturbance of our price structure. As my honorable friend is aware the American spot price has already fallen a long way from the highest level but the removal of the maximum price can only be considered when market conditions become more normal. I hope that the increased supplies of tin now coming forward as a result of the high quota fixed by the International Tin Committee will soon permit of a more normal relationship between the domestic price and the world price. The Government attaches importance to the domestic smelting industry and is watching the position closely."

KENNEDY

800.6354/165: Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, October 28, 1939—1 p. m.
[Received October 28—8:10 a. m.]

2197. My 2176, October 26, 6 p. m. Colonial Office states that British proposal for 100% for current quarter and "not less than" 60% for the first quarter of 1940 was formulated with a view not only to increasing output, but to effecting changes in production policy by indicating to the small mines that the rate of production will remain higher than pre-war levels and thus inducing them to refrain from selling their permits and to use them themselves, thus broadening the basis of production. Colonial Office also states that the figure 60% for the first quarter is not to be regarded necessarily as the final rate but as an assured minimum rate.

Colonial Office also points out that the House of Commons announcement reported in my 2190, October 27, 7 p. m., will be sent to

Malaya with suitable comment to indicate that it means to make effective the minimum price.

I gather that Bolivia has informally agreed to the British proposal, but that the British are not at all sure what the Dutch reaction will be. However, they do not wish us to take any action at The Hague, fearing that it might do more harm than good. Therefore, the British proposal is to be regarded for the time being as confidential.

KENNEDY

800.6354/166 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, October 31, 1939—10 p. m.

[Received October 31—7:12 p. m.]

2231. 1. The Colonial Office states that the following was embodied in the minutes of the tin meeting and has been circulated by Campbell to the International Tin Committee as part of the British proposals:

"It was also agreed that the U. S. A. Embassy in London should be approached with the object of inducing the authorities in the United States to defer their purchases, of about four to five thousand tons of tin, till conditions are more normal. To superimpose this demand on the present very heavy trade demands would tend to accentuate existing difficulties; on the other hand, if the demand were postponed till the position is more normal, it would have a desirable equilibrising effect, at a time when that would not prove of special value to producers."

The Colonial Office today formally expressed the hope that the United States Government would defer its purchases.

2. By a Board of Trade order export licenses for metallic tin are now suspended. The Colonial Office states that this is a temporary measure occasioned by the shortage of metal in this market, that considerable amounts of Nigerian ore are on the way, as to that it is expected that Bolivian shipments will follow. When these supplies of ore can be refined and the shortage thus relieved the order will be rescinded.

3. I have obtained authentic information from a source which cannot be specified that the Dutch have agreed to the British proposal referred to in my 2197 of October 28, 1 p. m., but on the condition that the maximum price be raised. My impression is that whereas the British desire to obtain as much foreign exchange as possible from the sale of such raw materials as tin and rubber, in view of their assurances to us and their public stand on the maximum price (the latest of which is to be found in my 2190, October 27) they are quite prepared to implement their recent proposal. How far they will be willing to resist Dutch pressure if it is unabated is another matter.

The last two sentences of my 2197, October 28, 1 p. m., can now be disregarded. You may wish to instruct the Minister at The Hague to reenforce the British proposal, knowledge of which could have reached you through Todd; but if the question of raising the maximum price is brought up he must be in every way prepared to defend the existing maximum price without in any way giving the impression that information as to the Dutch reply was obtained from British sources.

I am sure any course we take in this matter has disadvantages. If we do nothing the game is probably lost and if we take action and the Dutch cannot be moved the game is probably also lost.

4. Copies of previous telegrams have been sent to The Hague but this telegram will not be repeated to The Hague.

KENNEDY

800.6354/167 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, November 1, 1939—5 p. m.
[Received November 1—12: 53 p. m.]

2238. I had an opportunity of seeing Malcolm MacDonald last night and having a talk with him about the tin situation and his office telephoned today to say that the Dutch had withdrawn their objection to the British proposal and that therefore the Chairman's communiqué had been issued raising the tin quota for the current quota [*quarter*] to 100% and for the first quarter of 1940 to not less than 60%. Please inform Commerce of quota changes.

KENNEDY

800.6354/172

Memorandum of Conversation, by Mr. Roy Veatch of the Office of the Adviser on International Economic Affairs

[WASHINGTON,] November 2, 1939.

Participants: Sir Owen Chalkley, Commercial Counselor, British Embassy,
Mr. John Summerscale, Commercial Secretary, British Embassy,
Mr. Feis,^a
Mr. Veatch.

Sir Owen first presented a written statement regarding the price of tin (copy attached) which he said he had been instructed to hand

^a Herbert Feis, Adviser on International Economic Affairs.

to the Department of State. In commenting upon this statement Mr. Feis and Mr. Veatch said that this Government's representations to the British Government with respect to the policies of the International Tin Committee at the present time had been concerned with the limitation of supply rather than price. It was recognized that unusual circumstances had caused a wide differential between the price in Singapore and the price in New York for a period of a few days or weeks and that the present New York price still ranged considerably above the Singapore price because of the uncertainties regarding the cost of freight and insurance in the future.

Sir Owen then referred to the desire of the Bolivian Government to secure a loan in the United States,⁹² stating that he had discussed the matter with Mr. Pierson, President of the Export-Import Bank, on the previous day. He had understood that the question of collateral or guarantee of repayment of this loan had been an important consideration and that there had been some hesitation on the part of the United States due to the fact that the only important Bolivian export product, tin concentrates, is shipped principally to the United Kingdom, and in no case to the United States since there is no tin smelting industry here. With respect to this matter Sir Owen said that he was quite sure that the British Government would be prepared to facilitate some arrangement whereby Bolivian tin concentrates shipped to England might be earmarked as collateral for an American loan to Bolivia.

Sir Owen went on to point out, however, that his Government understood that Bolivia had suggested that in connection with such a loan a tin smelting industry should be subsidized in the United States. He wished to make it clear that his Government would naturally be opposed to any such move, creating subsidized competition with the existing smelting industry in the United Kingdom, and that they would be prepared to cooperate in earmarking for this Government Bolivian concentrates arriving in the United Kingdom, only if they were assured that the United States Government would not subsidize tin smelting in the United States.

With respect to this point Mr. Feis assured Sir Owen that this Government is not actively pursuing the suggestion of a subsidy for tin smelting, although quite naturally from a defense point of view it would be interested in the development of tin smelting in this country on a commercial basis.

Mr. Feis went on to say, however, that the proposal to subsidize tin smelting in the United States has been given rather wide consideration in Congress and is likely to receive further consideration

⁹² For correspondence regarding proposed extension by the United States of financial assistance to the Government of Bolivia, see vol. v, Bolivia.

as a defense measure because of the International Tin Committee's continuing policy of restricting the supply of tin unduly. He pointed out to Sir Owen and Mr. Summerscale the dangerous position of the United States because of short supplies of tin in this country and suggested that the best possible argument against a subsidized smelting industry dependent upon Bolivian ore would be the existence of adequate reserves of pig tin in the United States.

Sir Owen then mentioned a further communication which he had received from his Government requesting him to inform this Government that the United States should experience no difficulty in securing a reserve stock of four to five thousand tons of tin at the present time. In response to an inquiry Sir Owen said that this information had come to him by mail and that he had received no subsequent information from London on the subject. Mr. Veatch then read the paragraph embodied in the minutes of the International Tin Committee's meeting earlier in the week (transmitted to the Department in London's 2231, October 31, 10 p. m.) to the effect that the Committee was of the opinion that United States purchases for reserves at the present time would accentuate existing difficulties. He also read the information received from the American Embassy at London that the British Colonial Office had formally expressed the hope that the United States Government would defer its purchases.

Mr. Feis and Mr. Veatch explained that delivery on purchases made by the Procurement Division of the Treasury might be made within a period of six months and that therefore purchases at this time would not bring pressure on the market unless the International Committee fails to release sufficient tin during the first quarter of next year. Sir Owen was reminded that International Committee has just announced that releases during the first quarter "will not be less than sixty percent", although releases for the present quarter have been increased to one hundred percent. Both he and Mr. Summerscale appeared to be informed regarding the policies being followed by the International Committee and they seemed sympathetic with the American position that the Committee has been shortsighted in its policy of restricting unduly the amounts of tin available in consuming markets.

[Annex]

*Statement Communicated by Sir Owen Chalkley, British Embassy,
November 2, 1939*

It is understood that the United States Government have represented that the International Tin Committee are not holding the price within the agreed limits (£200 to £230 a ton) and that the United States market is being overcharged for tin.

Control over orders has been made in London and at Singapore fixing a maximum price of £230 but the quantities of tin actually smelted have not been enough to satisfy the continued American demand. The price of tin in the United States has therefore only fallen from £400 to £265. Substantially increased production will however come into the market early in November, which should remedy the position.

800.6354/176 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom
(Kennedy)*

WASHINGTON, November 24, 1939.

1497. Todd has recommended immediate fixing of the first quarter 1940 tin quota at 100 percent. If you see no objection, please press this proposal strongly with the British Government. The following points may be helpful:

1. The present rate of production of ore and metal in the East is unsatisfactory as evidenced by the fact that tin purchased by American manufacturers and importers since the first of October has been considerably below the rate of American consumption.

2. Apparently the difficulty is due to the fact that an insufficient number of mines are operating to produce enough ore to fill the present quota. The American Consul General at Singapore reports the opinion of the best-informed representatives of mining, smelting, and trading interests that no improvement in the situation can be expected (involving large outlays to open closed mines) unless an immediate announcement is forthcoming that the present quota will be maintained at least until July.

3. Todd has given Campbell his estimate that United States consumption during the first quarter of 1940 will be maintained at approximately 10,000 tons monthly, justifying releases at 100 percent for the first quarter.

4. It is believed that releases at 100 percent would also be fully justified for the second quarter, quite aside from the trend of commercial production (which cannot be predicted this far in advance), due to the strong desire here to add to commercial stocks as soon as possible and the Government program for the purchase of reserve stocks, a program which may soon be extended since Congress probably will be asked to make additional appropriations as soon as it assembles.

HULL

800.6354/180 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom
(Kennedy)*

WASHINGTON, November 29, 1939.

1525. Your 2472, November 28, 5 p. m.⁹³ In response to Campbell's queries regarding American tin consumption, Todd points out that actual figures are available indicating that tin plate manufacturers will consume during the last half of this year, including two pre-war months, approximately twice the quantity of tin used during the last half of last year, and that the actual figures of automobile production this year have been: August, 103,343; September, 132,672; October, 323,017 (which may be compared with total factory sales during the same period last year of 383,000).

Todd reiterates that tin is not available in quantities sufficient to replace current consumption and that as a result consumers' holdings are declining. He is informed that only 4,024 tons of tin was shipped from the Straits to the United States during the period November 1-27.

Quite aside from the concern of the industry, this Government must take an active interest in this situation because of the strategic importance of the metal and the very low level of supplies within the country. If Todd's information as to the amount of tin available in the Straits and being shipped to the United States is incorrect, we should like to be informed. If it is a fact that offerings in the Straits and shipments are far below normal and also below the reported rate of production of smelters, then this Government would appreciate an explanation as to what is holding up supplies and an indication of what action can be taken to remedy the situation.

It will be appreciated if the information given above and the inquiry suggested can be brought to the attention of the British Government before the International Tin Committee meets December 1.

HULL

800.6354/184 : Telegram

*The Chargé in the United Kingdom (Johnson) to the Secretary
of State*

LONDON, December 1, 1939—2 p. m.
[Received December 1—11:30 a. m.]

2504. Department's 1525, November 29.

1. Todd's statistics given in Department's above instruction sent in the form of a memorandum to Colonial Offices on November 30.

⁹³ *Ante*, p. 900.

In long discussion on tin situation, also held with Campbell yesterday, Todd's statistics brought to his attention orally.

2. In reply to the Department's query whether offerings on Straits or Straits' shipments were below normal Campbell merely drew attention to the "record total of 20,350 tons" afloat to the United States on October 31 and remarked that if all that tin is coming out there was nothing wrong with the offerings. His attitude was that in view of the very large quantity of tin on its way to America there could be no question of any hold-up.

3. In regard to smelter production Campbell drew attention to the October figures for smelter stocks which were the lowest in 2 years and which he maintained precluded any possibility of bottleneck at the smelters.

Campbell utilized the interview to deliver himself of a long monologue which in essence was a diatribe against what he described as the mad buying policy of the American consuming interests who he declared would in a few months find themselves stuck with excessive inventories purchased at abstracted prices. As he puts it "The Lord knows why you wanted this tin but having [*have*] it you will and you will have to take the consequences."

Press comments on tin meeting today draw attention to Britain's strengthened position with reference to this metal as United Kingdom and Straits before war responsible for about 64% of world's smelter output whereas the percentage now is 80 to 85%.

JOHNSON

800.6354/186 : Telegram

The Chargé in the United Kingdom (Johnson) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, December 9, 1939.

[Received December 9—8 a. m.]

2573. Embassy's 2510, December 1, 5 p. m.²⁴ Tin quota for first quarter of 1940 raised to 120 percent of standard tonnages.

JOHNSON

²⁴ Not printed; it had reported the quota for the first quarter of 1940 as established at 100 percent (800.6354/182).

800.6354/187 : Telegram

The Chargé in the United Kingdom (Johnson) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, December 11, 1939—1 p. m.
[Received December 11—8:10 a. m.]

2578. Embassy's 2553, December 6, 6 p. m.⁹⁵ Colonial Office announces today that the Government of the Straits Settlements has cancelled the order made on September 18 last, prescribing a maximum price for tin from that colony. Cancellation takes effect forthwith.

In pursuance of regulations 55 and 98 of the Defense Regulations 1939, the Ministry of Supply has issued control of tin (No. 2) order, 1939, dated December 8, revoking with effect from December 11, 1939, control of tin (No. 1) order of September 17, 1939. The latter order fixed the maximum price for tin on the basis of £230 a ton for standard tin and the new order removes this restriction.

JOHNSON

811.6354/577½

Memorandum by Mr. Roy Veatch of the Office of the Adviser on International Economic Affairs

[WASHINGTON,] December 15, 1939.

Mr. Summerscale called to report that the British Embassy at Washington had been instructed to make the following observations with respect to tin:

1. In view of the fact that all of the tin being produced currently in the world is required to meet current consumption requirements, purchases by the United States Government for reserved stock purposes tend to create additional competition for the available tin and probably will result in advancing tin prices. It is suggested, therefore, that this Government postpone its tin purchases until such time as supplies become easier.

2. As to the suggestion that some 50 percent of the stocks held by the Buffer pool (under the control of the International Tin Committee) be held in the United States, reference is made to the fact that the Buffer pool is for all practical purposes exhausted at the present time, and that there is little possibility that supplies can be set aside for the pool in the very near future. "If and when" the pool is reconstituted, a part of the reserve will "almost certainly" be held in the United States.

⁹⁵ Not printed.

IV. ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE WARTIME OPERATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL SUGAR AGREEMENT⁹⁶

561.35E1/729 : Telegram

The Minister in the Netherlands (Gordon) to the Secretary of State

THE HAGUE, September 21, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received September 21—4:25 p. m.]

185. With reference to the President's proclamation suspending marketing quotas on sugar⁹⁷ as reported in Radio Bulletin No. 215, Dr. Hart⁹⁸ asked me today whether even if we had had to take such a measure we would be disposed to make a public announcement that this does not mean that we wish to withdraw from the International Sugar Agreement⁹⁹ or to see its operation suspended. While Hart put the query informally he said he would put it formally through the Foreign Office if necessary so the query may forthwith be considered as official in its nature. If we were disposed to make an announcement or statement of this nature the Dutch would desire to use it to allay uneasiness which Hart says subsists to a considerable degree with respect to the continued existence of the sugar agreement.

GORDON

561.35E1/731 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Minister in the Netherlands (Gordon)

WASHINGTON, October 7, 1939—3 p. m.

110. Your No. 185, September 21, 6 p. m. You may inform Dr. Hart that the President's proclamation suspending the quota provisions of the Sugar Act of 1937¹ was taken in view of a domestic emergency which developed at the outbreak of the war on account of hoarding by housewives and speculative activities in the sugar market. This action was taken without reference to the International Sugar Agreement concerning which no policy has yet been adopted and no statement is contemplated in the immediate future. It would seem that the future of the machinery set up by this agreement would depend (a) upon future political developments in Europe and (b) upon whether the parties thereto who are now belligerents decide to avail themselves of the provisions of Article 51 (a) of the agreement.

HULL

⁹⁶ For previous correspondence, see *Foreign Relations*, 1937, vol. 1, pp. 931 ff.

⁹⁷ Proclamation of September 11, 1939; 54 Stat. 2654. However, by Proclamation of December 26, 1939, this suspension of marketing quotas was removed; 54 Stat. 2676.

⁹⁸ Netherlands representative on the International Sugar Council.

⁹⁹ Signed May 6, 1937; 59 Stat. 922, or Department of State Treaty Series No. 990.

¹ Act approved September 1, 1937; 50 Stat. 903.

561.35E1A/1168 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State

LONDON, November 7, 1939.

[Received November 7—1:11 p. m.]

2297. From the delegates to the International Sugar Council. Following circular note received from the Chairman:

"1. As you know, under article 51 (a) of the International Sugar Agreement, any contracting government becoming involved in hostilities may apply for suspension of its obligations, and if such application is denied, may give notice of withdrawal. Under article 51 (e), if any belligerent government does give notice of withdrawal, other contracting governments have the right at any time during the following 3 months also to give notice of withdrawal. Under article 51 (f) withdrawal takes effect 3 months after receipt of notice by the United Kingdom Government.

"2. So far no application for suspension of obligations under article 51 has been received, and the agreement is therefore in full force. Moreover, if one of the governments engaged in hostilities should make an application for the suspension or partial suspension of its obligations, I have no reason to believe that the Council would not find a way to meet the needs of the government concerned without forcing it to withdraw from the agreement.

"3. In any case, I think that it is very important to make every effort to keep the agreement alive. Taking a long view, it is certain that the end of the war will see the desirability of some regulation scheme if the sugar industry is not to fall into the chaos that followed the last war. In fact, I think it is very desirable to endeavor during the war to avoid the possibility of such a state of chaos arising.

"4. I fully realize that it may be difficult to hold formal meetings of the Council, but I believe that much useful work might be done by having informal discussions from time to time among the representatives of the delegations who are available in London, or who can easily come here. Further, it seems essential that the statistical work of the Council should be maintained.

[Here follow paragraphs 5 to 9 of the circular, containing recommendations regarding carrying on the work of the office of the Council upon a reduced budget.]"

The amount proposed for the United States in the revised budget of £3,800 for a full war-year is £734.1.9. It would be helpful if any instructions the Department may desire to send be received before the meeting which has been called by the Chairman for 10 a. m., Saturday, November 11th.

KENNEDY

561.35E1A/1172: Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom
(Kennedy)*

WASHINGTON, November 10, 1939.

1415. Your 2297, November 7. For the Delegates to the International Sugar Council.

The Department perceives no objection in principle to the proposed revised budget for the International Sugar Council but is confident of course that the delegates will carefully scrutinize the detailed arrangements involved. It should furthermore be made clear that the acceptance by this Government of this revision implies no commitment of any kind as to the attitude which may be assumed in the light of future developments relative to the maintenance of the Council during the war and that this Government neither waives nor limits the exercise of any of its rights under the agreement and especially under articles 51 (e) and 51 (f) thereof.

HULL

561.35E1A/1174: Telegram

*The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the
Secretary of State*

LONDON, November 22, 1939—5 p. m.
[Received November 22—1: 59 p. m.]

2425. From the delegates to the International Sugar Council.

Your 1415, November 10. Documents relating to informal meeting of the International Sugar Council on November 11 were forwarded by pouch on the S. S. *President Harding*, November 15 (Embassy's despatch 3849, November 14²). The Department's attention is particularly invited to enclosure 1 (S. C. 2009 [209]) and its annexes. This document is the Chairman's note on wartime arrangements for administration of the International Sugar Agreement quoted in the Embassy's 2297, November 7; annexed to the note are the Chairman's revised budget figures together with an explanatory note thereon and a table showing the shares of the various countries in the revised budget. Inasmuch as these figures are less than those already authorized for the current year, the Chairman proposes to make expenditures and to request contributions from members of the Council on this basis. The next formal meeting of the Council will be asked to give its retroactive approval. The general opinion at the informal meeting on November 11 was that the Chairman was not under the necessity of

² Not printed.

requesting prior specific approval for expenditures in an amount less than had already been authorized. As will be seen from the draft minutes of the informal meeting (S. C. 214, enclosure 5 to despatch 3849), there was no attempt to take formal decisions and many of the delegates had no specific instructions. The general consensus of opinion expressed, however, was plainly in favor of continuance of the machinery of the Council and maintenance as far as practicable of the statistical services furnished through the bulletin.

The Department's views as expressed in telegram 1415 of November 10 were set forth to the meeting by the American delegates. If the Governments who are members of the International Sugar Council decide to maintain the machinery set up by the Agreement in at least skeleton form and such services as may be practicable, including the publication of the bulletin, it is our opinion that the Chairman's budget as set forth in detail in the documents above cited represents a responsible amount for any effective service.

KENNEDY

CONCERN OF THE UNITED STATES OVER SOVIET DEMANDS ON FINLAND AND THE OUTBREAK OF THE WINTER WAR

760d.61/201

The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Kirk) to the Secretary of State

No. 2214

Moscow, March 30, 1939.

[Received April 20.]

SIR: With reference to my despatch No. 1945 of December 16, 1938,¹ reporting the visit to Moscow of a large Finnish Delegation for the purpose of attending the official inauguration of the new Finnish Legation, I have the honor to inform the Department that another Finnish delegation which came to Moscow a few weeks ago for the purpose of exploring the possibilities of expanding trade between the two countries departed therefrom during the course of the last week prior to the completion of its negotiations.

The Finnish Minister here² and members of his Legation have stated that the reason for such a departure was because "the Soviet authorities put forth certain propositions not in conformity with the policy of neutrality followed by Finland." He also stated that, if the Finnish Government had been aware that the Soviet authorities intended to introduce matters of a political nature into the commercial talks, the delegation would not have proceeded to Moscow, and he added that, although he could not be positive in the matter, nevertheless he felt that further commercial conversations would not be continued, at least not in the near future, with the Soviet Government.

While it is understood that the Finnish Legation here has limited itself thus far to the statement set forth above in respect of the reason for breaking off the commercial talks, it has been suggested that the propositions allegedly put forth by the Soviet authorities probably related to the desire of the Soviet Government to obtain some form of assurance from the Finnish Government that in the eventuality of war involving the Soviet Union the Aland Islands would not be utilized so as to protect German trade with Sweden, particularly in respect of deliveries of Swedish iron ore to Germany. It is also possible that the guarantee which the Soviet authorities, as stated in my despatch

¹ Not printed.

² Baron Aarno Armas Sakari Yrjö-Koskinen.

number 2184 of March 16, 1939,³ might be envisaging, with a view to reducing in time of war the danger to Soviet territory of a refortification of the Islands, was introduced into these commercial discussions and proved unacceptable to the Finnish Government. Although the Embassy is not in a position to confirm or deny the correctness of the suggestion, nevertheless, in view of the recent indications, as reported in the Embassy's despatch number 2147 of March 1, 1939,³ of the concern with which the Soviet Government regards the refortification by Finland of the Aland Islands, it is likely that the matter was injected by the Soviet authorities into the recent discussions with the Finnish Delegation in Moscow and resulted in an interruption of the conversations in question.

Respectfully yours,

A. KIRK

758.60d/122

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State

[WASHINGTON,] April 10, 1939.

The Minister of Finland⁴ came in and spoke to me very earnestly and confidentially about his Government having received notice from the Soviet Republic expressing a desire to secure certain islands by lease or cession in the Gulf of Finland—about the only islands in the Gulf. He said that his Government had very earnestly opposed such step in its reply to the Soviet Government; that the Soviet Government had suggested exchanging a small strip of Soviet territory on the inland border between the two countries for these islands or their indefinite lease; in each instance the Government of Finland had earnestly opposed any step in that direction.

The Minister then seriously requested and finally urged me to say something in a friendly spirit to the Soviet officials that might discourage them from bringing pressure on his Government for these islands. I expressed my regret to learn of this possible controversy and said that of course my Government and my people were specially friendly towards his Government and his people. I then added that my Government has a traditional policy of not undertaking to interfere in political controversies across the seas; that we only speak about political conditions when they become so acute and dangerous as to constitute a definite threat to the peace of the world. I told him I was very sorry that I was not in a position to discuss the matter with the Soviet Government, certainly at this stage. He seemed very much disappointed and importuned me at some length, but I was particular not to express a sentence or a word to him that might be interpreted

³ Not printed.

⁴ Hjalmar J. Procopé.

as conditional so far as our possible acts might be concerned, and continued to make clear our inability to interfere in a matter of that kind.⁵

C[ORDELL] H[ULL]

860d.24/21

The Finnish Minister (Procopé) to the Secretary of State

No. 1206

WASHINGTON, April 17, 1939.

EXCELLENCY: I have the honour to inform Your Excellency that my Government pending the proposed nomination of a Military Attaché to this Legation, have decided to send an Officer of the Finnish Army, Colonel Paavo Talvela, to Washington on a special mission. The purpose of Colonel Talvela's mission is to study the possibilities of arranging for future deliveries from the United States to Finland of certain materials and commodities.

I shall be very grateful if through Your Excellency's good offices Colonel Talvela be permitted to establish contact with the competent United States Military and other Authorities and to obtain from them the assistance which is necessary for the fulfillment of his mission.⁶

Colonel Talvela will arrive in Washington about May 1st and will stay here for two months.

Accept [etc.]

HJ. J. PROCOPE

758.60d/160 : Telegram (part air)

The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State

HELSINKI, June 2, 1939—3 p. m.

[Received June 5—5:40 a. m.]

97. See last paragraph my telegram No. 92, May 25.⁷ Minister for Foreign Affairs told me today that Soviet Government had made no further reference to previously proposed cession of Seiskari and Levansaari Islands in exchange for certain small areas in Soviet Karelia.

⁵The Minister of Finland had similar interviews on this day with James C. Dunn, Adviser on Political Relations, and Pierrepont Moffat, Chief of the Division of European Affairs. (760d.6114/3, 4) The American Minister in Finland, H. F. Arthur Schoenfeld, in his telegram No. 73, May 3, 1939, reported to the Secretary of State that the Finnish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Eljas Erkkö, had explained that the *démarche* of the Minister at Washington "had been designed primarily to apprise you of the Soviet suggestions regarding islands in eastern part of Gulf of Finland and not as a request for action which was considered neither necessary nor desirable at the Foreign Office." (760d.6114/6)

⁶Assistant Secretary of State George S. Messersmith, in his acknowledgment of April 26, 1939, assured the Finnish Minister that "this Government will be happy to assist Colonel Talvela in the fulfillment of his mission." (860d.24/21)

⁷Not printed.

He said spontaneously that for his part firm offer of Repola and Pora-järvi districts as well as Soviet part of Kalastajasaarento⁸ peninsula off Petsamo and certain minor rectifications elsewhere might be considered as compensation. He refrained however from intimating any admission that such a deal had been suggested in relation to the attempted Soviet obstruction of Aland Island plan.

I am positive that Finnish Government was prepared to be as patient as required by its knowledge of Russian methods in awaiting Soviet advances and intended meanwhile to proceed with its plans in the Aland Islands as reported in my telegram No. 96 today.⁹

Mailed to Moscow.

SCHOENFELD

860d.24/29 : Telegram (part air)

The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State

HELSINKI, July 18, 1939—2 p. m.

[Received July 20—5:30 a. m.]

133. My despatch No. 1081, February 18; and Department's instructions 163 and 166 and other correspondence.¹⁰ Minister for Foreign Affairs today confirmed press announcement of appointment of Colonel Per Zilliacus as Military Attaché to Finnish Legation at Washington. He expressed gratification at understanding shown by the Department of Finland's political position in having undertaken to facilitate acquisition of needed supplies. This understanding attitude would strengthen determination of Finland to maintain alignment with other neutral states in the north and would render more difficult any attempt to make a breach in the peace front by cutting off Finland from it.

The Minister said that Governor of Bank of Finland¹¹ and Minister of Finance¹² were now studying financial aspects of acquisition of American supplies, the need for which he said had been listed by Field Marshal Mannerheim and his Defense Council, in such quantities as to be quite beyond the capacity of the Treasury.

New Military Attaché would probably leave for his post very soon and other representatives to deal with proposed purchases in the United States would probably be necessary later.

SCHOENFELD

⁸ Rybachí, or Fisherman's peninsula.

⁹ Not printed. The Finnish Government desired to accomplish the refortification of the Åland Islands.

¹⁰ None printed.

¹¹ Risto H. Ryti.

¹² Väinö A. Tanner.

860d.51/357

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State

[WASHINGTON,] September 15, 1939.

The Minister of Finland called and, after giving me a number of figures about the fiscal situation of his Government and its commercial strength, stated that Finland's standing army, made necessary by Soviet menace, required considerable expense, and his Government would be deeply interested in securing credits from this Government in the amount of from 50 to 60 million dollars—credits largely to be expended in this country but some for general expenditures elsewhere. He said that his Government had not bought any military equipment, munitions, etc., from Germany but from Great Britain and Sweden. I referred him to Mr. Jesse Jones and also to Secretary Morgenthau. He did not seem to be so much worried about the Russian invasion or Russian domination immediately as he was two nights ago when he telephoned a very alarming message to Mr. Sumner Welles.

C[ORDELL] H[ULL]

641.60d.31/63 : Telegram

The Chargé in Finland (Shantz) to the Secretary of State

[Extract]

HELSINKI, September 18, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received September 18—1:36 p. m.]

182. . . .

Soviet Government yesterday informed Finnish Minister at Moscow by note that it would observe a policy of neutrality in its relations with Finland. The Secretary General¹³ commented that Finland had no added cause for alarm at Soviet invasion of Poland and that relations with Russia continued on a friendly basis. He knew of no special Finnish military preparations.

One regiment of Swedish speaking troops was transferred from Helsinki to Aland Islands last week.

SHANTZ

¹³ Tapio Voionmaa, Secretary General of the Finnish Foreign Office.

760d.61/214 : Telegram

The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State

HELSINKI, September 23, 1939—1 p. m.

[Received 2:15 p. m.]

191. Foreign Minister Erkko told me today that notwithstanding reports from various sources that existing Soviet-German political agreements¹⁴ also referred to Finland the Soviet Government had not yet raised any questions of a political character which might cause difficulties for Finland. The Minister said that nevertheless he expected the Soviet Government at any time to reopen the proposal made last March by the Soviet Foreign Trade Commissioner Stein involving cession to the Soviet Union of certain islands in the eastern part of Gulf of Finland. Meanwhile he had reopened negotiations with the Soviet Union for a trade agreement the formulation of which was now well advanced.

Repeated to Moscow.

SCHOENFELD

860d.24/37

The Secretary of State to the Finnish Minister (Procopé)

WASHINGTON, October 4, 1939.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your note of September 27, 1939,¹⁵ with further reference to the desire of your Government to purchase arms, ammunition, and implements of war in this country.

In reply, I have to inform you that in view of the assurance contained in your note of September 14¹⁵ that these arms, ammunition, and implements of war are intended solely for the Government of Finland in order to complete the armament and equipment of the Finnish Army, Navy and Air Force, and that they will under no circumstances be reexported from Finland, prompt consideration will be given to any applications which the Department may receive for licenses to export the arms, ammunition, and implements of war which your Government may purchase.

Under existing laws and regulations your Government is at liberty to purchase from private manufacturers in this country and to export to Finland arms of the types specified in your note under acknowledgment, provided that these arms do not involve military secrets of

¹⁴ For the texts of the Treaty of Nonaggression between Germany and the Soviet Union, and the Secret Additional Protocol, signed at Moscow on August 23, 1939, see Department of State, *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941* (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1948), p. 76.

¹⁵ Not printed.

interest to the national defense. As these arms are items of naval armament and equipment I am transmitting a copy of your note to the Acting Secretary of the Navy¹⁶ for his information.

Accept [etc.]

For the Secretary of State:

A. A. BERLE, JR.

760d.61/218 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, October 4, 1939—7 p. m.

[Received October 4—6:50 p. m.]

678. For the Minister. Numbered paragraphs correspond to the questions propounded in your telegram under reference.¹⁷

1. The recent policies of the Soviet Government in agreement with Germany in respect to the Baltic States appear to have as their object the realization by and with certain long known Soviet strategic aims in that area. In view of the indication in the Soviet press reported in my telegram 664, October 3, 1 p. m.,¹⁸ I consider it not unlikely that when the Soviet Government has adjusted to its satisfaction its relations with the Baltic States an endeavor may be made to force political negotiations on Finland for the purpose of securing at least Soviet naval and air bases on the Finnish islands in the vicinity of Kronstadt and possibly a Soviet base at Hanko.¹⁹ The question of Soviet participation in the régime of the Aland Islands may also be raised.

2. I have no reason to believe that there is any secret agreement between the Soviet and German Governments affecting the status of Finland aside from the recognition by Germany of the special interests of the Soviet Union in the Eastern Baltic and the region of the Gulf of Finland. On the evidence of the Soviet-Estonian agreement,²⁰ it appears that German recognition of these special interests does not permit the Soviet Union in any way to impair the sovereignty of or to impose the Soviet system upon the countries in that area. I am reasonably certain that the Scandinavian countries are in no way involved.

3. I see no prospect of an hostile attitude on the part of the Soviet Government toward Germany in the immediate future and almost certainly not until the Soviet Union has achieved and consolidated the territorial and strategic objectives which it is at present in the process

¹⁶ Charles Edison.

¹⁷ This telegram was sent in answer to an inquiry made directly to Ambassador Steinhardt by the Minister in Finland, which had been repeated to the Department in the latter's telegram No. 213, October 3, not printed.

¹⁸ Not printed.

¹⁹ Hangö; Khanko.

²⁰ For an account of the negotiations between Estonia and the Soviet Union for the Pact of Mutual Assistance signed in Moscow, September 28, 1939, see *Foreign Relations, The Soviet Union, 1933-1939*, pp. 934 ff.

of obtaining as a result of its collaboration with Germany. I believe that these objectives in addition to those already achieved and the possibility discussed in number 1 above include the acquisition of Bessarabia and the neutralization of the Black Sea area in agreement with Turkey.

After these objectives have been attained the possibility of a change in Soviet policy toward Germany will depend on the then existing situation. However, all the evidence at my disposal appears to foreshadow an extended period of Soviet-German cooperation.²¹

The foregoing, which is merely the expression of my personal opinion and is of necessity speculative in character, is based on information received in the strictest confidence and I will therefore ask you carefully to safeguard the source and Moscow origin thereof.

STEINHARDT

S60d.51/362

Memorandum of Conversation, by the the Secretary of State

[WASHINGTON,] October 5, 1939.

The Minister of Finland came in to speak about a loan which his Government is hoping to get from this Government through the Reconstruction Finance Corporation. I said that Mr. Jesse Jones was the chief authority of our Government on the question of the advisability of such loan and that he might keep in touch with Mr. Jones. This the Minister seemed to understand and to be disposed to do. He then said that Russia was not making any demands on his country just now; that he did not know when they might take up the question of establishing bases on certain Finnish islands in the Gulf of Finland and also securing access to the Aland Islands. He again sought to draw me out on some kind of an express or implied promise to say something to the Soviet Government in case such pressure as the foregoing should be brought to bear on his Government. I made it very clear that that would not be within the function of this Government, but that, of course, this Government was always interested in the welfare and the well-being of the Government and the people of Finland and that its feeling of interest existed at all times.

C[ORDELL] H[ULL]

²¹ For correspondence on early attempts at German-Soviet wartime cooperation, see pp. 477 ff.

760d.61/220 : Telegram

The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State

HELSINKI, October 6, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received October 6—2:30 p. m.]

218. Minister for Foreign Affairs has just informed me that last night Soviet Foreign Commissar²² asked Finnish Minister at Moscow to let Finnish Government know that the Soviet Government would be glad to have an exchange of views on political matters of mutual interest and that it would welcome the visit in Moscow either of the Finnish Foreign Minister or of another qualified special representative. No indication was given of the political issues to be discussed.

Minister for Foreign Affairs told me that in view of courteous form of Soviet suggestion Finnish Government would send to Moscow probably on October 9 next, Finnish Minister at Stockholm²³ who was chairman of Finnish delegation during peace negotiations at Dorpat in 1920,²⁴ and is thoroughly familiar with political relations between the Soviet Union and Finland. Minister of Foreign Affairs said he had previously made it clear to Soviet Government that if they were interested in matters relating to certain islands in eastern part of Gulf of Finland, satisfactory arrangement could be reached against proper compensation. He told me, however, that there could be no question of any arrangement involving stationing of Soviet military forces in Finnish territory. He concluded by stating that the special courtesy of manner used by Molotov in making his suggestion to Finnish Minister at Moscow renders it probable from knowledge of Russian methods that the Soviet authorities have matters of moment on their minds.

Repeated to Moscow.

SCHOENFELD

760d.61/239

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State

[WASHINGTON,] October 7, 1939.

The Minister of Finland called at his own request. He said that the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland had been invited by the Soviet Government at Moscow to come to that city for a discussion of political questions, and urged to come as soon as possible. The Min-

²² Vyacheslav Mikhailovich Molotov.

²³ Juho K. Paasikivi.

²⁴ Treaty of Peace between Finland and the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic was signed at Dorpat (Tartu, Yuryev) October 14, 1920; for text, see League of Nations Treaty Series, vol. III, p. 6. See also *Foreign Relations, 1920*, vol. II, pp. 253 ff.

ister said that his latest impression was the Finnish Foreign Minister himself would decline to go, but would send a subordinate with the view to minimizing and discouraging the matter from the standpoint of the Government of Finland. I said that naturally it was to be hoped the two countries might be able to keep up normal and mutually satisfactory friendly relations. I inquired as to what the Minister thought the Soviet might have in mind. He replied that he only knew what had happened to Estonia and Latvia, which was that the Soviet had assumed military domination of those two countries. I inquired as to what islands, if any, he thought the Soviet would insist on occupying, and he told me those two or three in the Gulf of Finland, as well as the Aland Islands, although, he said, his Government had not the power to transfer occupational rights or privileges on the Aland Islands to the Soviet, on account of the international factors involved.²⁵ The Minister then urged that this Government say something in some way to the Soviet Government with the view to discouraging any objectionable acts by the Soviet Government against Finland and to its detriment. I said that, regardless of our genuine friendship for his country and his people, we were not in a position to project this Government into political discussions and controversies between two other countries, such as the Soviet and Finland. I said that even if we were so disposed and should undertake to send a message to our Ambassador at Moscow for this purpose, it would probably become public and then the more harm would result both to Finland and to this country than any possible good, on account of the unfavorable reaction of the Soviet Government towards Finland in these circumstances. The Minister agreed that this view was true. I said that, repeating exactly my words of two days ago, this Government naturally feels a wholehearted interest in the welfare of Finland, and, in that state of mind, it naturally observes with interest developments from time to time relating to the welfare of Finland and her people. I added that this was all I could say at present.

C[ORDELL] H[ULL]

760d.61/224 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, October 8, 1939—2 p. m.

[Received October 8—2 p. m.]

705. My telegram No. 691, October 6, 4 p. m.²⁶ From the source indicated in my telegram under reference the following has been as-

²⁵ For the international stipulations involved, see the Convention relating to the Nonfortification and Neutralization of the Aland Islands signed at Geneva, October 20, 1921, League of Nations Treaty Series, vol. ix, p. 211.

²⁶ Not printed.

certained. Last night at 7 o'clock Molotov summoned the Finnish Minister and asked him why there had been no reply to the Soviet invitation. The Minister replied that a telegram had been received from Helsinki the night before stating that the reply would be sent during the day but as no such telegram has been received he assumed it had been delayed in transit. At approximately 11:30 p. m., the Finnish Legation received the reply stating that the Finnish Minister to Stockholm, Mr. Paasikivi was coming to Moscow as special delegate. The hour stamped on the telegram indicated that it had been received in Moscow already at 8 a. m., and had apparently been held by the Soviet telegraph authorities. At 1 a. m., the Finnish Minister saw Molotov and informed him of the nature of the reply. Molotov seemed surprised at the decision of the Finnish Government not to send the Foreign Minister but made no comment and merely inquired when the representative could be expected and was informed that he would arrive "in a day or two". Molotov then stated that since there was a war in Europe the matter was urgent, and added that he hoped the representative would not arrive "too late".

My informant added that he had heard that rumors were circulating in Moscow from Soviet sources to the effect that the Soviet Government intended to demand not only the Finnish islands in the vicinity of Kronstadt but also a naval base at Hango; participating in the regime of the Aland Islands and perhaps even a base in the port of Linhammar in the north of the Province of Petsamo in which province the Finnish nickel deposits are located. He added that he could obtain no confirmation of these rumors but stated categorically that should the Soviets put forward any such demands, even merely the right to establish a garrison on the Finnish mainland, he was convinced the Finnish Government would fight rather than yield especially if assured of the support of Sweden.

At the urgent request of my informant I urged that in the event that the foregoing is repeated to Helsinki and Stockholm both Missions be requested to protect the Finnish source thereof.

STEINHARDT

760d.61/225: Telegram

The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State

HELSINKI, October 8, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received 7 p. m.]

222. My telegram No. 218, October 6. Minister of Foreign Affairs informed me late this afternoon that he had seen Soviet Minister ²⁷

²⁷ Vladimir Derevyansky.

today and that latter had expressed some disappointment that the former was not proceeding to Moscow in person. Erkko had said in reply that he could not do so without information as to the concrete proposals Soviet Government had in mind for discussion. Soviet Minister had indicated only that Soviet Government was interested in discussing its own security in the Baltic and its commercial relations with Finland. Finnish Foreign Minister had made it entirely clear that his Government was not prepared to enter into any discussion along the lines of the arrangements just made with Estonia and Latvia.²⁸ This conversation had not produced any further indication of Soviet intentions but the Finnish Minister to Sweden would proceed to Moscow as planned tomorrow night. Minister for Foreign Affairs said announcement would be made tonight of proposed departure of special representative.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs said he proposed to make a *démarche* at Berlin for the sole purpose of eliciting the German Government's attitude towards the present situation of Finland vis-à-vis the Soviet Union and definitely not for the purpose of asking any aid whatsoever. His inquiries of the German Minister here²⁹ as well as at Berlin thus far had been received with evidence of complete disinterest. But he desired to have formal confirmation of such disinterest since it would make the situation clearer. In any case Finland had consistently taken the position that it would maintain complete aloofness from the combinations of the great powers and that it intended to remain absolutely neutral.

The Minister was evidently weighing in his mind the possible limits of concession to Russia because he raised the question whether Soviet Union would use force against Finland and also whether, and if so, in what conditions active support could be counted on from Sweden.

He considered the situation very serious and I confirm my impression of the Finnish Government's attitude outlined in my telegram No. 219 of yesterday.³⁰

Repeated to Moscow and Stockholm.

SCHOENFELD

²⁸ For an account of the negotiations between Latvia and the Soviet Union for the Pact of Mutual Assistance signed in Moscow, October 5, 1939, see *Foreign Relations, The Soviet Union, 1933-1939*, pp. 934 ff.

²⁹ Wipert von Blücher.

³⁰ Not printed.

760d.61/228 : Telegram

The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State

HELSINKI, October 9, 1939—3 p. m.

[Received October 9—1 : 05 p. m.]

227. British Minister³¹ has expressed to me his personal opinion that Finnish policy may not be sufficiently flexible in forthcoming negotiations with Soviet Union to warrant confident expectation that they will result in avoiding clash. He made suggestion that our Government might bring its influence to bear on Finnish Government in the sense indicated and I answered that I doubted your willingness to do so, having in mind your telegram No. 114, October 4.³² He then suggested that probably best channel through which to urge flexibility on Finnish Government would be the Swedish Foreign Minister³³ because of latter's long experience in diplomatic technique and special relations between Sweden and Finland.

In view of considerations set forth in my telegrams numbers 219³⁴ and 222, I cannot deny that there is some danger in the situation from the extended time British Minister had in mind but on the other hand it would seem that no action can be taken by a third government on the assumption that Finnish Government may not handle its negotiations with Soviet Government with restraint and skill. It may well turn out that better opening for exercise of moderating influence will exist at Moscow than here.

SCHOENFELD

760d.61/234 : Telegram

The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State

HELSINKI, October 10, 1939—11 a. m.

[Received October 10—7 : 22 a. m.]

232. Press today reports departure for Moscow last night of Minister Paasikivi as special envoy accompanied by Colonel Paasonen the President's³⁵ senior *aide-de-camp* as military expert and Mr. Nykopp of the Foreign Office as secretary. Evidence of military preparations on extensive scale increasingly apparent.

SCHOENFELD

³¹ Thomas Maitland Snow.³² Not printed; in this telegram the Department indicated that it was "reluctant for Finland to base any decision, even in part, upon information obtained from our officers, the more so as Finland has its own officials and sources of information in Russia." (760d.61/216)³³ Rickard J. Sandler.³⁴ Not printed.³⁵ Kyösti Kallio.

760d.61/250

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Chief of the Division of
European Affairs (Moffat)*

[WASHINGTON,] October 11, 1939.

The Swedish Minister ⁸⁶ called this morning.

He said that he had seen the Secretary of State just before the latter left for New York yesterday noon and had spoken to him confidentially as follows:

"The Swedish Minister has, upon instructions from his Government, on October 10th 1939 drawn the attention of the United States Government to the difficult situation which will arise in case, in connection with the Russian Government's invitation to negotiations with Finland, demands will be presented which seriously threaten the integrity and independence of Finland."⁸⁷

The Secretary had replied that he feared American intervention at Moscow might do more harm than good.

In the course of the afternoon the Minister had called on the President and had left him a note, copy attached, from the Crown Prince of Sweden in which the latter urged the President to use his influence in Moscow to counteract any possible attempts of an aggressive nature toward Finland. The President had replied that his influence in Moscow was just about zero. To this Mr. Boström had answered that his influence could not be zero anywhere in the world, and again urged that he send a message to Stalin.

The President apparently replied that he might be willing, after consulting with the Secretary of State, to send a message to Mr. Steinhardt directing him to tell Molotov that it was the President's hope that Russia would not make war upon Finland.

Mr. Boström apologized for making any observation, but he thought Molotov would reply that the U. S. S. R. had not made war on Estonia or Latvia, and had no intention of doing so on Finland. The Minister asked if he could not phrase his message to the effect that the United States hoped that the U. S. S. R. would not make any demands upon Finland which would seriously threaten the integrity and independence of that country.

The President agreed in principle, and said he would talk it over with the Secretary just as soon as the latter returned to Washington.

Later in the day the Finnish Minister made a similar appeal to the President from the President of Finland,⁸⁸ and, according to Mr. Boström, the President was even more prepared to send such a message.

⁸⁶ W. Boström.

⁸⁷ A copy of this oral statement was left at the Department by the Minister, and similar statements were left by the Norwegian Minister, Wilhelm Munthe de Morgenstjerne, on October 11, 1939, and the Danish Minister, Henrik de Kauffmann, on October 12, 1939.

⁸⁸ Not printed.

Mr. Boström asked me to bring this to the Secretary's attention immediately upon his return, and to let him know if and when a message were sent.

PIERREPONT MOFFAT

[Annex]

The Crown Prince of Sweden (Gustaf Adolf) to President Roosevelt

MY DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: The frank and friendly talk on various political topics which I had with you when you were kind enough to visit me at Medical Center in June of last year and the interest for our country and for our close neighbour, Finland, shown by you and the people of the United States on many occasions enables me to approach you on the subject of the present Russian attitude towards Finland which is causing us grave concern.

Any possible menace to the integrity or independence of Finland is bound to create a very serious situation in the northern part of Europe. It would be looked upon in our country as of fundamental and sinister importance. May I point out that there is a non-aggression treaty in force between Finland and Russia, and that as to the Åland archipelago their present status is guaranteed by international agreement and that everything concerning these Finnish Islands on account of their situation very near our capital and for other reasons has always been considered by us as of very special importance to Sweden.

We look to you as trusted promoter of peace and justice. Could you see your way to use your influence in Moscow to counteract any possible attempts of an aggressive nature towards Finland?

This personal message of mine is of course made with the full sanction of my father, the King,³⁹ and likewise with the full knowledge of the Swedish Government. I trust you will understand this earnest appeal made to you personally at a moment of grave national concern.

GUSTAF ADOLF

760d.61/242 : Telegram

The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State

HELSINKI, October 11, 1939—3 p. m.⁴⁰

[Received 3 : 58 p. m.]

235. My telegram No. 227, October 9. Minister of Foreign Affairs today expressed the great satisfaction of his Government at the action

³⁹ Gustaf V.

⁴⁰ The following note by the Chief of the Division of European Affairs was penned upon this telegram: "This telegram was sent Wed[nesday] morning (Washington time) some seven hours before our 194 to Moscow [*infra*] was despatched. The inference is inevitable that the Finnish Minister here made a report that was none too accurate following his talk with the P[resident] Tuesday night. P[ierrepont] M[offat]."

of our Government in instructing our Ambassador at Moscow to make clear to the Soviet Government our attitude towards present situation between the Soviet Union and Finland. The Minister said that the action of the President upon the communication addressed to him by the President of Finland and delivered through the Finnish Minister as well as similar communication on behalf of the King of Sweden was greatly appreciated. Similar action had been taken by the Governments of the three Scandinavian countries through their diplomatic representatives in Moscow.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs said the Finnish Government was deeply affected also by the friendly attitude towards Finland reflected in the press of the United States, Great Britain, France and Scandinavia.

SCHOENFELD

760d.61/253a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the Soviet Union
(Steinhardt)*

WASHINGTON, October 11, 1939—5 p. m.

194. Please take the earliest possible occasion to convey the true reading of the following message to President Kalinin:

"The President of the United States sends his greetings to President Kalinin with the following personal message:

"While the United States is taking no part in existing controversies in Europe, the President wishes to call attention to the long-standing and deep friendship which exists between the United States and Finland. He feels that he can call this to the attention of President Kalinin because of their joint efforts a number of years ago which resulted in the resumption of friendly relations between the Soviet Union and the United States.⁴¹

"Such being the case the President expresses the earnest hope that the Soviet Union will make no demands on Finland which are inconsistent with the maintenance and development of amicable and peaceful relations between the two countries, and the independence of each.

"The President feels sure that President Kalinin and the Government of the Soviet Union will understand the friendly spirit in which this message is sent, and extends to President Kalinin an expression of his highest consideration. Franklin D. Roosevelt."

HULL

⁴¹ For correspondence regarding the resumption of diplomatic relations between the United States and the Soviet Union on November 16, 1933, see *Foreign Relations, The Soviet Union, 1933-1939*, pp. 1 ff.

760d.61/247: Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, October 12, 1939—10 a. m.

[Received October 12—9:55 a. m.]

732. The press this morning reports without comment the arrival of the Finnish delegate accompanied by two officials. It is perhaps significant that according to the press he was met by only minor officials of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs in addition to the staff of the Finnish Legation and the Swedish Minister to Moscow.⁴²

I am informed that the Finnish delegate saw no Soviet officials yesterday but that a meeting is expected this afternoon at 5 o'clock. Although in view of the extreme secrecy which surrounds such matters in the Soviet Union no official confirmation can be obtained of reports of extensive Soviet troop and air concentrations on the Finnish frontier, in view of the employment of similar tactics in respect of Estonia and Latvia it is extremely probable that such measures have been taken by the Soviet Government to support its demands on Finland. I do not believe, however, that any additional mobilization or substantial troop movements are contemplated for this purpose. As reported in 532, September 12, 2 p. m.,⁴³ at the time the mobilization was effected which preceded the Soviet invasion of Poland the strength of the Leningrad military district was substantially increased, movement of troops from Moscow to that area was noted. The Finnish Legation here has been somewhat concerned at the publicity given abroad to the measures of defense undertaken by Finland on the ground that such publicity may aggravate the Soviet Union and cause it to regard its prestige as a great power to be at stake. The Legation believes that while the precautionary measures in themselves may have a salutary effect in moderating the Soviet demands too great publicity might have the opposite effect.

STEINHARDT

760d.61/248: Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, October 12, 1939—4 p. m.

[Received October 12—2:18 p. m.]

734. For the Secretary and Under Secretary. Your 194, October 11, 5 p. m. I saw Molotov at 3 p. m., and handed him the President's

⁴² Wilhelm Winther.⁴³ Not printed.

message for immediate delivery to Kalinin. He promised to bring the message to Kalinin's attention at once and stated that while he could not speak for Kalinin he would be glad to give me his own opinion. He said that he anticipated the "American sentimental interest in Finland." He proceeded: "It must be borne in mind that Finland exists as an independent nation pursuant to the treaty of 1920 with the Soviet Union under the terms of which the area of Finland was substantially increased as a result of the volunteer action of the Soviet Government."⁴⁴

He then pointed out to me on a wall map the territorial benefits which Finland received under this treaty with particular emphasis on the surrender of the Petsamo district⁴⁵ by the Soviet Government. He continued: "It is not alamode for one country to take territory from another" and asserted that he did not believe that anyone could fairly criticize the recently concluded treaties with Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania⁴⁶ as constituting a seizure of territory inasmuch as these treaties had been negotiated in each instance in the mutual interests of the countries concerned by joint collaboration and that the return of Wilno by the Soviet Union to Lithuania clearly evidenced the Soviet Government's regard for the right of small countries. He added that the treaties with Latvia and Lithuania had been negotiated on a friendly basis and that in all of them the Soviet Union had evidenced its respect for the independence of the country concerned.

He concluded with the statement that in so far as concerned the negotiations about to be undertaken [with] Finland he was sure that these negotiations would reenforce the friendly relations between the two countries and would be carried on with due regard for the interests of both countries. He specifically stated that the proposed arrangement with Finland [""]will not in the slightest degree affect or impair the independence of Finland" and that if Finland had the same desire as the Soviet Government to arrive at an understanding having regard to the respective interests of the two countries he believed the matter could be arranged without any difficulty, if

⁴⁴ A Finnish national government, appointed by a legally elected Finnish Diet, declared the independence of Finland on December 6, 1917. This independence was recognized by the Bolshevik government of Russia on January 4, 1918. The treaty of peace between Finland and the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic was signed at Dorpat on October 14, 1920 (see footnote 24, p. 960). Recognition of Finnish independence, and of the Government of Finland *de facto*, by the United States occurred on May 7, 1919 (*Foreign Relations*, 1919, vol. II, p. 215). The unqualified "full recognition of Finland as of May 7, 1919" by the United States was accorded in the note of January 12, 1920 (*ibid.*, p. 226, and footnote 10).

⁴⁵ It was the Finnish contention that the cession of the Petsamo district with its ice-free port of Pechenga was the belated fulfillment of a declaration of Alexander II, made in 1864, as compensation for a strip of land ceded by the Duchy of Finland on the Karelian Isthmus.

⁴⁶ For correspondence concerning negotiations between the three Baltic States and the Soviet Union for Pacts of Mutual Assistance, see *Foreign Relations*, The Soviet Union, 1933-1939, pp. 934 ff.

desired. Kalinin is a mere figurehead and that all of the recent negotiations have been carried on by Stalin and Molotov in violation of Kalinin's presence. I regard the observations made by Molotov as virtually constituting the reply of the Soviet Government regardless of any formal answer that Kalinin may make.

STEINHARDT

760d.61/265 : Telegram

The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State

HELSINKI, October 13, 1939—noon.

[Received 12:59 p. m.]

244. Minister of Foreign Affairs made a statement to me this morning regarding the Moscow conversations of the Finnish delegation. He enjoined absolute secrecy and said his statement was only for your personal information because of his fear that should any knowledge of the details of the negotiations leak out the Soviet Government's prestige would become involved. He was therefore withholding complete information for the present even from the Scandinavian Governments with the possible exception of Sweden as well as from members of the Finnish Cabinet except an inner group.

His statement was to the effect that the Finnish representatives met yesterday with Russians including Stalin himself and Molotov. The Russians desired control of islands in Gulf of Finland commanding Kronstadt mentioned in previous correspondence and a strip of territory on the mainland near Terijoki. In view of British nickel concession in Petsamo area Russians argued they should be given concession for facilities at Hango on southwest coast. They also desired the whole of Fisher's Island off Petsamo (Kalastajasaarento). They made no mention of the Aland Islands. Stalin personally volunteered readiness to make territorial compensation to Finland which I presume refers to the two districts mentioned in my telegram No. 97, June 2, last.

Finnish representatives immediately said Hango proposal could not be discussed and that Finland itself desired the whole of Fisher's Island through which boundary now runs. Minister of Foreign Affairs thought last mentioned matter and coastal strip in southeast were brought up for bargaining purposes. He felt that for the present matter was one of skill in negotiation and secrecy and he spoke approvingly of coolness, under pressure of the Finnish delegates at Moscow. He emphasized that the foregoing was for you alone and that he did not know how to thank you for your friendly intervention at Moscow.

SCHOENFELD

760d.61/259 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, October 13, 1939—5 p. m.
[Received October 13—3:50 p. m.]

741. For the Secretary and Under Secretary. My 734, October 12, 4 p. m. The Finnish Minister called this morning and recited to me in the strictest confidence the following account of the meeting yesterday afternoon at 5 p. m., between the Finnish representatives, Stalin, Molotov and Potemkin.

Stalin put forward as his initial proposals the following:

1. A pact of mutual assistance.
2. An "arrangement" with respect to the Finnish islands in the Gulf of Finland off Kronstadt.
3. The cession of the Finnish portion of the Rybachi Peninsula so as to facilitate Soviet transit to the Bay of Varanger.
4. The leasing to the Soviet Union of a naval and aviation base at Hango, the Soviet forces to be limited to "four or five thousand men", and,
5. The cession of four Finnish districts which lie along the Gulf of Finland between Leningrad and Viborg and which are within approximately 20 miles of the city of Leningrad.

In return Stalin offered substantial territorial compensation in central or southern Karelia along the present Finnish-Soviet frontier.

Stalin at the same time stated that the Soviet Government had no "claims" to the Aaland Islands. The Finnish representative gained the impression that he had abandoned any intention he may have entertained of making any demand at this time in respect of these islands.

To these proposals the Finns replied:

(1) That they were willing [*unwilling?*] to agree to a pact of mutual assistance, whereupon Stalin proposed in lieu thereof a pact limited to the mutual defense of the Gulf of Finland. This proposal was also rejected by the Finns who are of the opinion that Stalin will not press this point.

(2) That as part of a generally satisfactory settlement they would be prepared to cede the islands in the Gulf of Finland to the Soviet Government as they recognize the strategic importance of those islands to the Soviet Government in connection with the defense of Kronstadt and Leningrad.

(3) That as part of a generally satisfactory settlement they would be entirely agreeable to the cession of the Finnish portion of the Rybachi Peninsula recognizing the validity of the Soviet desire to have access to the ice-free Bay of Varanger over the small strip of land involved which is of no value to Finland provided however that the fishing rights granted to Finland under the existing treaty are preserved.

(4) As to the leasing of a base at Hango, Finland could not consent to the "touching" of the Finnish mainland with the exception of the small strip in the far north referred to in (3) above.

(5) As to the cession of the four districts in the neighborhood of Leningrad, Finland recognizes the undesirability from a Soviet point of view of having the Finnish frontier practically within artillery range of Leningrad and is accordingly disposed to negotiate this point. The Minister stated to me that the Finnish representatives hoped to persuade Stalin to reduce his request to two districts in view of the fact that the Finnish population of the four districts totaled approximately 50,000. The Finns do not, however, regard this point as insurmountable provided Stalin is otherwise reasonable but say that it will raise difficult problems involving the movement of population and fortifications.

The Minister expressed the opinion that if Stalin does not insist on the base at Hango all of the other requests which he and the other Finnish representatives regard as reasonable, can be negotiated on a satisfactory basis particularly if adequate territorial compensation for Finland is obtained in Karelia. He said that Stalin's attitude throughout the conference had been cordial and affable and in no sense insistent or threatening and that he regards the present status of the matter as such a substantial modification of what the Finnish Government understood Stalin's intentions to be as to constitute a satisfactory basis for negotiations provided Stalin does not increase his demands as the negotiations progress. The Minister concluded by expressing his deep appreciation of the President's message to which he attributed the moderate attitude thus far shown by the Soviet Government and added that in the absence of the message peremptory demands of a more far-reaching nature would undoubtedly have been made and insisted upon.

The Finnish representatives are now awaiting instructions from Helsinki and the conferences will be resumed at 5:00 o'clock this afternoon provided the instructions are received in time. The Minister expressed doubt that they would be received before tomorrow.

STEINHARDT

760d.61/270: Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, October 14, 1939—3 p. m.
[Received October 14—10:10 a. m.]

748. My 741, October 13, 5 p. m. I am informed in strict confidence that the Finnish representatives received their instructions at 3 a. m. this morning and that there will probably be a meeting at the Kremlin at 5 o'clock this afternoon. It was intimated that the instructions did

not materially alter the status of the negotiations and that point 4 of the Soviet proposals as reported in my telegram under reference will constitute the principal difficulty.

STEINHARDT

760d.61/278 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, October 15, 1939—noon.

[Received October 15—6:30 a. m.]

752. My telegram No. 741, October 13, 5 p. m. After two meetings in the Kremlin yesterday afternoon and evening, the Finnish representatives and the Finnish Minister to Moscow left at midnight by train for Helsinki. It is believed that they are returning for consultation and are expected in Moscow within a few days. The Moscow press this morning makes no reference to the foregoing.

Repeated to Helsinki.

STEINHARDT

760d.61/278 : Telegram

The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State

HELSINKI, October 15, 1939—2 p. m.

[Received 5:33 p. m.]

252. My telegram No. 244, October 13. It was announced last night that special representative Paasikivi and other members of Finnish delegation are returning to Helsinki and arriving tomorrow. Minister for Foreign Affairs informed me today that while the Russians at yesterday's meeting had introduced certain new "ideas" they involved no change of substance and Finnish delegation are ready to return here to discuss them in view of difficulty of dealing with such matters by telegraph. He also thought it likely that Minister Paasikivi desired to be at his post in Stockholm during forthcoming meeting of northern chiefs of state.^{46a}

Minister of Foreign Affairs said he had no doubt that your prompt intervention at Moscow prior to the beginning of conversations between Finnish delegation and Soviet authorities had important bearing on apparent moderation of Soviet attitude. He added that he considered the assurance given by Molotov to Ambassador Steinhardt that the Soviet Union had no designs on Finnish independence or integrity a significant commitment inasmuch as it had been given not to Finland but to the United States.

^{46a} At Stockholm, October 18-19, 1939.

Erkko told me that local military authorities today reported presence in the Baltic sailing westerly direction of Soviet battleship *Marat* and substantial escort. Despatch of this squadron might be designed to offer naval demonstration though there had as yet been no mention at Moscow of the Aland Islands. He said that Swedish Government's attitude which had not been formulated in any communication here would presumably hinge entirely on the course of the Moscow negotiations and I infer he meant by this on the matter of the Aland Islands.

He mentioned with more than a hint of irony that constant expressions from the Germans to the effect that if Finland had accepted non-aggression pact proposed last May⁴⁷ position of this country would now be better, seemed to overlook the fact that non-aggression pacts of Latvia and Estonia with Germany had not served those countries very well. He felt this the more strongly since he had asked for nothing from the Germans.

The Minister intimated complete awareness of possible application by the Russians to present [conversations?] of the policy of inflating objectives but said smilingly that for the present he was having more difficulty in keeping his own military men who are uninformed under restraint than he expected to have in dealing with the Russians. His general attitude reflected continued quiet resolution, patience and cautious forbearance.

SCHOENFELD

760d.61/277: Telegram

The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State

HELSINKI, October 15, 1939—4 p. m.

[Received 4:07 p. m.]

254. Minister of Foreign Affairs asked me as a personal matter today in what manner Finnish Government could best convey to our Government its appreciation of action taken lately at Moscow on behalf of Finland. I intimated that perhaps it might desire to send a personal message from the President of Finland to the President of the United States through the Finnish Minister at Washington.

Spontaneous expressions of gratitude have been universal among all classes here and marked by obvious sincerity. In referring to this today the Minister for Foreign Affairs said warmth of feeling aroused here by your action was measure of depth of anxiety in every Finnish heart. Incidental circumstance seems to be complete disillusion among elements previously inclined to count on support from Germany with

⁴⁷ Declined by Finland prior to May 19, 1939.

increased tendency to look to the United States as source of strength in time of trial.

SCHOENFELD

760d.61/283 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, October 16, 1939—9 a. m.

[Received 9:15 a. m.]

755. For the Secretary and the Under Secretary. My 734, October 12, 4 p. m. At midnight last night a note was delivered from Molotov enclosing a communication from Kalinin in reply to the President's message October 12.⁴⁸ The following is a full translation of Molotov's covering note:

"October 15, 1939. Mr. Ambassador: I have the honor to forward to you, for transmission to the President of the United States, the enclosed reply⁴⁹ of the President of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, M. I. Kalinin to the message addressed to him by the President of the United States transmitted by you to me on October 12.

I beg you, Mr. Ambassador, to accept the assurances of my highest consideration. (Signed) V. Molotov, People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs."

The following is a full translation of the enclosed reply of President Kalinin.

"October 15, 1939. Mr. President: I thank you for your greetings and for the friendly sentiments expressed in your message transmitted to me on October 12th.

I consider it appropriate to remind you, Mr. President, that the state independence of the Finnish Republic was recognized by the free will of the Soviet Government on December 31, 1919 [1917], and that the sovereignty of Finland was guaranteed to it by the Peace Treaty of October 14, 1920, between the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic and Finland. By the above-mentioned acts of the Soviet Government the basic principles of the reciprocal relations between the Soviet Union and Finland were defined. The present negotiations between the Soviet Government and the Government of Finland are also being conducted in conformity with these principles. Despite the tendentious versions which are being disseminated by circles evidently not interested in European peace, the sole aim of the negotiations referred to above is the consolidation of the reciprocal relations between the Soviet Union and Finland and a strengthening of friendly cooperation between both countries in the cause of guaranteeing the security of the Soviet Union and Finland. I beg you, Mr.

⁴⁸ The President's message was dated October 11, 1939, and delivered on October 12.

⁴⁹ Sent to the President at 1:40 p. m., October 16, 1939.

President, to accept the expression of my deep respect. (Signed) M. Kalinin.

Franklin D. Roosevelt, President of the United States."

STEINHARDT

760d.61/298 : Telegram

The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State

HELSINKI, October 18, 1939—11 a. m.

[Received October 18—9:28 a. m.]

260. My telegram No. 254, October 15. I have received from Foreign Office informal note advising me that yesterday the President of Finland through Finnish Minister at Washington sent following message to the President of the United States:

"In the name of the people of Finland, I herewith beg to express to you and through you to the great American people the sincere gratitude felt by the people of Finland for the sympathy and moral support you and the people of the United States have shown us. Your personal valuable assistance and interest in Finland's fate and difficult problems will never be forgotten in this country."

SCHOENFELD

760d.61/314 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, October 19, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received October 19—1:55 p. m.]

775. The Soviet press up to the present time has not reported the departure of the Finnish representatives last Saturday⁵¹ for Helsinki and has since that date made no reference to the negotiations with Finland. The meeting of the northern countries at Stockholm⁵² which opened yesterday was reported in a brief despatch today which gives no indication of the subjects to be discussed.

I am informed in strict confidence that no decision will be taken by the Finnish Government in respect of the negotiations with the Soviet Government until after the termination of the Stockholm Conference. The Finnish representatives are expected to leave Helsinki on Saturday and to arrive in Moscow Monday morning.

STEINHARDT

⁵¹ October 14.

⁵² For the text of the message sent by President Roosevelt to the King of Sweden on this occasion, and for the reply by the King on October 19, 1939, see Department of State *Bulletin*, October 21, 1939, p. 403.

760d.61/321 : Telegram

The Minister in Sweden (Sterling) to the Secretary of State

STOCKHOLM, October 20, 1939—11 a. m.

[Received October 20—10:10 a. m.]

158. I had a conversation this morning with Sandler who gave me the following in strictest confidence.

The situation in connection with Finland and Russia is very grave. We shall know more about it early next week when Paasikivi returns to Moscow. The outrageous demands made by the Soviet Government are entirely plain to Finland. They not only infringe upon her integrity and sovereignty but impair her political independence. He could not divulge them specifically since he felt that only the Finnish Government should do so. Sweden is most grateful to President Roosevelt for his *démarche* in Moscow but the Soviet Government has not yet withdrawn or modified these demands. In them is a threat to all of Scandinavia, particularly to Sweden, to Norway and to Denmark in a lesser degree. The four northern countries are working in the closest harmony. He could not state what Sweden would do in assistance to Finland if war broke out between Finland and Russia until the situation was further developed. He felt that a further message from President Roosevelt to Moscow, if the events of next week warranted, might have a repeated restraining effect and he would perhaps call me to discuss the matter.

STERLING

760d.61/322 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, October 20, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received October 20—2:18 p. m.]

781. My telegram No. 741, October 13, 2 [5] p. m. In discussing the Finnish-Soviet negotiations a member of the German Embassy here stated that while the Soviet Government was not consulting with the German Government Molotov had nevertheless kept the German Ambassador here⁵⁸ informed. My informant was aware of the details of the Soviet proposals to Finland, as well as the contents of Kalinin's reply to the President. He stated that his Ambassador had gained the impression that the Soviet Government intended to insist on the proposals taken back to Helsinki by the Finnish representatives but would not raise any additional points and he felt that as it might

⁵⁸ Friedrich Werner, Count von der Schulenburg.

be difficult for Finland to accept all of the Soviet proposals as made, the possibility of a crisis between the two countries could not be excluded.

While the foregoing may have been conveyed in order to support the Soviet position in its negotiations with Finland it may, on the other hand, accurately reflect the intentions of the Soviet Government.

STEINHARDT

760d.61/325 : Telegram

The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State

HELSINKI, October 21, 1939—7 p. m.

[Received October 21—2:52 p. m.]

273. Finnish delegation augmented by Minister of Finance left tonight to resume conversations at Moscow after constant Cabinet consultations yesterday and today. There was impressive popular demonstration of patriotic fervor on their departure. Tanner's inclusion in the delegation insures its representative character since he is Social Democratic Party leader and considered strongest figure in the Government.

SCHOENFELD

760d.61/330 : Telegram

The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State

HELSINKI, October 23, 1939—11 a. m.

[Received 2:45 p. m.]

275. My telegram No. 252, October 15. Minister for Foreign Affairs informed me this morning that Soviet authorities had in fact raised additional far-reaching issues beyond those previously reported. Among them were extensive transfer of territory on Carelian Isthmus containing some 60,000 Finnish inhabitants and effort to exclude Sweden from proposed remilitarization of Aland Islands which he described as effort to "torpedo" that arrangement. There had been also suggestion of concluding mutual assistance pact including revival of principle of so-called indirect aggression which ostensibly led to failure of negotiations last summer between Soviet Union and Western powers.^{53a}

There had been some thought of adding General Walden another signatory of Dorpat Treaty of 1920 to Finnish delegation prior to its departure October 21, but this had been abandoned in order to minimize military aspect of Moscow conversations. Delegation had arrived at Moscow this morning.

^{53a} For correspondence regarding the Anglo-French-Soviet negotiations attempting to reach an agreement against aggression, see pp. 232 ff.

The Minister said that any agreement resulting from present negotiations would in any case have to be submitted to individual party groups prior to secret session of the Diet which would have to give its formal approval before arrangement could be formulated as a treaty or otherwise. In the meantime he felt easier about possibility of reaching agreement and seemed to base his relative optimism largely on belief that Russians would not press matters to the point of using force. His advices confirmed existence of serious deficiencies in Russian military organization which had great difficulties with poor transport and inadequate supplies and equipment even during present peaceful occupation of Estonia. Finnish military position was improving every day following receipt of quantities of armament from Sweden and rising production of domestic munitions plants.

SCHOENFELD

760d.61/334 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, October 24, 1939—2 p. m.

[Received October 24—11:50 a. m.]

792. For the President, the Secretary and Under Secretary. My telegram No. 790, October 24.⁵⁴ I am informed in strict confidence, with an urgent request for secrecy, that the two meetings in the Kremlin last night at which Stalin and Molotov, the Finnish representative Paasikivi and the Finnish Finance Minister were present went very badly and ended in an impasse. This was due, it was said, to the Soviet insistence upon a base and the right to station troops at Hango and the refusal of Stalin to modify the territorial extent of the Soviet demand for the cession of the Finnish communes north of Leningrad. As had been anticipated the other Soviet proposals involving the Finnish Islands in the Gulf of Finland and the Rybachi Peninsula presented no difficulties. The Finnish delegate Paasikivi and the Minister for Finance may return to Helsinki tonight. I received the impression that the negotiations had virtually broken down over the question of a Soviet base at Hango Bar. Unless Stalin alters his [position?] a serious situation will arise.

In view of the delicacy of the present situation the foregoing was conveyed with the urgent request that it be held in absolute secrecy for the information of the President, Secretary and Under Secretary alone as there is particular concern lest this information return to Helsinki via the Finnish Minister in Washington.

STEINHARDT

⁵⁴ Not printed.

760d.61/336½ : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, October 24, 1939—7 p. m.
[Received October 24—2:30 p. m.]

794. My telegram No. 792, October 24, 2 p. m. In the course of my visit to Potemkin this afternoon I inquired of him as to the status of the Finnish-Soviet negotiations. He replied that he had not been present at the conferences last night and therefore was without current information but that it was his impression that the present Soviet proposals being "extremely moderate" Finland would be expected to accede thereto.

STEINHARDT

760d.61/348 : Telegram

The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State

HELSINKI, October 26, 1939—2 p. m.
[Received October 26—1:23 p. m.]

288. My telegram No. 282, October 24.⁵⁵ Minister of Foreign Affairs asked me to call on him at 1 o'clock today and said that in view of the friendly action of our Government on behalf of Finland he desired to inform me of present status of negotiations with Soviet Union as reported by Finnish delegates who arrived this morning. He said the Russians were still insistent on a 30-year concession of naval base at Hango where they would base not exceeding 4,000 Soviet troops. They also desired territory on Carelian Isthmus from line drawn eastward to present frontier from a point west of and including island of Bjorko⁵⁶ which would take in good part of first line of Finnish fortifications. Compensation offered would be about double the area desired and in Repola and Porajärvi districts. Further, Russians desired whole of Fisher's Island off Petsamo with right to fortify it on the ground that they must be prepared to defend that area against both the British and the Germans. As for the Aland Islands the Russians are willing to disinterest themselves provided Finland took sole responsibility for remilitarization there. The Minister said that at latest meetings with Finnish delegates Stalin had conducted the negotiations practically alone though Molotov was present. Latter had asked full report of one question during the meeting, this being whether Finland desired war with the Soviet Union, which question Finnish representatives had merely answered

⁵⁵ Not printed.

⁵⁶ Koivisto.

by asking him to repeat the question. Nevertheless conversation had been businesslike and not dictatorial on Soviet side.

Minister for Foreign Affairs deplored the fact that apparently through British sources world press had been enabled to make reference to [the] demand regarding Hango. He understood this point had been raised during British negotiations with Soviet Union last summer and thus British Government obtained knowledge of it.

He concluded by expressing his personal conviction that Finland should not yield the point regarding Hango which he felt would have disastrous consequences that would be equivalent to complete surrender of principle that territory was inviolable. He had reason to believe Russians were reducing forces near the border and in any case could not fight on such an issue. He intimated that other members of the Government might be more timid in this respect but he felt Russians would not go to war to enforce the demand. Finnish delegates would return to Moscow in 3 to 4 days after taking some rest here but the Minister was considering whether he should not suggest that negotiations be continued in Helsinki.⁵⁷

SCHOENFELD

760d.61/355 : Telegram

The Minister in Sweden (Sterling) to the Secretary of State

STOCKHOLM, October 27, 1939—6 p. m.

[Received 6:15 p. m.]

168. Sandler asked me to see him this afternoon. He stated that the Finnish-Russian negotiations were in a most serious stage. He recalled that in our last interview (Legation's 158, October 20, 11 a. m.) he had mentioned that the Russian demands not only infringed upon Finland's sovereignty and integrity but impaired her political independence. He stated that the revised demands still infringe upon her integrity and sovereignty and while they do not directly affect Finland's independence or assume the position of neutrality, such as would follow from a mutual assistance pact, they did so indirectly by including Hango on the mainland as a military and naval base, perhaps as an air base. This if granted would in effect result in the loss of Finland's political independence. Not only that but the cession of Hango would entirely change the situation in the Baltic and would be a direct danger to Sweden. Russia's plans in the event

⁵⁷In his telegram No. 291, October 26, the Minister sent the additional information that the Soviet Union had "abandoned previous demand for a mutual assistance pact and the figure of 4,000 troops to be garrisoned at Hango was a reduction from a previously higher figure which was not mentioned to me." (760d.61/349) The Soviet proposals of October 14 had mentioned that not to exceed 5,000 men were to be stationed at Hango.

of Finland's rejection of the demands are an unknown quantity but should Russia attempt to enforce them by an invasion of Finland, Sweden and the other Scandinavian countries would consider very seriously giving military aid to Finland. He said that in all probability the Department had knowledge of the full demands through our Legation in Helsinki but if not he believed they could be obtained from the Finnish Minister at Washington.

With this preliminary statement Sandler asked very earnestly if President Roosevelt would not make another approach immediately to Moscow. He said "immediately" because the Finnish delegation has planned to leave Helsinki for Moscow on Saturday (tomorrow) evening with the final limit of cessions to Russia and it was felt that Moscow would probably reject them when presented. He pointed out that one reason for the absolute secrecy surrounding the negotiations was to enable the Soviet Government to modify the demands without loss of face. If President Roosevelt's appeal was communicated to Russia before the arrival of Finnish delegates there was still some hope that the demands would be modified. A salient point he stated in the exchange of notes between President Roosevelt and President Kalinin was that the latter did not mention in his reply the treaty of nonaggression between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and Finland of January 22 [21], 1932⁵⁸ and its subsequent prolongation of April 7, 1934⁵⁹ whereby the existing frontiers were guaranteed and upon which Finland was largely basing her resistance.

Sandler asked if the President's decision could be cabled to me at once and given to him confidentially so that in the event that the decision was in the affirmative he could advise the Finnish delegation to delay their departure in order to arrive in Moscow after the President's communication. He said that he was taking this initiative with the knowledge of Finland. He added that no replies had yet been received to the identic notes of October 12 from the Scandinavian powers to the Soviet Government.

STERLING

760d.61/855 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Minister in Sweden (Sterling)

WASHINGTON, October 28, 1939—4 p. m.

71. Your 168, October 27, 6 p. m. I have discussed the substance of your telegram with the President who feels that with his message

⁵⁸ Signed at Helsinki, January 21, 1932; for text, see League of Nations Treaty Series, vol. CLVII, p. 393.

⁵⁹ Protocol prolonging the treaty of nonaggression to December 31, 1945, signed at Moscow, April 7, 1934; for text, see League of Nations Treaty Series, vol. CLV, p. 325.

to President Kalinin of October 11 and his later message to the King of Sweden at the time of the Stockholm Conference he has taken all steps that he usefully could in relation to the current Finnish-Russian negotiations. Please inform Sandler expressing the President's appreciation for this new evidence of a desire on Sweden's part to cooperate with us wherever practicable.

HULL

760d.61/358 : Telegram

The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State

HELSINKI, October 28, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received 6:18 p. m.]

295. My telegram number 288, October 26. Minister for Foreign Affairs informed me this afternoon that Molotov had recently asked German Ambassador at Moscow to use his influence with the Swedish Government through Swedish Minister there with a view to having Swedish Government urge upon Finnish Government acceptance of Soviet demand regarding concession for naval base at Hango which Soviet Foreign Commissar described as a proposed Russian Gibraltar. Swedish Government had taken the position in reply to this *démarche* that it would support the Finnish Government in its opposition to this demand.

Erkko then read me a personal note in German which he said had already been sent by him to the German Minister here and to the effect that the German Government in view of its well known and frequent declarations regarding dictation imposed upon it by other nations was in particularly good position to appreciate that Finland could not permit any breach in its essential defenses such as would be involved in the proposed Gibraltar in the Baltic especially considering that the power demanding it already had such strong positions on the south shore and islands of that sea. The personal note was couched in correct but unmistakable language and the Minister for Foreign Affairs expressed to me his belief that its contents would be known promptly in Moscow and serve as preliminary notice of the forthcoming answer of the Finnish Government to latest Soviet proposals.

Meanwhile Minister of Foreign Affairs said Finnish parliamentary party leaders had been consulted on various points relating to proposed response to Soviet Government since it was the intention of the Government here to have full support of united nation in this decisive stage of the negotiations, though it was also intended to frame the Finnish statement in most appropriate manner possible with conscious appreciation of the unaccountable reactions of the Asiatic minds at Moscow which might easily be more dangerous on unessentials than

on matters of substance. I did not press the Minister for details believing that the essence of the situation was presented in the foregoing. He said he did not know when Finnish delegation would return to Russia, it being intended to postpone return as long as possible within reason.

SCHOENFELD

760d.61/360 : Telegram

The Minister in Sweden (Sterling) to the Secretary of State

STOCKHOLM, October 29, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received October 29—1:30 p. m.]

173. Your 71, October 28, 4 p. m. Your message conveyed to Sandler this morning. He was extremely disappointed and again emphasized the gravity of the situation pointing out the possibility of a war involving all the Scandinavian countries. He said "we in Sweden feel strongly that a further *démarche* by President Roosevelt would have great effect." He earnestly hoped for a reconsideration by the President of his decision.

The renewed discussions at Moscow are to begin Thursday or Friday next.⁶⁰

STERLING

760d.61/368 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

MOSCOW, October 30, 1939—8 p. m.

[Received October 30—2:45 p. m.]

837. I have just been informed that the British broadcast from London at 7 p. m., Moscow time in reporting the expected departure tomorrow of the Finnish delegation for Moscow stated that a Finnish newspaper this evening had published a report alleging "when Paasikivi was in Moscow a high official of the American Embassy handed him a personal message of sympathy from President Roosevelt asking to be kept informed of the progress of the negotiations." I need hardly assure the Department that this report, assuming it to have been published in a Finnish newspaper,⁶¹ is completely without

⁶⁰ November 2 or 3.

⁶¹ The Minister in Finland had informed the Department in his telegram No. 298, October 30, that the report published in the Finnish press had been reprinted from the Stockholm newspaper *Social-Demokraten* (760d.61/367).

foundation. Neither I nor any member of the Embassy staff saw Paasikivi during his visits to Moscow.

Repeated to Helsinki.

STEINHARDT

760d.61/386 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, October 28 [30], 1939—9 p. m.

[Received October 30—3 p. m.]

836. Personal for the Secretary and Under Secretary. My telegram No. 828, October 28, 9 p. m.⁶² The Swedish Minister called this morning under instructions from his Foreign Minister to discuss with me the advisability of my suggesting to the President a further indication of American interest in an amicable outcome of the Finnish-Soviet negotiations. I inferred that his [inquiry?] was preliminary to a consideration by the Swedish Minister of Foreign Affairs of an approach along the same lines in Washington. I told him that in my opinion the present situation would hardly justify me in making such a recommendation to my Government but that if the trend of the negotiations now about to be resumed gave indication of an impending rupture I would bear his suggestion in mind.

He said that his Government continues to regard the Soviet demand for a base at Hango as the vital point at issue and is gravely concerned over the present *status quo* as he doubts the willingness of either side to make concessions on this point. He said he understood that in order to meet the Finnish objection to a Soviet base on the Finnish mainland the Soviet Government had offered to dig a canal to separate the proposed base at Hango from the mainland but that this puerile suggestion had been rejected by the Finns. He said he also understood that the Finns had offered to cede sufficient territory to the Soviet Government to remove the Finnish frontier to a distance of 50 kilometers from Leningrad but that the Finns had thus far been unwilling to agree to a closer approach of the Soviet frontier to Viborg.

The Minister did not know why his Government is so concerned at this particular moment. The one indication in regard to the future course of these negotiations which I have received since the departure of the Finnish delegation (see my telegram No. 828, October 28,

⁶² Not printed.

9 p. m.) was more optimistic than previous information from the same source.⁶⁴

STEINHARDT

760d.61/373 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, November 1, 1939—2 a. m.

[Received 2:30 a. m.]

844. For the President and the Secretary and the Under Secretary. My 838, October 30, 9 p. m.⁶⁵ The Finnish Minister called this afternoon at 6 o'clock⁶⁶ and set forth his understanding of the present status of the Finnish-Soviet negotiations as follows:

1. The Finnish Government has offered the northern tip of the Rybachi Peninsula. The Soviet Government desires the southern part as well primarily for the purpose of digging a canal to the Bay of Varanger. The Minister gave it as his opinion that the Finnish Government is prepared to meet the Soviet request.

2. The Soviet Russian Government is prepared to reduce its demands to six of the islands in the Gulf of Finland including Hogland in lieu of the eight originally demanded. The Finnish Government has made a counter-offer of five of the islands and the southern part of Hogland, the northern part to be retained by Finland. The Minister gave it as his opinion that if necessary the Finnish Government would cede all of Hogland.

3. The Finnish Government has offered to cede territory in the vicinity of Leningrad so that the Finnish frontier will be distant 60 kilometers from Leningrad. This territory constitutes approximately three of the four communes originally demanded by the Soviet Government. As to the fourth commune the Soviet Government is prepared to agree to the retention by Finland of such part thereof as will constitute adequate protection for Viborg. The Finnish Minister gave it as his opinion that this particular demand no longer presents any serious difficulty.

4. The Finnish Government has decided to refuse to grant the Soviet Government a naval base at Hango.

5. The Soviet Government has offered to consent to the fortification by Finland alone of the Aland Islands without Swedish participation. The Minister was not clear as to whether this offer by the Soviet Government was contingent on the granting by Finland of a base at Hango.

6. The Soviet Government has offered to cede approximately 5,400 square kilometers of mostly timber lands to the Finnish Government

⁶⁴ The Ambassador had reported in his telegram that a member of the German Embassy in Moscow had "the impression [that] the Soviet Government is now prepared to modify in some respects the demands presented to Finland in order to achieve an amicable and peaceful solution." (760d.61/361)

⁶⁵ Not printed.

⁶⁶ Undoubtedly October 31 is meant.

in central Karelia. That is slightly more than twice the area to be ceded by Finland to the Soviet Government. The Minister stated that this offer was not unsatisfactory to the Finnish Government. In conclusion the Minister gave it as his opinion that if the Soviet Government was prepared to withdraw its demand for a base at Hango the negotiations could be speedily closed.

In Molotov's review of foreign affairs before the Supreme Soviet delivered at 9 o'clock tonight he dwelt at length upon the Finnish negotiations. Although the text of his remarks is not yet available,⁶⁷ I believe the following is an accurate summary of that portion of his speech. Molotov reviewed the Soviet proposals in regard to the territory north of Leningrad, certain islands in the Gulf of Finland desired for the purpose of establishing a naval base and certain frontier rectifications in the northern part of Karelia. In exchange he stated the Soviet Union was willing to give Finland double the amount of territory in central Karelia and to withdraw the Soviet objections to the fortifications of the Aland Islands by Finland but without the participation of any third power. He appears to have made no reference to Hango or a naval base on the Finnish mainland but to have referred only to a base on an island in the Gulf of Finland presumably Hogland.

In respect to the President's message to Kalinin, Molotov stated that it was in violation of American neutrality. He then added that the Soviet Union had given Finland its independence in 1917⁶⁸ but that the Philippines had yet to receive theirs from the United States!

It appears that Molotov by failing to mention Hango and referring only to a base on one of the islands in the vicinity of Kronstadt was in effect announcing the abandonment of the Soviet demand for a base on the Finnish mainland. In this connection I refer to my 828, October 28, 9 p. m.⁶⁹

In the light of the foregoing I am now inclined to believe that there should be no great difficulty in arriving at a satisfactory solution of the Finnish-Soviet issue which, unless the Soviet Government next undertakes some form of "amicable cooperation" with the Philippines, should now allow me a night's sleep.

A full summary of Molotov's speech will be telegraphed in the morning when the text should be available.⁷⁰

STEINHARDT

⁶⁷ For the summary of Molotov's speech of October 31, 1939, before the Special Fifth Session of the Supreme Council of the Soviet Union, see the Ambassador's telegram No. 847, November 1, 1939, *Foreign Relations, The Soviet Union, 1933-1939*, p. 786.

⁶⁸ See the photographic reproduction of the original resolution of the Council of People's Commissars, dated December 18, 1917, to present before the Central Executive Committee of the Bolshevik government the recognition of the sovereign independence of the Republic of Finland, in *New York Times*, November 27, 1939, p. 4.

⁶⁹ Not printed; but see footnote 64, p. 986.

⁷⁰ Telegram No. 846, November 1, 1939, from the Ambassador in the Soviet Union, *Foreign Relations, The Soviet Union, 1933-1939*, p. 785.

760d.61/376 : Telegram

The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State

HELSINKI, November 1, 1939.

[Received November 1—8:40 a. m.]

299. Finnish delegation left last night for Moscow. Authorized statement this morning [declared] that Government met yesterday under chairmanship President Republic, approved counter-proposal to be submitted Moscow and instructions for delegation.

Molotov's speech last night [at] special session [of] Supreme Soviet: press publishes official statement Finnish Foreign Office as follows:

"In matters mentioned by Molotov Soviet Union expressed desire [to] discuss with Finland. By making public Soviet Union's standpoint at time when Finland's plenipotentiaries have just left Helsinki to deliver Finnish Government's answer to Soviet Government, Commissar Molotov has created new situation. Hitherto negotiations have been confidential and Finland has independently and without pressure from any foreign power whatever sought without prejudice [to] find solution [to] questions presented, notwithstanding their difficulty in view of neutrality policy Finland has embraced. Thus Finland has also wished have regard for Soviet Union's effort to make effective safety of Leningrad but without risking its own security.

It's too early say how Molotov's statement may affect Finnish Government's standpoint. In any event that statement has produced natural delay continuing negotiations.

Since Commissar Molotov in his speech said Soviet Union has right and obligation to take effective measures contemplating safeguarding its security in Gulf Finland and on border nearest Leningrad, Finnish Foreign Office points out that Soviet Union in its Nonaggression Pact concluded 1932 with Finland bound itself to respect boundaries established between Finland and Soviet Union in peace treaty at Dorpat and to solve all differences of opinion between two countries by pacific means. Finland will trust that Soviet Union respects this agreement whose continued validity to end year 1945 was agreed between Finland and Soviet Union 1934."

Repeated Embassy, Moscow.

SCHOENFELD

760d.61/388 : Telegram

The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State

HELSINKI, November 1, 1939.

[Received November 1—2:22 p. m.]

301. My 299 today. Afternoon press publishes authorized statement Finnish Government learned Molotov's speech 1 o'clock this morning, first impulse being [to] recall delegation [and] consider new situation, but when full Cabinet met found situation undergone no

change requiring interruption negotiations, since desires expressed Molotov's speech no surprise and Finnish Government's answer based on proposals set forth [in] Molotov's speech. Statement says there was surprise, however, Soviet suggestion third power had exercised pressure on Finland regarding which Government has no knowledge, likewise that Molotov should have implied danger threatens Soviet Union from Finland which only desires maintain friendly relations doing nothing possibly dangerous [to the] former. Statement adds Finnish delegation crossed border this forenoon following telephone communication with delegation at border.

Embassy, Moscow, informed.

SCHOENFELD

760d.61/386 : Telegram

The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State

HELSINKI, November 2, 1939.

[Received November 2—8:45 a. m.]

304. My 299 and 301 yesterday. Finnish Foreign Minister in speech last night said publication by one party substance negotiations just as delegates other party leaving resume conversations creates peculiar atmosphere, illuminated only Soviet view [of] issues which, though involving perhaps minor territorial changes for Russia, regarded here not as measures [to] enhance latter's security but merely as Russian imperialism. Finnish policy based principles absolute neutrality, right self-defense, Finland considering itself obligated resist any attempt [of] third power trying use its territory against Soviet Union, expressed readiness take measures strengthen security Leningrad, Finnish Gulf, proving no hostile spirit towards Soviet Union. Present negotiations also based treaties freely made, situation leads inquiry what significance attributable new agreements if those in force not respected. Minister said duty deny claim Finland [was] subjected [to] pressure or received advice from any foreign state. Finland showed readiness [to make] far reaching concessions Soviet Union in proposals being submitted, but there's limit even for small nations. Added Finnish people united as always serious times, no reason think solution impossible, with due regard vital interests creating conditions peace, friendly relations between two peoples, foundation happy future.

SCHOENFELD

760d.61/389 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, November 2, 1939—2 p. m.

[Received November 2—11:36 a. m.]

849. My 847, November 1, 10 p. m. The remarks of Kuznetsov,⁷¹ the Secretary of the Party Committee in Leningrad, in presenting the customary motion to approve Molotov's speech as published in the press yesterday contained a more direct threat to Finland. After accusing the Finnish "ruling circles" of delaying the negotiations he stated: "I do not know on whom the representatives of these ruling circles are counting. It is well known to all of us that certain governments in Europe also counted on someone. They hoped for and even obtained guarantees but what occurred is also well known to all of us. Is it not clear that the sole guaranty, the sole hope for the preservation of peace and for the security and independence of Finland is the Soviet Union alone?"

The obvious reference to the fate of Poland contained in Kuznetsov's remarks is apparently part of an attempt by the Soviet Government to create a menacing atmosphere prior to the resumption of the negotiations with the Finnish delegates who arrived in Moscow this morning and to impress the Finnish representatives with the necessity of meeting the Soviet demands. As the principal point at issue remains the question of the location of a naval base, Molotov's failure to specify whether the Soviet Union will insist on a base at Hango or elsewhere on the mainland or perhaps accept a base upon an island, together with his reference to Soviet concession in the matter of the fortification of the Aland Islands, would indicate that the Soviet Government still envisages the possibility of a compromise which will then be presented as a satisfaction of the Soviet demands as set forth in Molotov's speech. In view of Finnish reaction to Molotov's speech the dangers inherent in the employment of such tactics on the part of the Soviet Government are apparent.

Repeated to Helsinki.

STEINHARDT

⁷¹ Alexey Alexandrovich Kuznetsov, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party in Leningrad.

760d.61/398: Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, November 3, 1939—3 p. m.
[Received November 3—1:10 p. m.]

856. For the President, Secretary and Under Secretary. Today's *Pravda* which did not appear until 2:30 p. m., contains an editorial on the front page entitled "Concerning the Question of the Soviet-Finnish Negotiations" the first sub-heading of which reads "The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Finland Calls for a War with the Soviet Union".

After reviewing the Soviet proposals and negotiations as presented in Molotov's speech the editorial charges that certain Finnish leaders, the Finnish press and the foreign press have distorted the essence of the Soviet proposals with provocative aims and accuses the Finnish Government of having adopted extraordinary measures which can only be regarded as preparation for war. The editorial then asserts that the speech of the Finnish Foreign Minister on the day following Molotov's speech can only be regarded as an appeal to war against the Soviet Union and quotes the alleged remarks of Erkkko to the effect that the Soviet demand for the removal of the frontier from Leningrad was Russian imperialism which Finland could not accept and would, therefore, defend its territory.

In conclusion the editorial charges that the Finnish Foreign Minister made a direct threat against the Soviet Union and that it was "line for line like the former Minister of Poland Beck who as is well known provoked a war with Germany". The editorial then asserts that the forces on whose support Mr. Erkkko is counting in his struggle against the Soviet Union are known "to us" and are the same which brought on the war and are continuing their unsuccessful efforts to drag the Soviet Union into the war against Germany and its Baltic neighbors.

Part 2 of the editorial under the sub-title "The False Political Game of Certain Swedish Political Figures" attacks the Swedish press and the Swedish Foreign Minister for asserting that the Soviet proposals threaten the Scandinavian countries "in obedience to orders from their masters in the west". This section of the editorial concludes: "Our answer is simple and clear. We will send to the devil any game of the political card players and will continue on our road in spite of everything. We will assure the security of the Soviet Union irrespective of anything, smashing each and every obstacle in the path of that aim".

The above editorial appears to have been provoked by a speech of the Finnish Foreign Minister, text of which is not available to me. The speech may well have been distorted by *Pravda*, especially that portion in regard to Russian imperialism alleged to be a quotation.

While full of abuse and threats against Finland, the editorial does not indicate that the Soviet Government considers the negotiations as having broken down. Its chief purpose appears to be an attempt to terrorize the Finnish Government and the Finnish delegation at present waiting in Moscow for an appointment. I am unable to state as yet what effect this editorial, the whole tone of which is violent and abusive, will have on the continuation of the negotiations.

STEINHARDT

760d.61/401 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, November 3, 1939—6 p. m.
[Received November 3—3 : 30 p. m.]

859. My 853, November 2.⁷² I am informed that the Finnish delegation is going to the Kremlin at 6 o'clock this afternoon. A member of the Finnish Legation has just advised me that while the violent tone of the *Pravda* editorial will undoubtedly render the negotiations still more difficult it does not in the opinion of the Finnish delegation basically alter the situation. He added that according to the text of the speech of the Finnish Foreign Minister as received by the Legation the words which he is quoted as saying in the *Pravda* editorial in regard to Russian imperialism and the impossibility of Finland's accepting the Soviet proposals for the rectification of the frontier north of Leningrad are a fabrication put into the Minister's mouth by *Pravda*.

In the light of the foregoing, I consider it disturbing that *Pravda* should have had recourse to such fabrication since, while distortion of meaning and even misquotation are customary Soviet tactics, it is rare that remarks capable of disproof are deliberately invented.

The *Izvestiya* which today appeared even later than *Pravda* makes no reference to the Soviet-Finnish negotiations.

STEINHARDT

760d.61/407 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, November 4, 1939—5 p. m.
[Received November 4—11 : 18 a. m.]

863. For the President, Secretary and Under Secretary. I have been informed that on November 2 the Swedish Minister having failed to obtain an appointment with Molotov left a note at the

⁷² Not printed.

Foreign Office dealing with the Soviet-Finnish negotiations. At about 5 o'clock in the afternoon Molotov sent for the Swedish Minister and handed back the note with the statement that the Soviet-Finnish negotiations were not a matter of concern to Sweden. Obviously, therefore, the outburst against Sweden and the Swedish Foreign Minister, contained in the editorial in *Pravda* (see my telegram No. 856, November 3, 3 p. m.), was provoked by these renewed Swedish representations.

STEINHARDT

760d.61/408 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, November 4, 1939—6 p. m.
[Received November 4—12:05 p. m.]

864. My telegram No. 863, November 4, 5 p. m. I am informed in strict confidence that the meeting yesterday between the Finnish delegates and Molotov and Potemkin⁷³ took place in a normal atmosphere and that no reference was made by either side to Molotov's speech or the *Pravda* editorial. The Finnish delegation presented the Finnish counterproposals to the Soviet demands and is at present awaiting the Soviet answer. My informant stated, however, that the meeting produced little change in the situation, from which it appears that the Soviet Government is still insisting on a naval base at Hango.

As I have previously reported the negotiations appear to be entering a most delicate and even dangerous stage and it is probable that Stalin is at present considering his definite decision in the matter. There have been rumors of troop and artillery movements during the last 48 hours by train from Moscow to Leningrad. I have been unable to confirm these reports and am inclined to believe that if true the movements were not of an extensive character.

STEINHARDT

760d.61/409 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, November 5, 1939—1 p. m.
[Received November 5—10:10 a. m.]

868. For the President, Secretary and Under Secretary. My telegram No. 864, November 4, 6 p. m. The following has been conveyed to me with the request that it be held in the utmost secrecy.

⁷³ Vladimir Petrovich Potemkin, Assistant People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union.

At the meeting last evening at which only Stalin, Molotov and the two chief Finnish delegates were present, Stalin, while maintaining the Soviet demand for a naval base on the Finnish side of the entrance to the Gulf of Finland, did not insist that it be at Hango and offered to accept islands in the vicinity of Hango for that purpose. In return for this concession Stalin insisted that the Finnish-Soviet frontier be drawn further to the north of Leningrad than the Finns had proposed in their reply.

The Finnish delegation are now awaiting further instructions from Helsinki. As soon as they are received a further meeting will take place.

While I am unable to forecast the reaction of the Finnish Government to the latest Soviet proposals, I regard the presence of Stalin and his apparent disposition to compromise on his demand for Hango as encouraging.

SCHOENFELD

760d.61/411 : Telegram

The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State

HELSINKI, November 6, 1939—noon.

[Received November 6—11:02 a. m.]

311. See my telegram No. 288, October 26. Minister for Foreign Affairs informed me today that following conversations between Finnish delegation and Soviet Russian representatives November 3 and 4, in last of which Stalin participated, improvement in the Soviet attitude was noticeable. The Russians receded from their claim of naval base on mainland and at Hango and would be satisfied with certain islands there, but Finnish Government does not intend to concede this. Further instructions which had been requested would probably go forward to the Finnish delegation tomorrow and would also touch upon frontier rectification in Karelian Isthmus, where there had likewise been further approach to Finnish position in that Kuokkala district and possibly Terijoki, neither with military importance to Finland, might be ceded. Russians were also showing more amenable attitude with reference to Fisher's Islands off Petsamo where Finnish claim to the whole was still being held out for, but where most northerly point might be conceded. As for Repola and Porajärvi offered by the Russians as compensation, the Minister was of the opinion that this area, which is largely marshland and barren, would be inadequate. Tone of conversations whenever Stalin participates is much better than with Molotov.

See my despatch [*telegram*] No. 295, October 28. The Minister for Foreign Affairs told me he had yesterday received visit of Finnish citizen lately resident in Germany and an old personal friend of Field

Marshal Goering who had asked him to convey personal message from Goering to the effect that Finland would do well to concede Soviet demand for naval base at western end of Gulf of Finland and that Germany could render no assistance at this time, with veiled intimation that situation in this respect might eventually change. Comment of Minister Erkko to me was that he had asked for no assistance from Germany and that this message was evidently related to the incident mentioned in my telegram last cited.

The Minister concluded that telephone conversations with Finnish delegates at Moscow showed they remained calm and confident and were being treated with deference. I may add that in my opinion they are also showing consummate skill as negotiators.

SCHOENFELD

760d.61/415 : Telegram

The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State

HELSINKI, November 6, 1939—2 p. m.

[Received November 6—12:55 p. m.]

313. Minister for Foreign Affairs informed me today that three Scandinavian Governments had recently made further *démarche* at Moscow in behalf of fair adjustment of relations between Soviet Union and fellow neutral state Finland. He said in response to inquiry that he had scrupulously refrained from soliciting help from Sweden or even inquiring regarding Swedish Government's attitude in certain eventualities because he felt situation was too delicate for any other procedure. As to effort of Soviet Government to exclude Sweden from proposed refortification of Aland Islands, Finnish Government in its written answer to the Russian proposals, including this point, had confined itself, merely to taking note of Soviet position.

SCHOENFELD

760d.61/430 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, November 10, 1939—1 p. m.

[Received November 10—7:45 a. m.]

881. For the President, the Secretary and the Under Secretary. I have been informed with the customary request for strict confidence that the Soviet-Finnish negotiations yesterday evening at which Stalin, Molotov and the two Finnish delegates were present made no progress towards the solution of the two principal questions at issue; namely, the Soviet demand for a base in the vicinity of Hango and the exact location of the Finnish-Soviet frontier north of Leningrad,

but that despite this the negotiations were carried on in a friendly atmosphere and will continue. The exact time of the next meeting has not been fixed and may have to await further consultation with Helsinki.

STEINHARDT

760d.61/438 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, November 13, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received November 13—1:08 p. m.]

889. For the President and Secretary and Under Secretary. The Finnish delegation has decided to return to Helsinki tonight at 9:50 following a decision to that effect by the Finnish Cabinet this morning.

I have been informed in strict confidence that since the last meeting of November 4th (see telegram No. 868, November 5, 1 p. m.) there has been an exchange of communications between Molotov and Paasikivi which however revealed no basis for further negotiations and was apparently largely motivated on the Soviet side by a desire to induce the Finnish delegation to remain in Moscow.

STEINHARDT

760d.61/455 : Telegram

The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State

HELSINKI, November 18, 1939—11 a. m.

[Received noon.]

334. My telegram No. 328, November 13.⁷⁴ Minister for Foreign Affairs informed me this morning that following return of Finnish delegation from Moscow there had been several Cabinet meetings to consider their report and that as yet the Government had taken no decision as to how or when the negotiations with the Soviet Union would be continued, if at all. The Minister said a full report had also been made by him to the parliamentary leaders. He volunteered to supply me with a secret study of the strategic significance of the Russian proposals and plans as revealed during the negotiations. In reply to my inquiry whether it was the Government's view that these plans had any relation to Soviet-German cooperation, he answered in the negative. Answering further inquiry as to suggestions that Russian policy now contemplated deliberate economic pressure on Finland, the Minister said that Finnish exports were moving in increasing quantity through Narvik and that paved motor road was being constructed to

⁷⁴ Not printed.

Ljungens Fjord in Norway for use in moving heavy quantities by truck. Meanwhile the Minister felt that development of relations with the Soviet Union would depend in great measure on the general course of the war and primarily upon the question whether Soviet Government really desired to fasten its control on this country which would not be tolerated, or whether it had less extreme purposes.

SCHOENFELD

760d.61/478: Telegram

The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State

[Extract]

HELSINKI, November 24, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received November 24—2:25 p. m.]

350. My telegram No. 334, November 18. Minister for Foreign Affairs informed me this afternoon that Finnish Government had been unable as yet to make any further decision regarding procedure to be followed with reference to Soviet Union's demands. Difficulty was that Molotov's speech, October 31, had broken discreet silence in which negotiations should have been conducted and thus Russians themselves had raised issue of their prestige. Finnish Government was seeking some method of saving Russian face but in the circumstances it was extremely difficult to find it. In the meantime false and misleading reports continued to appear in Soviet press largely in the form of messages from Tass⁷⁵ representative in Helsinki and Finnish authorities were refraining from provocative replies.

The Soviet Government had lately begun somewhat mystifying action by purchasing on the local market with American currency some 22,000,000 Finnish marks in currency and Finnish Government was at a loss to know the purpose of such action which would be carefully watched. Two hundred thousand dollars has been so used today. There had been many reconnaissance flights by Soviet aircraft near Finnish coast defenses and elsewhere and some increase of Soviet forces at certain places near the border but no military movements of importance. There was absolutely no truth in reports of incidents on the border between Finnish and Soviet troops or with reference to shooting down Soviet planes, the only incidents having been some losses from inadvertent passage over land mines by Finnish soldiers.

SCHOENFELD

⁷⁵ Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union, official communication agency of the Soviet Government.

760d.61/480 : Telegram

The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State

HELSINKI, November 26, 1939—10 a. m.

[Received 6:05 p. m.]

355. My telegram number 350, November 24. I am reliably informed that last week a member of German Foreign Office reiterated to Finnish Minister at Berlin advice previously given to Finnish Government to accept Soviet demands. On this occasion advice was reinforced by explanation of Soviet Government's determination to secure its ends as illustrated in the statement that at the time of Soviet demands on Estonia which led to decision of German Government to undertake mass evacuation of its people from Baltic States, Soviet Government had threatened if necessary to deport entire population of Estonia to Asiatic Russia. I am also informed that German Embassy at Moscow has lately urged again that Finland accede to the Soviet demands.

Foregoing is considered here as further evidence of cooperation between Germany and Soviet Union but may in fact be more revealing of degree of subordination now reached by German policy in relation to the Soviet Union especially as there has been no disclaimer by Soviet Government that its encroachments on south shore of Gulf of Finland and the Baltic or its attempts to obtain foothold on the north shore are inspired by idea of defense against Germany.

In public address November 23 Finnish Prime Minister ⁷⁶ reviewed history of Finnish-Soviet relations including latest controversy and suggested that security of Leningrad, if it could be considered really threatened at all from Finland, would certainly be better served by friendly and strictly neutral Finland prepared to resist any attempt to use Finnish territory against Soviet Union than by refugee [*sic*] encroachments on Finnish territory which could not be obtained without destroying integrity and independence of this country.

It seems possible that the Soviet Government might be open to [suggestion?] from some quarter in which it had confidence that it could now claim that safety of Leningrad had been assured by success of its diplomacy and strength of its military forces in having induced such an undertaking as the latest utterances of the Finnish Prime Minister confirming previous official statements to the same effect. Soviet Government might be brought not only to see futility of persisting in its recent course but how it could save face. If German Government for instance were willing to make such representation without using it for incidental purposes of its own, proof would also be

⁷⁶ Professor Aimo K. Cajander, until December 1, 1939.

afforded of sincerity of its deprecatory advice to Finland and alleged disinterest.

It seems likely that Finnish Government will do nothing for the present to make situation more embarrassing for Soviet Government but neither does it seem probable that former will deviate from position consistently taken while continuing to hope that correct interpretation of strategic facts will dawn on the Soviet Government's mind and incidentally afford test of latter's sincerity in claiming that its security has been the sole issue.

SCHOENFELD

760d.61/479 : Telegram

The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Thurston) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, November 26, 1939—2 p. m.

[Received November 26—9:48 a. m.]

941. Today's *Pravda* published a front page editorial devoted to a sarcastic and abusive personal attack upon Cajander, the Finland Prime Minister whom it repeatedly characterizes as a clown. The editorial stresses the point that the Finnish people are not in agreement with Cajander's rejection of the Soviet proposals, states that he belongs to the farsighted school of Beck⁷⁷ and Moscicki⁷⁸ and implies he is being led by England. It concludes by expressing the hope that the Finnish people will not long permit marionettes like Cajander to guide the Finnish Ship of State along the disastrous course of Beck and Moscicki.

Repeated to Helsinki.

THURSTON

760d.61/485 : Telegram

The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Thurston) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, November 27, 1939—2 p. m.

[Received November 27—1:25 p. m.]

943. Embassy's telegram No. 942, November 27, noon.⁷⁹ *Pravda*, a copy of which the Embassy was able to obtain only at 1 o'clock, publishes the text of the Soviet note handed to the Finnish Minister last night in the following manner:

“Note of the Soviet Government Pertaining to the Provocative Shelling of Soviet Troops by Finnish Military Units.

On the evening of November 26 the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union Comrade V. M. Molotov received the

⁷⁷ Józef Beck, Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs until outbreak of war.

⁷⁸ Ignacy Moscicki, President of the Republic of Poland, 1926–1939.

⁷⁹ Not printed.

Minister of Finland, Mr. Yrjö Koskinen and handed him the note from the Government of the Soviet Union pertaining to the provocative shelling of Soviet troops by Finnish military units concentrated on the Karelian Isthmus.

In accepting the note Mr. Yrjö Koskinen declared that he would immediately communicate with his Government and give a reply. The text of the note is set forth below.

'Mr. Minister. According to a communication of the General Staff of the Red Army today the 26th of November at 3:45 p. m. our troops on the Karelian Isthmus at the Finnish frontier near the village of Mainila were unexpectedly shelled from Finnish territory. In all seven artillery shots were fired as a result of which three privates and one junior commander were killed and seven privates and two officers were wounded. The Soviet troops having strict orders not to respond to provocation refrained from returning the fire.

The Soviet Government, in informing you of this matter considers it necessary to emphasize that even at the time of the recent negotiations with Messrs. Tanner and Paasikivi it pointed out the danger created by the concentration of a large number of regular Finnish troops on the very border above Leningrad. In connection with the fact of the provocative first shelling of Soviet troops from Finnish territory, the Soviet Government is now obliged to state that the concentration of Finnish troops above Leningrad creates not only a threat to Leningrad but also presents in fact a hostile act against the Soviet Union which has already led to an attack against Soviet troops with casualties.

The Soviet Government does not intend to exaggerate this outrageous attack on the part of Finnish armed units, perhaps badly led by the Finnish command. But it would desire that such outrageous acts should not take place in the future.

Consequently, the Soviet Government, lodging a determined protest against what has taken place, proposes to the Finnish Government without delay to withdraw its troops to a distance of from 20 to 25 kilometers from the frontier on the Karelian Isthmus, and thereby to prevent the possibility of further provocations.

Accept Mr. Minister, etc. Signed People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Molotov. November 26, 1939.'

THURSTON

760d.61/489: Telegram

The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Thurston) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, November 28, 1939—1 p. m.

[Received November 28—10:50 a. m.]

949. Embassy's telegram 942, November 27, noon.⁸⁰ The reply to the Soviet note of November 26 was sent to Molotov by the Finnish Minister shortly after midnight. It states upon investigation it has been ascertained that the cannon shots referred to were not fired from the Finnish side but that on the contrary shots were fired on the Soviet side on the afternoon of November 26, near the village of Mainila, and that the explosions thereof were seen from the Finnish side. After citing particulars as to the time, place, and nature of the cannon fire which took place on Soviet territory, observations concerning which were noted at the time in the log book of the Finnish frontier guards, and which are ascribed to a possible accident during Soviet gun [practice], the reply states that the act of hostility against the Soviet Union

⁸⁰ Not printed; but see the Embassy's telegram No. 943, November 27, 2 p. m., *supra*.

complained of by the Soviet Government was not committed by Finland.

With respect to the concentration of regular troops on the frontier near Leningrad, it is stated that such troops on the Finnish side are principally frontier guard forces, while no artillery pieces have been placed which could fire beyond the frontier.⁸¹ The reply states, however, that while there are no concrete reasons for the withdrawal of such forces from the frontier, as has been proposed by the Soviet, the Finnish Government is nevertheless disposed to enter into conversations with a view to the reciprocal withdrawal of forces to a certain distance therefrom.

In conclusion the reply states that it has been noted with pleasure that the Soviet Government does not intend to exaggerate the importance of the frontier incident which it assumed had taken place and proposes, so that no difficulty regarding the question may continue to exist, that the frontier authorities of both countries on the Karelian Isthmus proceed to a joint investigation of the incident pursuant to the convention regarding frontier authorities concluded September 24, 1929 [1928].⁸²

Repeated to Helsinki and to Stockholm for the information of Ambassador Steinhardt.

THURSTON

760d.61/499: Telegram

The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Thurston) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, November 29, 1939.

[Received November 29—10:50 a. m.]

959. Today's Moscow papers publish the text of the Finnish reply to the Soviet note of November 26 and the text of the Soviet counter reply of November 28. A translation of the latter follows:

"Mr. Minister: The answer of the Government of Finland to the note of the Soviet Government of November 26 represents a document reflecting the profound hostility of the Government of Finland to the Soviet Union and is destined to lead the crisis in the relations between both countries to an extreme.

1. The denial on the part of the Government of Finland of the fact of the outrageous artillery shelling of Soviet troops by Finnish

⁸¹ The Minister in Finland reported in his telegram No. 359, November 28, that the Chairman of the National Defence Council of Finland, Field Marshal Baron Mannerheim, had made a signed statement upon his return from an inspection trip on the Karelian Isthmus in which he stated that Finnish heavy artillery was located at least 50 kilometers from the frontier, that the most advanced battery of light artillery was 20 kilometers away, and that Finnish troops were at divine service on the afternoon of Sunday, November 26, 1939 (760d.61/490).

⁸² For text of the exchange of notes between Finland and the Soviet Union appointing Frontier Commissioners on the Karelian Isthmus, signed at Helsinki, September 24, 1928, see League of Nations Treaty Series, vol. LXXXII, p. 63.

troops which resulted in casualties cannot be explained otherwise than as a desire to mislead public opinion and to mock the victims of the shelling. Only an absence of a feeling of responsibility and a disdainful regard of public opinion could have motivated the attempt to explain the outrageous incident of the shelling as artillery training exercises by Soviet troops at the very frontier line and in sight of Finnish troops.

2. The refusal of the Government of Finland to withdraw the troops which committed the villainous shelling of Soviet troops and the formal demand for the simultaneous withdrawal of Finnish and Soviet troops on the basis of the principle of equality reveal the hostile desire of the Government of Finland to keep Leningrad under threat. In fact we have here not equality in respect of the position of Finnish and Soviet troops but on the contrary an advantageous position of Finnish troops. The Soviet troops do not threaten the vital centers of Finland since they are situated hundreds of kilometers therefrom, whereas the Finnish troops situated at a distance of 32 kilometers from a vital center of the USSR—Leningrad, with a population of 3½ millions—creates for the latter a direct menace. It is hardly necessary to state that there is actually no place for the Soviet troops to withdraw to since the withdrawal of Soviet troops to a distance of 25 kilometers would place them in the outskirts of Leningrad which clearly would be absorbed [*absurd*] from the point of view of the security of Leningrad. The proposal of the Soviet Government for the withdrawal of Finnish troops to a distance of 20 or 25 kilometers is a minimum one since its aim is not the elimination of the inequality in respect of the positions of the Finnish and Soviet troops but merely a certain amelioration thereof. If the Government of Finland rejects even this minimum proposal then this means that it intends to keep Leningrad under the direct menace of its troops.

3. Having concentrated above Leningrad a large number of regular troops and having placed thereby a most vital center of the USSR under direct threat the Government of Finland has committed a hostile act in regard to the USSR which is incompatible with the pact of nonaggression concluded between the two countries. Having refused to withdraw its troops even 20 or 25 kilometers after the villainous artillery shelling of Soviet troops on the part of the Finnish troops the Government of Finland has shown that it continues to retain hostile positions in relation to the USSR, does not intend to take into consideration the requirements of the pact of nonaggression and has determined to continue to hold Leningrad under threat. But the Government of the USSR cannot reconcile itself to the fact that one side should violate the nonaggression pact while the other side should be bound to fulfill it. Consequently the Soviet Government considers itself obliged to declare that it considers itself as of today free from the obligations which it has undertaken under the non-aggression pact concluded between the USSR and Finland and which is being systematically violated by the Government of Finland.”

THURSTON

760d.61/502 : Telegram

The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Thurston) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, November 29, 1939—3 p. m.

[Received November 29—11:18 a. m.]

961. Strictly confidential unconfirmed reports have reached the Embassy today to the effect that Soviet forces are being withdrawn from the Polish area and transferred to the north and that specialized reservists in the Moscow area are being called up.

Opinion in diplomatic and other foreign circles here is divided as to the possible intentions of the Soviet Government at this time. Some observers consider that the Soviet Government is merely endeavoring so to harass the Finnish Government, that in order to be relieved of the strain to which it is being subjected it will reopen negotiations with the Soviet Government while others hold the view that when domestic opinion has been sufficiently educated and stimulated the Soviet Government will take forcible means to gain its objectives in Finland.

It is difficult to estimate the significance which should be attached to current developments in the Finnish-Soviet situation as in the last analysis it will depend upon the real objectives entertained by Stalin. If it is his purpose merely to remove to a safer distance the frontier which he feels to be too close to Leningrad, a move by Soviet forces to bring about such a rectification might not necessarily lead to general hostilities with Finland. Should he, however, be determined to gain a naval base on Finnish territory at the entrance to the Gulf of Finland any military move designed to take possession of such a base presumably would lead to major hostilities. There is, of course, no evidence upon which to formulate an opinion on these points—other than that afforded by the nature of the several demands made upon Finland during the recent negotiations. It will be recalled in this connection that the collapse of those negotiations resulted from the refusal of the Finnish Government to grant such a base.

THURSTON

760d.61/516a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Chargé in the Soviet Union (Thurston)*⁸⁸

WASHINGTON, November 29, 1939—[3:13 p. m.]

252. Please call at the Foreign Office and leave a copy of the following statement which I have this afternoon released to the press:

“This Government is following with serious concern the intensification of the Finnish-Soviet dispute. It would view with extreme regret

⁸⁸ An identical telegram was sent also to the Minister in Finland. The Chargé in the Soviet Union advised the Department in his telegram No. 967, November 30, that he had handed this statement at 12:45 p. m., to Assistant People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs Potemkin, who saw “no occasion for the use of good offices.” (760d.61/507)

any extension of the present area of war and the consequent further deterioration of international relations. Without in any way becoming involved in the merits of the dispute, and limiting its interest to the solution of the dispute by peaceful processes only, this Government would, if agreeable to both parties, gladly extend its good offices."

HULL

760d.61/503 : Telegram

The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Thurston) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, November 29, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received November 29—12:45 p. m.]

963. My 961, November 29, 3 p. m. Investigation by Captain Yeaton seemly [*seemingly*] confirms the despatch of Soviet forces heretofore in the Polish area to the Leningrad area and the movement from the Leningrad area toward the Finnish border of a considerable quantity of artillery. In his opinion therefore the Soviet Army is now in a position to carry out any military move against Finland that may be decided upon.

The Finnish Legation was advised shortly before by the Foreign Office at Helsinki that instructions regarding the Finnish reply to the last Soviet note were about to be despatched. They have not yet been received by the Legation.

Today's press continues on an increased scale to devote attention to the Finnish problem and publishes a great many more resolutions by Soviet bodies throughout the country in which emphasis is laid on the exhaustion of patience, the "anger and indignation of the Soviet people which has been aroused by the insolent and lying note of the Finnish Government", and the readiness of the various armed forces of the State to play their parts.

THURSTON

760d.61/508 : Telegram

The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State

HELSINKI, November 29, 1939—7 p. m.

[Received November 29—3:20 p. m.]

368. My 362, today.⁸⁴ Foreign Office has supplied me with French translation of note to Soviet Foreign Commissar which was tele-

⁸⁴ Not printed.

graphed to Finnish Minister at Moscow this afternoon for delivery presumably tonight.⁸⁵ Translation follows.

"In reply to your note of the 28th instant I have the honor to inform you as follows:

It appears from my note of November 27 that Finland has not injured the territorial integrity of the U. S. S. R. In order to establish this fact in an irrefutable manner my Government proposes that the Frontier Commissioners of the two countries on the Isthmus of Karelia be instructed to proceed together to investigate the incident in question as provided in the convention regarding frontier commissioners concluded September 24, 1928. In my note I also pointed out that on the Finnish side of the border there have been placed chiefly ordinary frontier guard troops who cannot be a threat to the security of Leningrad. My Government thinks that a denunciation of the non-aggression pact was not justified; according to the protocol of 1934 this treaty shall remain in force and cannot be denounced until the end of the year 1945.

My Government desires to emphasize notably article 5 of the non-aggression treaty in which the two contracting parties declared that they will endeavor to resolve in a spirit of justice all differences of whatever nature or origin they may be which might arise between them and that they will have recourse for purposes of settlement exclusively to peaceful means. To this end the two contracting parties undertook to submit the differences which might arise between them and which may not have been settled by ordinary diplomatic procedures within a reasonable time to a conciliation procedure in a mixed conciliation commission. According to the said article the conciliation procedure shall be applied especially in case the difference should involve the question whether the mutual engagement of non-aggression has been violated or not.

Referring to the foregoing, my Government proposes that in conformity with article 5 of the treaty of non-aggression and the provisions of the Conciliation Convention attached to this treaty⁸⁶ a conciliation commission be convoked without delay to examine the difference which has just arisen. Finland is disposed alternatively to submit the settlement of the difference to a neutral arbitration.

In order to furnish a solid proof of its sincere desire to reach an agreement with the Government of the U. S. S. R. and to refute the allegations of the Soviet Government according to which Finland adopted a hostile attitude towards the U. S. S. R. and would desire to threaten the security of Leningrad my Government is ready to reach an understanding with the Government of the U. S. S. R. on the subject of the displacement of the defense troops on the Isthmus of Karelia, with the exception of the frontier guard troops and customs,

⁸⁵ The Minister in Finland reported in telegram No. 369, November 30, that the Secretary General of the Finnish Foreign Office had held a press conference in the early hours of the morning, at which he declared that this note had been telegraphed to Moscow about 5 p. m., on November 29, and had been received at the Finnish Legation at 9:30 p. m., just before the Minister was summoned to the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs (see *infra*).

⁸⁶ For text of the Conciliation Convention, signed on April 22, 1932, see League of Nations Treaty Series, vol. CLVII, p. 401.

at such distance from Leningrad that it cannot be claimed that they would threaten the security of that city."

Repeated to Moscow.

SCHOENFELD

760d.61/505 : Telegram

The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Thurston) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, November 29, 1939—11 : 30 p. m.

[Received November 29—8 : 50 p. m.]

964. I have just been advised by the Finnish Legation that the Finnish Minister was summoned to the Foreign Office at 10 : 30 tonight by Potemkin who handed to him a note stating that inasmuch as Finnish aggression against the Soviet military forces continues on the Karelian Isthmus and at other places and that this creates an intolerable situation, the responsibility for which rests exclusively with the Finnish Government, it is no longer possible for the Soviet Government to maintain relations with the Finnish Government and it is in consequence withdrawing government, political, and economic representatives from Finland.

The Finnish reply to the last Soviet note had in the meantime arrived and the Finnish Minister endeavored to present it. Potemkin stated that he would ascertain and notify the Finnish Minister as soon as possible whether it will still be acceptable. The reply I understand, while maintaining Finland's denial of any acts of aggression, states that in the interests of peaceful relations the Finnish Government is, however, ready to withdraw its forces from the Finnish-Soviet frontier.

Repeated to Helsinki and to Riga for the information of Ambassador Steinhardt who is returning to Moscow by the most expeditious means.

THURSTON

760d.61/510 : Telegram

The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State

HELSINKI, November 30, 1939.

[Received November 30—5 : 20 a. m.]

370. One Soviet two-motored plane passed over Helsinki 9:20 o'clock this morning low altitude, fired on by anti-aircraft artillery, departed after 15 minutes. At 10:20 a flight of nine Soviet light

bombers attacked fortresses in Bay of Helsinki, met by anti-aircraft fire, departed 10:25.⁸⁷

SCHOENFELD

760d.61/511: Telegram

The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State

HELSINKI, November 30, 1939—10:40 a. m.

[Received November 30—6:40 a. m.]

371. Your 172, November 29.⁸⁸ I handed to Minister Foreign Affairs 10:20 this morning memorandum containing your offer good offices. Minister said Finnish Government would welcome exercise good offices to put end to Russian attack, especially as it has no communication with Soviet Government. No attack had been made from Finnish side anywhere but artillery bombardment began 7 o'clock this morning by land and sea near Terijoki and Kuokkala district as well as north Lake Ladoga where Russians crossed frontier. Russians also occupied Finnish part Fisherman's Peninsula, [the district of] Petsamo, and seized Finnish frontier guards [along the] northern boundary. Plane which came over Helsinki 9:20 this morning dropped five bombs Malmi air field.

SCHOENFELD

760d.61/518: Telegram

The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Thurston) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, November 30, 1939—2 p. m.

[Received November 30—8:28 a. m.]

968. Embassy's telegram 964, November 29, 11:30 p. m. The Finnish reply to the last Soviet note was accepted last night by the Soviet Foreign Office. No reply, however, has been made. The Finnish note is worded approximately as stated the telegram above cited⁸⁹ with the addition that it proposes that in accordance with the nonaggression pact (which of course has been denounced by the Soviet Government) a committee of conciliation be convoked to ex-

⁸⁷ For further reports by the American Minister in Finland of subsequent Soviet air raids on Helsinki during the first days of Soviet aggression, see Department of State *Bulletin*, December 2, 1939, pp. 610-611. On December 3, 1939, the Minister reported the officers and employees of the Legation who had been withdrawn to Bad Grankulla, 17 kilometers from Helsinki; *ibid.*, December 9, 1939, p. 649.

⁸⁸ This telegram was identical with the Department's telegram No. 252, November 29, to the Chargé in the Soviet Union, p. 1003.

⁸⁹ For the text of the Finnish note, see telegram No. 368, November 29, 7 p. m., from the Minister in Finland, p. 1004.

amine the existing differences or that alternatively they be submitted to neutral arbitration.

While the Finnish Legation has not yet received instructions from Helsinki to withdraw it is making preparation for withdrawal in anticipation of their receipt. Potemkin inquired of the Finnish Minister last night: "When do you expect to leave?"

THURSTON

[For the text of the message sent by President Roosevelt on November 30, 1939, to Finland and the Soviet Union, appealing to both Governments to refrain from air bombardment of civilian populations or of unfortified cities, see telegram No. 255, November 30, 1939, to the Chargé in the Soviet Union, *Foreign Relations, The Soviet Union, 1933-1939*, page 798.]

760d.61/528: Telegram

The Chargé in Finland (Shantz) to the Secretary of State

HELSINKI, December 1, 1939—1 a. m.
[Received November 30—8: 15 p. m.]

377. Foreign Office Information Chief just informed press that after unanimous vote confidence by Diet the Government has resigned to make way for a government with which the Russians will negotiate. He asked me to have you relay this information to Moscow at once as Finnish authorities have no means of communication. He said this announcement authorized by Tanner.

SHANTZ

760d.61/540a: Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Chargé in the Soviet Union (Thurston)*⁹⁰

WASHINGTON, November 30, 1939—[10: 18 p. m.]

257. The Chief of the Information Bureau of the Finnish Foreign Office has requested the American Legation in Helsinki to inform the Soviet Government in view of the lack of direct communication between Helsinki and Moscow that after a unanimous vote of confidence by the Diet the Finnish Government has resigned in order to make

⁹⁰ A note at the end of this telegram reads: "Approved by the Secretary, the President, Mr. Dunn and Mr. Moffat." The Assistant Chief of the Division of European Affairs, Loy W. Henderson, wrote on the margin: "A draft of this telegram was dictated by telephone at 10:00 p. m., to the Soviet Ambassador who said he would also telegraph contents to his Gov[ernment]. At 10:30 a draft was dictated by telephone to Mr. Sterling at Stockholm who promised to try to relay it by telephone to Moscow."

way for a government with which the Soviet Government will negotiate.

He said that he had been authorized by Tanner, who we understand was Finance Minister of the outgoing government and a leader of the Social Democratic Party, to make this statement.

You are authorized to transmit this information immediately to the appropriate Soviet authorities.

This Government accepts no responsibility except for the transmission of this message.

HULL

760d.61/551 : Telegram

The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Thurston) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, December 1, 1939—2 a. m.
[Received November 30—11:57 p. m.]

978. The first announcement by the Soviet authorities of the opening of hostilities with Finland was made at 12:45 this morning, when a Tass despatch from Leningrad was broadcast over the Moscow radio stations stating that at 2 a. m. on November 30 Finnish forces invaded the Soviet Union on the north shore of Lake Ladoga, but were repulsed. At 3:15 a. m. Finnish infantry attempted to invade Soviet territory on the Karelian Isthmus but were repulsed with machine gun fire, after the Soviet forces had taken prisoner 10 soldiers and 1 non-commissioned officer. Another attack was launched by the Finns at 4 a. m. on the Karelian Isthmus and this too was repulsed.

In view of these events orders were given to the military forces of the Leningrad district to advance into Finland and at 8 a. m. (almost 5 hours previous to my interview with Potemkin at which he professed to have no knowledge of any new developments since the breaking of relations with Finland) the Soviet forces crossed the Finnish frontier on the Karelian Isthmus and "in several other regions." They penetrated from 10 to 15 kilometers into Finnish territory during the day, occupying Metsapirtti and Kuokkala (both small places near the frontier) and advancing toward Terijoki. Moreover, the airdromes at Helsinki and Viborg were bombed.

The foregoing was followed by the reading of a Tass despatch from London stating that President Kallio of Finland had declared that a state of war exists.

THURSTON

760d.61/540 : Telegram

The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Thurston) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, December 1, 1939—6 a. m.
[Received December 1—1:45 a. m.]

979. Packer⁹¹ telephoned from Riga at 5 following message from Shantz at Helsinki :

“Finnish Government has resigned so that government may be formed with which Soviet Government will be willing to negotiate. Foreign Office asks me to send this to Soviet Government as it has no means of communication with Moscow.”

Urgent efforts are being made to establish communication with a responsible official to whom the message can be delivered. The Chief of the Division of American Countries⁹² at the Foreign Office who was reached through the employee on guard at the Foreign Office informed the latter at 5:30 a. m. could not see me until 11 o'clock and forestalled the delivery of the message through that employee by ordering him again [apparent omission]. The employee declined to call any other Foreign Office officials alleging that he has no record of the home telephone numbers.

THURSTON

760d.61/541 : Telegram

The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Thurston) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, December 1, 1939—8 a. m.
[Received December 1—2:35 a. m.]

980. Handed to Valkov, Chief of the American Division, at 7:45 a. m. a personal note containing the message from Helsinki quoted in my 979, December 1, 6 a. m.⁹³

THURSTON

⁹¹ Earl L. Packer, Consul and First Secretary of Legation in Latvia, sometimes Chargé d'Affaires.

⁹² Vasily Alexeyevich Valkov.

⁹³ By 8:30 a. m., the Chargé reported in telegram No. 981, December 1, that he had heard by telephone from Riga the Department's telegraphic instruction No. 257, November 30, which had been telephoned to the Minister in Sweden for relay. On this information the Chargé had telephoned to Valkov, advising that he had received authorization to transmit the message from the Finnish Government, and assuming responsibility only for such transmission.

760d.61/550 : Telegram

The Minister in Sweden (Sterling) to the Secretary of State

STOCKHOLM, December 1, 1939—2 p. m.

[Received December 1—9 : 30 a. m.]

229. Following from Helsinki by telephone:

"379. December 1, 2 p. m. Our 378 today. Mr. Erkko has just called on me at Bad Grankulla and informed me that new Cabinet is headed by Mr. Ryti, Director of the Bank of Finland, as Prime Minister, with Mr. Tanner, late Minister of Finance, as Minister for Foreign Affairs. Other minor changes in Cabinet possible.

He said heavy artillery preparations from sea for attempted landing have been proceeding at Hangoe with transports visible at sea and have met strong resistance. Air bombing squadrons crossed Finnish Gulf entering Finnish territory over Sveaborg passing Tavastehus en route to industrial cities Tammerfors and Jyvaskyla.

Heavy air raid started over Helsinki about 1 o'clock.

Erkko said he would be called upon for other public office. Schoenfeld."

Repeated to Paris.

STERLING

701.60d61/15 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, December 1, 1939—3 p. m.

[Received December 1—11 a. m.]

985. The Finnish Legation informed me today at 2 p. m. that in response to its request this morning for the issuance of Soviet exit visas to all non-Soviet members of its staff and *laissez passer* to the Minister and diplomatic officers of the Mission, the Chief of Protocol Division⁹⁴ of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs stated that neither visas nor *laissez passers* will be issued until the Soviet Government receives assurances that its representatives in Finland are safe and have been permitted to depart with usual diplomatic courtesies. Notwithstanding my 983 of December 1, noon,⁹⁵ Moscow is uncertain that its telegrams to Helsinki are being delivered and it therefore requests that the above information concerning the status of the departure of the Minister and his staff be brought to the attention of the Finnish diplomatic Mission abroad for transmission to the Finnish Government.

STEINHARDT

⁹⁴ Vladimir Nikolayevich Barkov.

⁹⁵ Not printed.

704.60D61/1 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, December 1, 1939—6 p. m.
[Received December 1—2: 45 p. m.]

987. The Finnish Minister called to see me this afternoon and informed me that he had received a telegram from his Government last night via Tallinn instructing him to entrust the representation of Finnish interests in Moscow to such mission as he deemed advisable. He said that his first thought had been to request the American Government to assume the representation of Finnish interests but that this morning he had heard a rumor to the effect that the United States was about to break off relations with Russia and that in consequence he had discussed with the Italian Ambassador⁹⁶ the possibility of the Italian Government representing Finnish interests. His Counselor,⁹⁷ whom he had not previously consulted, having expressed doubt as to the accuracy of the rumor, he said he had called to inquire of me as to whether the rumor of an immediately impending rupture of diplomatic relations between the United States and the Soviet Union was correct. I replied that I had no information or even intimation to this effect. He then said that under these circumstances he would appreciate it very much if I would request my Government to assume the representation of Finnish interests in Moscow and said that in view of the urgency of the situation he would welcome an immediate reply. I told him that I would be glad to transmit his request to my Government and that I would give him the reply as soon as it was received by me. In conclusion, the Minister stated that before calling on me he had told the Italian Ambassador of his decision to request the American Government to represent Finland provided the reported impending rupture of relations between the United States and the Soviet Union was not confirmed and that the Italian Ambassador had approved his decision.

STEINHARDT

[For the statement made by President Roosevelt at his press conference of December 1, 1939, on the attack by the Soviet Union against Finland, see *Foreign Relations, The Soviet Union, 1933-1939*, page 799, or *Department of State Bulletin*, December 2, 1939, page 609.]

⁹⁶ Augusto Rosso.

⁹⁷ A. Solanko.

760d.61/563 : Telegram

The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State

HELSINKI, December 1, 1939—9 p. m.

[Received December 1—6: 55 p. m.]

386. I saw the new Prime Minister Ryti briefly, the new Minister of Foreign Affairs Tanner for 20 minutes this evening. The former told me that the Russians had been repelled nearly everywhere today.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs said that the new government had taken office at 5:00 o'clock this afternoon. It was a national government with [apparent omission] support of the Finnish Diet. He hoped it would be possible to reach peaceful settlement with the Soviet Union for which purpose it was planned tentatively to solicit diplomatic support of friendly [nations], though at this time its specific program was not defined. A national government was also being formed in Sweden today and might have to take grave decisions in the event as seemed possible the Soviet Government should take action involving Aland Islands where Soviet air forces had been observed today. Finnish Government while hoping to reach friendly settlement with Soviet Russia was not prepared to surrender either its independence or its honor. It was the personal opinion of Minister Tanner that a settlement might still be achieved within the framework of the recent negotiations at Moscow though it might require more concessions than Finnish Government had thus far deemed advisable.

Military situation was not unsatisfactory, no advances having been achieved by the Russians today except slight progress near Terijoki where a so-called new state government had been set up under Communists Kuusinen⁸⁸ and Rosenberg⁸⁹ as titular Prime Minister and Foreign [*Finance*] Minister respectively. There were three heavy air raids today on Helsinki and nearby naval base Santa Hamina. I understand from other sources that at least two Russian planes were brought down in these attacks. The Minister said there had also been air activity at Hango but he had no confirmation of reported sea bombardment there mentioned in my earlier telegram today.

I am now in Helsinki but return to Bad Grankulla tonight through fairly effective blackout.

SCHOENFELD

⁸⁸ Otto W. Kuusinen, President of the "Democratic Republic of Finland", set up by the Soviet Union at Terijoki.

⁸⁹ Mauri Mark Rosenberg was Minister for Finance and Assistant Chairman of the "Democratic Republic of Finland."

740.00116 European War, 1939/108 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, December 1, 1939—midnight.

[Received December 1—11:50 p. m.]

991. For the Secretary and Under Secretary. I have just seen Molotov and Potemkin and handed to the former a note conveying the President's message as set forth in the Department's No. 255 of November 30, 6 p. m.¹ Molotov made the categorical statement that the Soviet air force had not bombed civilian populations or unfortified cities and that it had no intention of doing so. He seemed to be in some doubt as to whether to rest upon his oral reply or to make a written acknowledgement of the message.²

I took the opportunity to inquire as to the Soviet Union's objectives in the existing conflict, to which he replied that those objectives had been fully set forth in his speech reported in the Embassy's telegram No. 965, November 30, 1 a. m.³ He then stated that the Soviet Government had exercised great patience and restraint in the course of the recent negotiations and was convinced that had Paasikivi been the chief Finnish delegate and in control of the negotiations a satisfactory solution would readily have been arrived at but that Tanner had been truculent and irreconcilable. He added that Tanner had now been put at the head [*sic*] of the Finnish Government and that it was impossible for the Soviet Government to treat with any government headed by him.

I then asked him whether this meant that the Soviet Government would be prepared to treat with a Finnish government headed by Paasikivi to which he replied by asking me whether I had as yet learned of the constitution of the government referred to in my 990, December 1, 8 p. m.⁴ He intimated very clearly that the Soviet Government would be willing to negotiate with the Kuusinen government but not with the existing government in Helsinki.

As the result of my conversation I gained several impressions, among which the most outstanding are the following:

1. That the present objectives of the Soviet Government in Finland while not publicly told transcend those put forth in the course of the negotiations and may be evaluated with a fair degree of accuracy from Molotov's speech, the inspired pronouncement of the Finnish Communist Party referred to in my No. 986, December 1, 4 p. m.⁵ followed by the setting up of the Kuusinen government, and Molotov's expres-

¹ See bracketed note, p. 1008.

² No record of a written, formal reply has been found in Department files.

³ *Foreign Relations, The Soviet Union, 1933-1939*, p. 797.

⁴ Not printed; but see telegram No. 386, December 1, 9 p. m., from the Minister in Finland, *supra*.

⁵ Not printed.

sion to me of a willingness to treat with that government but not with the government in Helsinki and that these objectives are (a) to achieve by means of its armed forces the physical seizure of the strategic positions in Finland now desired by the Soviet Government ostensibly for the purpose of defense but actually for the purpose of attaining a dominant position in the Baltic, and, (b) to establish in power the Kuusinen government or another regime which will be subservient to the Soviet Government.

2. That the Soviet Government does not desire the mediation of a third party.

3. That the action of the Soviet Government in precipitating a war with Finland was occasioned by a desire to liquidate the Finnish question at the earliest possible moment in order to be free to meet possible developments in the Balkans and the Black Sea area or perhaps to strengthen its position vis-à-vis Germany.

STEINHARDT

760d.61/585: Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the
Secretary of State*

Moscow, December 2, 1939—1 p. m.

[Received December 2—11:46 a. m.]

992. My 990, December 1, 8 p. m.⁶ The Soviet press this morning announces that in response to a request from the newly formed "People's Government of Finland" the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the U. S. S. R. has decided to recognize and establish diplomatic relations with "the Finnish Democratic Republic". The Soviet press today publishes on the first page the composition of the "People's Government of Finland" headed by Otto Kuusinen as President of the government and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ministers of Finance, Defense, Internal Affairs, Agriculture and Education and Minister for the Affairs of Karelia, whose names are unknown to the Embassy. The press likewise publishes on the front page the full text of the declaration of this new government which is as summarized in my telegram under reference, with the addition of the announcement of the formation of "a first Finnish corps" made up of volunteers which will form the nucleus of the future people's army and an appeal to the Soviet Government for the conclusion of a pact of mutual assistance between Finland and the Soviet Union and with the request for the Union of the Karelian people in a single and independent Finn state. The declaration states that the first task of the new "Govern-

⁶ Not printed; it quoted the 6 p. m. announcement by the Soviet radio of the formation at Terijoki of the "People's Government of Finland" and its appeal for the aid of the Red Army in crushing the "warmongers of the Tanner Government." (760d.61/561) Väinö A. Tanner was now Minister for Foreign Affairs in the new Cabinet of Risto H. Ryti.

ment" is to bring about the overthrow of the present Finn Government, the destruction of its armed forces, the conclusion of peace, and the guaranteeing of the independence and security of Finland by means of the establishment of friendly relations with the Soviet Union.

STEINHARDT

760d.61/586: Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the
Secretary of State*

Moscow, December 2, 1939—2 p. m.
[Received December 2—11:50 a. m.]

993. My 991, December 2, noon [*December 1, midnight*]. The press today publishes the following announcement released by Tass at 10 a. m. this morning concerning my interview last night with Molotov.

"In connection with the declarations made by the Ambassador of the United States Mr. Steinhardt under instructions from the President, Mr. Roosevelt, Comrade Molotov made the following explanation concerning the questions relating to the events in Finland. The wish of Mr. Roosevelt for the prohibition of the bombardment from airplanes of the population of the cities of Finland insofar as it is addressed to the Soviet Union is based on a misunderstanding. Soviet airplanes have not bombarded cities and do not intend to do so but have bombarded airdromes since our Government prizes the interests of the Finnish people no less than any other Government. Naturally from America, which lies at a distance of over 8000 kilometers from Finland, it is possible that this is not apparent; but none the less, a fact remains a fact. In view of this, the above-mentioned declaration of President Roosevelt as is evident becomes pointless. Insofar as concerns the resignation of the government of Cajander and its replacement by the government of Tanner, Comrade Molotov said that this event unfortunately does not improve matters; the selection of Tanner is clearly unfortunate. Mr. Tanner was and still remains the evil genius of the Soviet-Finnish negotiations. If these negotiations had been carried on by Mr. Paasikivi on behalf of Finland, without the participation of Mr. Tanner as was the case during the first period of the negotiations, then the negotiations probably would have ended in an acceptable agreement, but the participation of Mr. Tanner in the negotiations spoiled the whole matter and apparently tied the hands of Mr. Paasikivi. In view of this the Soviet Government expects no good from the Government of Tanner. Furthermore, the formation of a new government of Finland—the "People's Government" headed by Mr. Kuusinen—makes him a new and important element in the situation and arouses in the Soviet Union the hope of a peaceful and satisfactory settlement of the crisis which has arisen."

During our conversation Molotov gave no intimation that he intended to give publicity to his statements.

STEINHARDT

704.60d61/1 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the Soviet Union
(Steinhardt)*⁷

WASHINGTON, December 2, 1939—4 p. m.

260. Your 987, December 1, 6 p. m. It is somewhat embarrassing that the Finnish Minister's request that we assume charge of Finnish interests in Soviet Russia should have been made contingent upon our future policy vis-à-vis Russia, and still more that the matter should have been put up along these lines to the Italian Ambassador. In these circumstances, and in order that no inference as to our policy should be drawn by the Soviet authorities, you should explain to the Minister that we feel that Finnish interests could most effectively be protected by the Italian Ambassador, who has apparently indicated willingness to accept the task. You may add, however, that if at any time we could informally be of help to the Italian Ambassador, you would be glad to cooperate.

HULL

706.60d58/1 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary
of State*

Moscow, December 2, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received December 2—2:32 p. m.]

998. The Swedish Minister has just called to see me and in the course of our conversation stated that he had been authorized yesterday by his Government to undertake the representation of Finnish interests in Moscow and that he expected to call at the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs later this afternoon for the purpose of inquiring whether this would be agreeable to the Soviet Government. He and I are of the opinion that the Soviet Government will decline to permit a third power to represent Finnish interests in Moscow on the grounds that the Soviet Government has now recognized the Kuusinen government and has announced its intention of exchanging diplomatic representation with that government. The Minister expressed the opinion that the lack of communication between the Finnish Legation in Moscow and the Helsinki Government accounted for the instructions received by him from his Government in conflict with the action of the Finnish Minister in Moscow as reported in my No. 987, December 1, 6 p. m.

⁷Note in the handwriting of Pierrepont Moffat, Chief of the Division of European Affairs: "Policy approved by the P[resident] in conference with the Secretary of State 12-2-39."

The Swedish Minister has promised to advise me later in the day of the answer received by him from the Soviet authorities.

STEINHARDT

760d.61/588 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, December 3, 1939—1 a. m.

[Received December 3—12:35 a. m.]

1005. A statement has just been broadcast over the Moscow radio announcing the signing today⁸ of a pact of mutual assistance and friendship between the Soviet Union and the Finnish Democratic Republic. The pact was signed by Molotov on behalf of the Presidium of Supreme Soviet of the U. S. S. R. and by Kuusinen on behalf of the Finnish Democratic Republic. It was stated that the negotiation of the pact took place in the presence of Stalin, Voroshilov,⁹ and Zhdanov.¹⁰ The eight articles of the pact may be tentatively summarized as follows:¹¹

1. The Soviet Union transfers to Finland that part of Karelia inhabited by Karelians the area of which is 70,000 square kilometers. Finland cedes to the Soviet Union the Karelian Isthmus embracing an area of 3,970 square kilometers. The Soviet Union pays to Finland 120,000,000 Finnish marks as compensation for the railways included in this cession.

2. Finland leases to the Soviet Union for 30 years the Hango Peninsula and immediately adjacent areas for use as a naval base with the right by the Soviet Union to maintain thereon a strictly limited air force. Finland sells to the Soviet Union the islands of Hogland, Seiskari, Lavansaari, Tytärsaari—both great and little, and Koivisto as well as the Rybachi Peninsula and another unidentified island for 300,000,000 Finnish marks.

3. Finland and the Soviet Union pledge themselves to mutual assistance including military aid and to prevent their territories from being used for military operations against the other on the part of any European country whatsoever.

4. Neither party is to enter into an alliance against the other.

5. The contracting parties will negotiate a commercial treaty at the earliest possible date providing for an annual trade between them to exceed that of 1927 in which year the value of this trade reached 800,000,000 Finnish marks.

6. The Soviet Union undertakes to furnish Finland military supplies and material.

⁸ December 2.

⁹ Kliment Efremovich Voroshilov, People's Commissar for Defense of the Soviet Union.

¹⁰ Andrey Alexandrovich Zhdanov, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Leningrad oblast.

¹¹ A text of this treaty was published in the *New York Times*, December 3, 1939.

7. Articles 3, 4, and 5 are to run for 25 years from the date of signature of the treaty and unless denounced before the expiration of that period will continue in effect automatically for an additional period of 25 years.

8. The pact enters into effect upon signature and the exchange of ratifications is to take place as soon as possible in the capital of Finland, Helsinki.

STEINHARDT

740.00116 European War, 1939/111 : Telegram

The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State

HELSINKI, December 3, 1939—11 a. m.

[Received December 3—9: 30 a. m.]

397. The Minister of Foreign Affairs has just handed me the following *note verbale*, dated December 2:

“The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland has the honour to deliver, in the name of the President of the Republic of Finland, the following reply to the message of the President of the United States of America, delivered by the American Minister on December 1, 1939, ‘The Government of Finland, approving the principle of international law enounced by the President of the United States of America, affirms its determination that its armed forces shall in no event, and under no circumstances, undertake the bombardment from the air of civilian populations or of unfortified cities, upon the understanding that these same rules of warfare will be scrupulously observed by all their opponents.’ ”

SCHOENFELD

860d.51/370 : Telegram

The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State

HELSINKI, December 3, 1939—11 a. m.

[Received December 3—10 a. m.]

400. In response to my inquiry today regarding financial situation of Finnish Government, the Minister of Foreign Affairs told me that he had authorized Finnish Minister at Washington yesterday to solicit from our Government assistance in raising 60 million dollars in the United States. He said he had been advised indirectly by Ambassador Steinhardt that there was every disposition in the United States to facilitate procurement of funds for Finnish Government. As I reported last September, Tanner evidently hopes the financial assistance from the United States Government may be received from our Government directly.

SCHOENFELD

760d.61/584 : Telegram

The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State

HELSINKI, December 3, 1939—11 a. m.

[Received December 3—8:30 a. m.]

401. It having been announced in the press that the Finnish Government has addressed a communication¹² to the Secretary-General¹³ of the League of Nations invoking the provisions of the Covenant with reference to the aggression against Finland, Minister Swormstadt informed me this morning that though the Finnish Government had little hope of any practicable result from the appeal to the League,¹⁴ it had been advised by other governments which he did not name to take this step.

In strict confidence he informed me that yesterday the Swedish Government had been requested to make known to the Soviet Union the willingness of the Finnish Government to negotiate with the Soviet Government regarding its demands and though he did not say so, I gained the impression that the frame of reference for such negotiations would be wider than had thus far been deemed admissible by the Finnish Government.

SCHOENFELD

704.60d61/3 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, December 3, 1939—4 p. m.

[Received December 3—1:05 p. m.]

1009. The Finnish Minister recognizes that his request made through me concerning the representation of Finnish interests in Moscow by this Embassy has been annulled by the action of the Swedish Government reported in my 998, December 2, 5 p. m., and 999, December 2, 6 p. m.¹⁵ Moreover, in view of the recognition by the Soviet Government of the "Kuusinen government" and the conclusion of a formal treaty with that government it is improbable that any third

¹² The text of the Finnish appeal to the Council and Assembly of the League of Nations on December 3, 1939, is printed in League of Nations, *Official Journal*, Nos. 11-12 (pt. II), November-December 1939, p. 509.

¹³ Joseph Avenol, of France.

¹⁴ For the action initiated by the Secretary General of the League of Nations, see telegram No. 302, December 3, 1939, from the Consul General at Geneva, *Foreign Relations, The Soviet Union, 1933-1939*, p. 800. For the steps taken in the United States inaugurating what came to be known as the "moral embargo", see telegram No. 265, December 4, 1939, to the Ambassador in the Soviet Union, and footnote 2g, *ibid.*, p. 801.

¹⁵ Latter not printed.

power will be permitted to take over Finnish interests and that in consequence the Swedish request will be refused.

I have advised the Finnish Minister that if at any time we can informally be of assistance to the Swedish Minister I will be glad to cooperate.

STEINHARDT

760d.61/619 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, December 5, 1939—1 a. m.
[Received December 4—9: 10 p. m.]

1018. An announcement on the Soviet radio at 5:30 p. m. stated that Molotov in reply to an offer to negotiate made by the Finnish Government through the Swedish Minister in Moscow, told the Swedish Minister that the Soviet Government does not recognize the "so-called" Finnish Government which has "fled from Helsinki to an unknown destination",¹⁶ and that there cannot be any question of further negotiations with that Government. Molotov added that moreover the Soviet Government has recognized and concluded a pact of mutual assistance and friendship with the "People's Government" of Finland; a pact which is the basis for future developments. Repeat to Embassy at Stockholm and for transmission to Helsinki.

STEINHARDT

760d.61/739

Memorandum by the Chief of the Division of European Affairs (Moffat) to the Under Secretary of State (Welles)

[Extract]

[WASHINGTON,] December 5, 1939.

MR. WELLES: At your request, I saw the Finnish Minister on his return from New York yesterday evening. Here in brief is his story:

He said that he had had a long telephone talk yesterday morning with Mr. Ryti, the new Prime Minister. Mr. Ryti said that despite

¹⁶ The Minister in Finland advised the Department in his telegram No. 408, December 6, that on the afternoon of December 6, the President of the Republic of Finland together with members of the Cabinet had received the Diplomatic Corps in Helsinki on occasion of the 22d anniversary of the independence of Finland. This reception was especially held to refute the Soviet allegation that the Finnish Government had fled. (860d.407/2) The text of a telegram for this anniversary from the President of the United States to the President of Finland is given in Department of State *Bulletin*, December 9, 1939, p. 650. This was acknowledged by President Kallio in a telegram from Helsinki on December 7, *ibid.*, December 16, p. 636.

certain gestures which he was making—such as an offer to negotiate with Moscow, an appeal to the League, et cetera,—he was under no illusions that war with Soviet Russia could be avoided. On the other hand, he was optimistic,—surprisingly optimistic, said Mr. Procopé,—of the outcome, *if* Finland could obtain help from abroad, and particularly from the United States. He accordingly made an urgent plea over the telephone for help. This can be divided into three parts:

1. *Money.* The Prime Minister said the figure that he was hoping to obtain in the United States was sixty million dollars, but said that of this sum twenty-five million dollars were immediately necessary. Mr. Procopé had been in New York and had been in touch, directly or indirectly, with various of the big bankers. He was convinced that there was no possibility for Finland to borrow money in Wall Street. That left two possibilities—the first an RFC¹⁷ credit, the second a Government loan. With regard to his negotiations with Mr. Jesse Jones, the latter had proposed a very involved scheme whereby a corporation should be set up with American and Finnish capital on a 5 to 1 basis; this corporation would receive credit to buy an American commodity, such as wheat or cotton, which it could then sell in Liverpool and loan the proceeds to Finland. If Finland went broke, the corporation would go bankrupt. According to the Minister's viewpoint, this scheme had possibilities, but the figures discussed by Mr. Jesse Jones were too small (six to ten million dollars), and the machinery was too complicated. However, he was seeing Mr. Jones at twelve o'clock today, and would pursue the matter further. The other plan he had in mind was a Government loan. Here he felt that if the President would announce that the moment Congress met in January he would ask for a large Government loan for Finland, the effect abroad would be excellent, and possibly he could succeed in obtaining an advance from Wall Street pending the vote by Congress. Throughout, the Minister was thinking and talking in very large sums.

2. *Supplies.* Mr. Ryti had telephoned a list of the necessary war supplies which Finland needed, the most important item of which was pursuit planes. The minister said that he was under specific instructions to ask for the right to purchase United States Army stocks. I intimated that I did not think this would be possible. In that case, continued the Minister, he was to ask that the Army grant Finland priority over its own orders in the matter of the delivery of supplies from American factories. (Parenthetically, the Swedish Minister called at the Department with the same request yesterday afternoon.)

¹⁷ Reconstruction Finance Corporation.

3. *A break of relations with Russia.* When the Minister had spoken with Mr. Ryti and suggested the possibility of such action here, Mr. Ryti had replied "That would be bright." The Minister was worried over the fact that so many Republicans were not only urging a breach in relations, but were using this as a means of attacking the Administration. He asked if I thought a decision was imminent; I replied that an immediate decision seemed improbable as the Secretary of State was on the point of leaving for an absence of two or three days in Chicago.

P[IERREPONT] M[OFFAT]

760d.61/631 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, December 5, 1939—8 p. m.
[Received December 5—4:15 p. m.]

1024. My 1022, December 5, 3 p. m.¹⁸ The Swedish Minister informed me this afternoon that when he called on Molotov last night he first inquired whether the Soviet Government had reached a decision with respect to the proposed representation of Finnish interests by the Swedish Government. Molotov replied that as the Soviet Government no longer recognizes the Helsinki Government since it considers the Finnish Government to be that headed by Kuusinen, it must definitely reject the request that the Swedish Legation in Moscow take over the representations of Finnish interests.

The Swedish Minister then handed to Molotov a note (the text of which he showed to me) conveying a statement on behalf of the Finnish Government at Helsinki that it desired to submit new proposals for the peaceful solution of the existing conflict and inquiring whether the Soviet Government was prepared to resume negotiations. Molotov accepted the note but promptly replied that the Finnish proposal could not be considered since the Soviet Government would neither resume negotiations nor have any other dealings with the Helsinki Government.

The Swedish Minister stated that Molotov had remained calm and courteous during the interview in contrast with their last meeting. He gained the impression that the Soviet Government is entirely satisfied with the present situation, anticipates little difficulty in carrying out its objectives in Finland, and is determined not to accept intervention of any third party.

¹⁸ Not printed.

In conclusion the Minister remarked that he anticipated the possibility of the formation of a coalition government in Sweden to be composed of all parties excepting the Communist. Under such a coalition Hansson presumably would remain as Prime Minister although Sandler might leave the Foreign Office and the Conservatives be given one or more portfolios as he believes the Finnish situation might now induce the Conservatives to alter their former policy of non-collaboration with the Socialist Government.

STEINHARDT

860d.51/373

Memorandum by the Under Secretary of State (Welles) to the Chief of the Division of European Affairs (Moffat)

[WASHINGTON,] December 6, 1939.

MR. MOFFAT: I enclose a copy of a memorandum¹⁹ left with me by the Finnish Minister last night. I have placed the original in the President's hands. The President asked me to let the Minister know that full consideration is being given to all aspects of the problem as to how appropriate assistance might be rendered Finland in accordance with our policy and under the terms of existing law. The President further asked me to say to the Minister that the President did not think that there was any useful purpose to be served by his receiving the Minister at this time as the Minister had so urgently asked last night. I have communicated this to the Minister and have added that I felt sure that if the President later thought it would be useful to talk to the Minister he would let the Minister know through me.

For your own information, both the Secretary of the Treasury and Mr. Jesse Jones are studying the matters involved.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

701.60d61/18 : Telegram

The Minister in Sweden (Sterling) to the Secretary of State

STOCKHOLM, December 7, 1939.

[Received December 7—6: 52 a. m.]

268. Following by telephone for Department from Helsinki.

"409. December 7, noon. Secretary General Finnish Foreign Office has just telephoned me by direction Minister for Foreign Affairs stating that Finnish Minister and Legation personnel Moscow expect to leave Moscow for Berlin via Dunaburg²⁰ today. He stated German Ambassador as Dean of Diplomatic Corps had been requested to take

¹⁹ Not printed.

²⁰ Daugavpils, Dvinsk.

charge of Finnish interests and had referred matter to his Government but German Ambassador doubted it would authorize such action. He reminded me that Finnish Government had previously asked Swedish Government to take over its interests but Soviet Government had refused.

Secretary General now inquires whether American Embassy Moscow could be authorized to take charge of Finnish interests or at least of Finnish Legation building. I said I would refer matter to you immediately. Schoenfeld."

STERLING

704.60d61/4b : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the Soviet Union
(Steinhardt)*

WASHINGTON, December 7, 1939—6 p. m.

270. The Finnish Foreign Minister has now renewed the request that you be authorized to take charge of Finnish interests or at least of Finnish Legation Building. Although the inference is fairly clear from your 1024 that in refusing Sweden the right to assume charge of Finland's interests, Molotoff was enunciating a general policy, you may nevertheless in the course of your routine conversations at the Foreign Office inquire whether the Soviet Government would permit any foreign government to take charge of Finnish interests, or at least of the Finnish Legation Building. If the answer is negative, you may inform Schoenfeld that no useful purpose would be served by making a direct request; if the answer is affirmative, you may then inquire whether the Soviet Government would agree to your assuming charge of Finnish interests, or at least of the Finnish Legation Building.

HULL

704.60d61/5 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary
of State*

Moscow, December 8, 1939—7 p. m.
[Received December 8—6:15 p. m.]

1050. Department's No. 270, December 7, 6 p. m. In the course of a general conversation with Potemkin this afternoon, I inquired whether the refusal by the Soviet Government to consent to the representation of Finland's interests by Sweden was based on a general policy or whether the Soviet Government would permit any other government to take charge of Finnish interests or of the Finnish Legation building. Potemkin replied that the refusal of the Swedish request was based on a decision in principle with respect to "the Government

which has fled from Helsinki" adding that the Soviet Government, having recognized the Kuusinen government, could not permit the Helsinki Government to be represented in Moscow. He made it quite clear that his reply applied to the Finnish Legation building and any other Finnish Government property as well as to the representation of Finnish interests.

Since the departure of the personnel of the Finnish Legation last night, the gates of the Finnish Legation have been sealed by the Soviet authorities and the building is under guard.

Repeated to Helsinki [and?] Stockholm.

STEINHARDT

[Mr. Jesse H. Jones, Chairman of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, after consultation with the President, issued a press release on the evening of December 10, 1939 (for text, see *New York Times*, December 11, 1939), which announced that the Reconstruction Finance Corporation and the Export-Import Bank of Washington, jointly, would make a loan of \$10,000,000 to the Finnish-American Trading Corporation, New York, N. Y. This loan was to be guaranteed by the Finnish Government, and its purpose was to furnish dollar exchange to enable Finland to make purchases exclusively in the United States of "agricultural surpluses and other civilian supplies."]

760d.61/769

*The Finnish Legation to the Department of State*²¹

MEMORANDUM

Soviet Russian demands on Finland, as they had been put forward during the first negotiations in Moscow, were the following (information dated October 27th, 1939) :

1. The Finnish Isles in the Eastern part of the Gulf of Finland, Suursaari (Hogland) and Koivisto (Björkö) included.
2. Part of the Karelian Isthmus, from Koivisto on the Gulf of Finland eastwards to Kirjasalo on the frontier line.
3. The port of Hanko (Hangö).
4. The harbor Lappohja (Lappvik). Both 3) and 4) evidently to be ceded under lease.
5. The Western part of the Kalastajasaarento ("Fishermans Peninsula") in Petsamo.

On October 31st, 1939 the following Finnish counterproposals were fixed as instructions for the Finnish negotiators again going to Moscow :

²¹ Notation by Pierrepont Moffat, Chief of the Division of European Affairs: "Left at the Department of State by the Finnish Minister (under specific instructions from his government) 12-11-39."

A. The Isles Seiskari, Lavansaari, Peninsaari, Tytärsaari-islands can be ceded against territorial compensations. The status of Suursari (Hogland) can be discussed.

B. Hanko and Lappohja are not to be ceded or leased in any case.

C. On the Karelian Isthmus Finland would cede against territorial compensations elsewhere the territory marked by a line starting from the mouth of the Vammelsuu river on the Gulf of Finland through Raivola and Kaukjärvi to the frontier.

D. In Petsamo Finland is ready to cede against territorial compensations elsewhere the Western side of the Northern Kalastaja-saarento ("Fishermans Peninsula").

E. The territorial compensations from Russia are not to be calculated mathematically, i. e. not square mile against square mile.

F. The Treaty of Non-aggression will be completed on the lines proposed by Finland and already accepted by the Soviet Union.

G. The proposed demilitarization of fortified zones on both sides of the border is not to be accepted.

H. Soviet Russia's information regarding the fortification of the Aaland Islands by Finland alone has been noted as corresponding to Finland's intentions.

On November 10th, 1939, information was received that the Soviet Union insists on getting the naval base on the Finnish coast in the Western part of the Gulf of Finland and on a frontier line on the Karelian Isthmus starting from Koivisto on the Gulf of Finland. The Finnish Delegation was in possession of detailed information regarding the utmost limit of concessions Finland would make. The negotiations were broken off in the evening of November 9th, but Russian Premier Molotov informed by a letter during the night that a misunderstanding existed.

On November 13th, 1939, the Finnish Foreign Office informed that the Finnish Delegates Paasikivi and Tanner are returning from Moscow and that the Russian Government still insist on the frontier line starting from Koivisto and on a naval base in the mouth of the Gulf of Finland.

In the last phase of the negotiations Finland had made still larger concessions in as far as she had agreed to the frontier line on the Karelian Isthmus to be drawn further from the present frontier from the neighbourhood of Ino, and furthermore she had been willing to cede the Southern part of Hogland.

WASHINGTON, December 11, 1939.

860d.24/54

*The Finnish Minister (Procopé) to the Secretary of State*²²

No. 3658

WASHINGTON, December 11, 1939.

EXCELLENCY: I herewith have the honour to inform Your Excellency that the Finnish Government is sending a purchasing Commit-

²² Acknowledged for the Secretary of State on December 15, 1939, by the Counselor of the Department, R. Walton Moore.

tee to the United States. The members of this committee are Lieutenant General V. P. Nenonen, former Inspector of the Finnish Artillery, and Mr. W. Wahlfors, President of the Wärtsilä metal concern in Finland. They are accompanied by one secretary. General Nenonen is not visiting the United States in his capacity of officer, but only as a member of the above mentioned committee. The purchases will mainly consist of implements of war. The committee is expected to arrive in New York about the 20th of December.

Accept [etc.]

HJ. J. PROCOPE

760d.61/710 : Telegram

The Consul General at Geneva (Tittmann) to the Secretary of State

GENEVA, December 11, 1939—9 p. m.
[Received December 11—6: 16 p. m.]

317. The Finnish appeal was referred by the Assembly this afternoon to an *ad hoc* committee of 13 after an address by Holsti the Finnish delegate, which will presumably be reported fully in the press. The committee of 13 met after the Assembly and, on the basis of article XV, paragraph 3 of the Covenant, despatched a telegram to the Russian Government,²³ citing the Finnish appeal and requesting cessation of hostilities with a view to negotiations.

TITTMANN

760d.61/750 : Telegram

The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State

GRANKULLA (HELSINKI), December 13, 1939—8 p. m.
[Received December 14—3: 10 a. m.]

435. Minister for Foreign Affairs told me tonight that he was awaiting report of action of the League of Nations on Finland's appeal but understood it would condemn Russian aggression²⁴ and leave member states free to choose amount and kind of support to be given this country. This support would be financial, economic and military depending on various factors affecting countries lending support and would include despatch of volunteers and military supplies especially from Scandinavian countries. He expected help from Britain and France among others.

²³ The text of the telegram from José Caeiro da Matta, the Portuguese Chairman of the Special Committee of the Assembly, is in League of Nations, *Official Journal*, Nos. 11-12 (pt. II), November-December 1939, p. 529. For the reply by Molotov, see telegram No. 1077, December 13, from the Ambassador in the Soviet Union, *Foreign Relations, The Soviet Union, 1933-1939*, p. 803.

²⁴ For the expulsion of the Soviet Union on December 14, 1939, from the League of Nations, see telegram No. 324 of that date from the Consul General at Geneva. *ibid.*, p. 804.

Nevertheless, Tanner said, in response to inquiry, that "the end is not in doubt" since Finland could not indefinitely withstand overwhelming numbers, although military situation remained favorable due among other factors to seasonal and climatic conditions. He made it clear that final collapse of Finnish resistance from sheer exhaustion was not excluded and permitted inference that help must be immediate and generous if it is to be effective.

He explained absence of Russian bombing of Helsinki since December 1 only on the ground of unfavorable weather conditions and denied report that it is due to notice rumored to have been served by Finns that in the event of repetition of bombing of the capital Leningrad would be bombed in reprisal. He intimated, however, that latter contingency was doubtless present in Russian mind.

Minister of Foreign Affairs said it had been rumored but was not yet confirmed at Tallinn that General Laidoner,²⁵ lately at Moscow, had been asked by the Russians to dissolve Estonian Civic Guard and to adapt organization of Estonian Army to Russian methods, which he thought would mean complete subjection of Estonia if this report were true, and also possibility that Estonia would be forced to fight Finland.

Answering my inquiry as to the effectiveness of announced Soviet blockade, Tanner said he had not taken it very seriously until today when he learned of loss of [a] German vessel in the Gulf of Bothnia yesterday as result of submarine attack and he feared that Soviet submarines may have entered northern reaches of the gulf before mining thereof was completed. He spoke of difficulty of supplying Finland from abroad and considered overseas route through Norway the best but that even this would be difficult.

SCHOENFELD

860d.51/375 : Telegram

The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State

GRANKULLA (HELSINKI), December 14, 1939—1 p. m.
[Received December 14—12:03 p. m.]

436. I have received from Finnish Minister of Finance, Mr. Mauno Pekkala, note dated December 13 transmitting guarantee of Finnish Government for payment of obligations entered into by the Finnish-American Trading Corporation up to \$10,000,000 and requesting me to cable you that the guarantee may be communicated to Warren

²⁵ For reports about General Laidoner's visit in Moscow, see telegram No. 1041, December 8, 1939, from the Ambassador in the Soviet Union, and telegram No. 155, December 15, 1939, from the Minister in Estonia, *Foreign Relations, The Soviet Union, 1933-1939*, pp. 980 and 981, respectively.

Peterson [*Pierson*], Export-Import Bank. Document itself reads as follows:

“Guarantee. The Finnish Government hereby undertakes and agrees unconditionally to guarantee the payment to the Export-Import Bank of Washington and/or the Reconstruction Finance Corporation of obligations entered by the Finnish-American Trading Corporation up to a total amount of \$10,000,000. Helsingfors, this 13th day of December, 1939. Finnish Government (signed) Mauna Pekkala. (Countersigned) Emil Pehkonen.”²⁶

SCHOENFELD

860d.51/383

Memorandum of Conversations, by the Adviser on International Economic Affairs (Feis)

[WASHINGTON,] December 15, 1939.

The Finnish Minister came in to see me this afternoon in regard to this matter of financial assistance. He said that he had spoken to the Secretary of the Treasury about it, and that this morning the Secretary of the Treasury had informed him that the only way in which any further financial help could be given to Finland would be by action of Congress. He stated that he would discuss that with the President in the near future.

I corroborated this fact and explained why the Export-Import Bank could not undertake the financing of arms, munitions, and implements of war.

The Finnish Minister then said that they had out of funds in hand enough to pay not only for the airplanes whose purchase is now in prospect but also for anti-tank and anti-aircraft guns which they desperately needed. He said he was informed that these weapons were only made in Government arsenals and could only be procured by purchase from the American Government. I confirmed the fact that if this was the only source, legislative authority from Congress would be required. He said he greatly hoped that the Administration would make some such proposal to Congress.²⁷

²⁶ Later, on December 28, 1939, the Department of State asked for slight changes in the wording to transform this “agreement to guarantee” into a “guarantee” of this loan, together with interest thereon, to satisfy legal requirements and to complete the records. This revised guarantee, dated January 9, 1940, was transmitted to the Department in telegram No. 22, January 11, 1940, not printed.

²⁷ A bill was introduced in the Senate on January 8, 1940, by Senator Prentiss M. Brown to enable loans to be made to Finland not to exceed \$60,000,000. On March 2, 1940, an Act was approved (54 Stat. 38) whereby the lending authority of the Export-Import Bank of Washington was increased to \$200,000,000. It was provided, however, that the amount of loans to any one foreign country outstanding at any one time should not exceed \$20,000,000, in addition to loans already authorized.

I conferred with Mr. Green. He gave me to understand that private firms in the United States could make these weapons (later Mr. Green, however, explained deliveries would be months delayed). As regards questions of priority in delivery, I said that I thought the matter was one for consideration by the Army and Navy Munitions Board, who, however, did submit unusual questions to the President.

He emphasized his belief that the power to obtain these weapons promptly would make all the difference between the power to survive or defeat, and that the decisive time was short; and that if Finland went under,²⁸ it would probably usher in other momentous events.

H[ERBERT] F[LEIS]

500.C111/1139 : Telegram

The Consul General at Geneva (Tittmann) to the Secretary of State

GENEVA, December 16, 1939—5 p. m.
[Received December 16—1:17 p. m.]

326. Reference Consulate's 322, December 13, Part 1, paragraphs 4, 5, and 6.²⁹ Holsti, the Finnish permanent delegate, told me this afternoon that it was his understanding that the League Secretariat would act as a kind of clearing house of information and center of communication between Finland and members of the League desiring to give aid to Finland and any non-members desiring to coordinate their aid with that of League members. It is not the intention, however, that the League should act in any way as a purchasing or transport agent. Holsti had seen Avenol this morning who explained that it was necessary to know in detail what the Finnish requirements were before the Secretariat could take action. Avenol was informed that an emissary of the Finnish Government was expected to arrive in Geneva with this information some time next week.

Some observers have expressed doubts as to whether the Swiss Government might not object to such activity on the part of the League Secretariat on Swiss territory but Holsti said in his opinion the Swiss Government would not raise objections but would undoubtedly insist that great discretion be exercised in connection therewith. Repeated to Paris.

TITTMANN

²⁸ Finland was compelled to conclude a treaty of peace, with protocol, with the Soviet Union, which was signed at Moscow, March 12, 1940. For translation of the text of the treaty and protocol, see Department of State *Bulletin*, April 27, 1940, p. 453.

²⁹ *Foreign Relations*, The Soviet Union, 1933-1939, p. 803.

760d.61/790 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, December 18, 1939—7 p. m.

[Received December 19—8:35 a. m.]

1107. It is becoming increasing[ly] apparent that the Soviet plans in respect of Finland have seriously miscarried and that the Soviet Government is now faced with the necessity of expending a far greater effort than had been anticipated. From many indications it would appear that Stalin was convinced that a military attack coupled with the formation of the Kuusinen government would produce internal dissension in Finland sufficient to bring about a speedy collapse of Finnish organized resistance and a swift and easy Soviet victory.

Insofar as concerns the military operations in addition to Potemkin's boast to the French Ambassador reported in my 1045, December 8, 2 p. m.,³⁰ I have learned from a number of reliable Soviet sources that the military plans the termination of a 9-day operation against Finland. It is rumored that Voroshilov personally assured Stalin that his motorized columns would have no difficulty in reaching Helsinki within 6 days.

Further evidence of Soviet overconfidence and miscalculation may be found in the prompt repudiation by the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the article concerning Rumania in the *Communist International* which was clearly published to coincide with or follow on the heels of the anticipated collapse of Finland.

Although military information in the Soviet press has been confined to the daily communiqué which gives few details of the fighting, even accepting these communiqués at their face value, it is clear that far from achieving a speedy victory, the Soviet forces, after 19 days on the offensive, have made very little progress against Finland. Reports have reached Moscow from numerous sources that the large number of wounded arriving in Leningrad have necessitated the conversion of schools and other public buildings into temporary hospitals. Up to the present, no indication as to Soviet losses has appeared in the Soviet press. Swedish sources estimate the Soviet dead at 25,000.

The discomfiture of the Soviet Government over the miscarriage of its plans in Finland is reflected in the press which except for the daily communiqué continues to ignore the war with Finland. Reports from the field correspondents of leading Moscow newspapers which were a feature of the opening days of hostilities have been discontinued. Furthermore, the Soviet no longer makes mention of the

³⁰ Not printed. Potemkin had boasted to the French Ambassador, Paul Nagiar, on November 30, 1939, that the entire operation would be over in 4 or 5 days, with Soviet forces in occupation of Helsinki (760d.61/681).

whereabouts or the activities of the "Kuusinen government" which has maintained complete silence since the conclusion of the treaty of December 2 with the Soviet Government.

In addition I believe that the Soviet Government did not anticipate the extent of the foreign reaction against Soviet aggression or expulsion from the League. The fact that the Soviet Union apparently preferred to accept expulsion from the League rather than to withdraw of its own accord may have been due to the expectation of the Soviet Government that at least one country represented on the League Council would be sufficiently afraid of Soviet displeasure to block the required unanimous passage of a resolution of expulsion. The tone of the editorials dealing with the League action which have appeared in the leading Moscow newspapers reflect a certain uneasiness as to possible further developments in Soviet relations with foreign countries and the care taken in the editorials to divest the Soviet Union of responsibility for the fact that it is now outside the League may indicate that the Soviet Union while continuing its war with Finland does not desire at this time to precipitate a rupture with England, France or the United States.

The obvious miscarriage of Soviet plans in respect of Finland does not however mean that the Soviet Government has any intention of departing from its announced course in regard to that country. On the contrary, having definitely and publicly committed itself to the Kuusinen government and the Finnish campaign, it is extremely unlikely that the Soviet Government, if only for reasons of military prestige, would be prepared to consider the abandonment of the Finnish venture.

In view of the overwhelming preponderance of the Soviet armed forces the final outcome would appear to be only a matter of time unless Finland is able to obtain sufficient support from other countries. Should this support be forthcoming the effort which would be required of the Soviet Union might complicate Stalin's internal and external situation to such an extent as to endanger the present regime.

STEINHARDT

760d.61/814 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, December 20, 1939—3 p. m.

[Received December 20—11:40 a. m.]

1116. The Military Attaché has ascertained, from what he regards as an exceptionally reliable source, that among the major difficulties

which the Soviet armed forces are encountering in Finland has been the expected confusion resulting from duality of command inherent in the system of Political Commissars.³¹ According to this information this duality of command and interference of the Political Commissars has resulted in a situation whereby regular army officers are afraid to assume the responsibility essential for the conduct of operations in the field.

It has been reported by another reliable foreign informant that a substantial body of Soviet forces advancing through the central portion of Finland has been cut off and surrounded by a Finnish counterattack.

STEINHARDT

760d.61/850 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State

Moscow, December 25, 1939—noon.

[Received 6:40 p. m.]

1133. For the Under Secretary. From the evidence thus far available, due in part to the strong geographic defensive position of the Finns and the inadequacy of roads and road facilities for Soviet troop transport, the overwhelming disparity in manpower has not proved to be as decisive as might have been expected. Insofar as concerns the naval position, the Soviet Navy has thus far accomplished virtually nothing and has not even been able to close the Gulf of Bothnia to fairly regular traffic between Finland and Sweden. The great threat to the Finns appears to be the insufficiency of fast modern pursuit planes with which to drive off bombing attacks, light artillery, and munitions.

The reports I have of the conditions under which the Soviet troops go into battle, such as inadequate clothing [for] extreme cold, insufficient food supplies, and particularly inadequate rail transportation and general disorganization back of the lines make it appear not impossible that a sustained defence by the Finns may produce serious difficulties for the Soviet Government.

STEINHARDT

³¹ Concerning the reinstatement of the system of political, or military commissars in the Red Army in May 1937, see telegram No. 105, June 8, 1937, from the Chargé in the Soviet Union, *Foreign Relations, The Soviet Union, 1933-1939*, p. 376, and footnote 22, p. 377.

700.00116 M. E./155

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Chief of the Division of Controls (Green)

[WASHINGTON,] December 28, 1939.

Colonel Per Zilliacus, the Finnish Military Attaché, called me by telephone this afternoon. He said that he had been instructed by his Minister to ascertain whether there was any likelihood that this Government would place a moral embargo on the exportation of aviation gasoline to the U. S. S. R.

I told Colonel Zilliacus that the U. S. S. R. did not import aviation gasoline in significant quantities from the United States.

JOSEPH C. GREEN

760d.61/878 : Telegram

The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State

GRANKULLA (HELSINKI), December 28, 1939—5 p. m.

[Received 8:15 p. m.]

483. At the request of Prime Minister Ryti I called on him today. He told me that the military situation continued satisfactory. Nevertheless he was deeply concerned by inevitable Finnish losses though they were very small in comparison with those of the Russians who he said had no regard for the lives of their own soldiers. In the Petsamo area which was considered by the Finnish authorities as unimportant strategically, the Russians had withdrawn. In the central area they had recently suffered heavy defeats and were being harassed with success by light Finnish forces during their retreat. Heavy Russian attacks continued in the south but were everywhere repulsed by the Finnish troops who were inflicting heavy losses.

Large shipments of guns and ammunition were coming forward especially from Britain while others were expected from France. Christmas holidays had slowed down movement of Swedish volunteers of whom only about 2,000 were now in this country but larger numbers were expected soon.

After these preliminary statements the Prime Minister introduced the main topic he had in mind. He said the Swedish Government had suggested to the Finnish Government very recently that another *démarche* be made by the former at Moscow with a view to stopping hostilities. Before taking a position on this suggestion which the Prime Minister felt offered little prospect of success in view of the Soviet Government's previous disdainful attitude towards Sweden

Mr. Ryti desired me to inquire of you in confidence whether our Government would be disposed to consider favorably a request from the Finnish Government that the United States initiate a general *démarche* for peace at Moscow by any governments prepared to cooperate in such action including not only belligerents, but also neutrals. He mentioned the Scandinavian countries, Italy, and Japan and said that he was even thinking of the possibility that the United States might approach the German Government. Though the latter's attitude toward Finland was unfriendly and he had no illusions as to its willingness if approached by the United States to participate in such a *démarche* at Moscow he felt it might be worth while to make this approach because of Germany's presumed influence with the Soviet Government. Incidentally, the Prime Minister said Ribbentrop had been asked by the Soviet Government to recognize the puppet government of Kuusinen and had stated at first that Germany might do so if the city of Viborg should fall to the Russians but more recently that it was not intended for the present to recognize that government in any case.

The Prime Minister said he looked upon the present situation as dual in its nature. On the one hand Finland must concentrate all its efforts upon securing the means for continued effective resistance to the Russian attack. On the other hand the diplomatic and political problems must be dealt with in the light of the interests and policies of other countries and this depended upon general developments which would be slow to mature.

Mr. Ryti said he had been informed that heavy movements of troops and material were going southward from Moscow but he had no authentic explanation of the reasons for these movements.

I told the Prime Minister I would telegraph you his inquiry and advise him of your reply without delay. I asked Mr. Ryti whether he had any reason to believe the Soviet Government was open to any suggestion for a peaceful settlement in view of its consistent attitude exemplified most recently following the meeting of the Council of the League of Nations. He said he had private information that the Soviet Government was seeking a way out of the present difficulties without further loss of prestige. It is my impression that if your answer is favorable it would be valued here more highly than anything of the kind that could be done by any other Government friendly to Finland and that in the Finnish view the action which might follow would have greater prospects for success.

SCHOENFELD

760d.61/879 : Telegram

The Minister in Switzerland (Harrison) to the Secretary of State

BERN, December 29, 1939—10 a. m.
[Received December 29—9 : 50 a. m.]

158. Following communication dated December 28th has just been received from the Secretary General of the League of Nations :

“I have the honor to inform you that, in accordance with the resolution adopted by the Assembly on December 14th, in connection with the Finnish appeal, I have addressed to the members of the League the following telegram :

“With reference resolution adopted Assembly December 14th as result Finnish appeal beg draw Government's attention particularly to last three paragraphs first part resolution, namely, “Assembly urgently appeals to every member of the League to provide Finland with such material and humanitarian assistance as may be in its power and to refrain from any action which might weaken Finland's power of resistance ; authorizes the Secretary General to lend the aid of his technical services in the organization of the aforesaid assistance to Finland ; and likewise authorizes the Secretary General in virtue of the Assembly resolution of October 4, 1937, to consult non-member states with a view to possible cooperation.” Should be grateful for information regarding your Government's intentions. Avenol, Secretary General’.

The Assembly having authorized me to consult non-member states with a view to their possible cooperation in the assistance to be given to Finland, I should be grateful if you would enable me to inform the Finnish Government whether and, if so, to what extent, your Government is willing to help.”

HARRISON

760d.61/888 : Telegram

The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State

GRANKULLA (HELSINKI), December 30, 1939—8 p. m.
[Received 9 : 43 p. m.]

488. The Prime Minister informed me this evening that the Finnish forces had had a great success yesterday at Suomussalmi where they had annihilated an entire Russian division and captured large amounts of war material although another Russian division stationed to the eastward had rendered no help to its comrades notwithstanding appeals of the latter. A similar success was indicated further north at Salla. North of Ladoga a large Russian force estimated at three divisions was surrounded and in danger of crushing defeat except for limited numbers of Finns. On the Karelian Isthmus where large concentrations of Russians were massing the principal anxiety of the Finnish high command was the long range heavy guns of the Russians but Swedish guns of 150 millimeters caliber had been received and more were expected by the Finns. In strict confidence Mr. Ryti told

me that a reserve of two divisions had not yet been used by the Finnish Army. The Minister said that fighting among the Russians themselves had taken place at various points including the Karelian Isthmus.

With reference to your 218, December 29,³² I conveyed to Mr. Ryti the first information he had received regarding release of 44 planes to the Finnish purchasing mission in the United States as well as the action of our Government in putting at the disposal of manufacturers plans and specifications of equipment used by our army. He expressed deep appreciation.

SCHOENFELD

760d.61/890 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the
Secretary of State*

Moscow, December 31, 1939—8 p. m.

[Received December 31—6:20 p. m.]

1164. Department's telegram No. 327, December 29, 6 p. m.³³ I have no evidence which would justify the opinion that the present time is propitious to approach the Soviet Government for the purpose of bringing about negotiations with the Finnish Government nor is there as yet any sign of a desire on the part of the Soviet Government to extricate itself from the difficulties which it has encountered in the prosecution of the war with Finland. As I have indicated in my telegrams I believe that the Soviet Government has committed itself so publicly and definitely to a course which involves the conquest of Finland that only the fear of serious internal complications or of menace from abroad will induce Stalin to accept the loss of prestige which would attend negotiations with the present Finnish Government.

Up to the present the internal difficulties which may in part be due to the added strain of the military operations in Finland appear to constitute little more than an intensification of the normal defects of Soviet economy. They are not as yet, insofar as I am able to ascertain, sufficiently serious to cause a modification of Soviet policies in regard to Finland. The reverses which the Soviet Army has thus far sustained in Finland are unquestionably causing concern to the Soviet Government but every indication points to the intention to continue offensive military operations. I regard as substantial proof of the

³² Not printed.

³³ Not printed; the Department instructed the Ambassador in the Soviet Union to report any information regarding Soviet internal conditions that might make it possible for another *démarche* to be entertained for suspending hostilities between Finland and the Soviet Union and entering upon peace conversations (760d.61/878).

foregoing the exchange of telegrams between Kuusinen and Stalin on the occasion of the latter's 60th birthday³⁴ particularly Stalin's personal commitment in his reply to Kuusinen of December 23 in which he referred to a "speedy and complete" victory over the present Finnish Government and which can only be interpreted as disclosing his intention to pursue the Finnish venture.

Should there be any developments in Soviet internal conditions or in the international situation of the Soviet Union which would justify the belief that the Soviet Government might be willing to entertain an offer of mediation by a third country, in my opinion that would be the time in the light of the then existing situation to examine the best method of approach. I consider, however, that should such an occasion present itself a general *démarche* by a number of powers would be a most ineffective method of approach. Furthermore, I am convinced that any attempt to associate Germany with such a *démarche* or even make an informal approach through that country would be extremely injudicious. In the first place I doubt that Germany would be willing to take part in any such *démarche* and secondly any effort to include Germany would almost certainly be viewed by the Kremlin as an attempt to drive a wedge between Germany and the Soviet Union. I also believe that any approach even at the appropriate time would be impolitic if it were thought by the Soviet that the initiative had come from Sweden by reason of the fact that the traditional animosity between Sweden and Russia has been accentuated by the not disinterested activities of Sweden on behalf of Finland. If and when the situation appears propitious it may well be that an informal strictly confidential approach by the United States alone would offer the best chance of success.

I shall continue to watch closely for and report to the Department the slightest indication which in my opinion would support the conclusion that the Soviet Government might be willing even to consider a suggestion looking toward the termination of hostilities with Finland.

STEINHARDT

760d.61/890: Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld)

WASHINGTON, January 3, 1940—6 p. m.

2. (1) Your 487, December 30, 7 p. m.,³⁵ leaves us almost as confused as we were as to precisely what the Prime Minister has in mind. It

³⁴ Born December 21, 1879.

³⁵ Not printed; it repeated some further thoughts by the Prime Minister of Finland concerning a possible move for ending hostilities with the Soviet Union (760d.61/887).

is not clear, for instance, whether he desired the United States in cooperation with other powers to endeavor to arrange for a peace conference in which a number of countries would participate with the purpose of bringing about a cessation of the conflict between Finland and the Soviet Union, or whether it is his idea that the United States, together with other powers, should merely try to persuade the Soviet Union to enter into bilateral peace negotiations with Finland.

(2) We are now in receipt of a telegram from Steinhardt in reply to our telegram to him referred to in the last paragraph of our no. 219 of December 29, 6 p. m.,³⁶ to you. For your personal information only, Steinhardt says that he is in possession of no evidence which would justify a belief that now is a propitious time to approach the Soviet Government with a view to prevailing upon it to enter into negotiations with the Finnish Government, and that he has observed nothing thus far which would indicate that the Soviet Government has any desire to extricate itself from the difficulties which it is encountering as a result of its war with Finland.

(3) You are authorized orally to inform the Prime Minister that while we do not wish to leave untaken any step which might lead in the direction of the cessation of hostilities between the Soviet Union and Finland, the results of our own investigations cause us to doubt that an approach by this Government to the Soviet Government for a peace conference would serve any useful purpose at the present time. We are nevertheless willing to give consideration to any suggestions or concrete proposals which the Finnish Government may at anytime desire to make to us.

HULL

760d.61/879 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Minister in Switzerland (Harrison)

WASHINGTON, January 5, 1940—6 p. m.

2. Your 158, December 29, 10 a. m. You are requested to address the following note to the Secretary General of the League of Nations:

"I have the honor to inform you that I have been instructed by my Government to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of December 28, 1939 concerning the resolution adopted by the Assembly of the League of Nations on December 14, 1939, following the appeal of the Government of Finland for material and humanitarian assistance, and inquiring whether my Government would enable you to inform the Finnish Government whether, and if so, to what extent my Government is willing to help.

"In reply I am instructed to state that the Government of the United States has from the outbreak of hostilities given tangible indication

³⁶ Not printed.

of its sympathy for the people and Government of Finland in the present situation.

“Furthermore the American Red Cross and private organizations in the United States have already extended medical, financial, and other aid to the Finnish people and are in consultation with agencies of the Finnish Government with regard to the most effective manner in which such aid may be continued and expanded. This assistance is no doubt reflected in the reports of its needs which the Finnish Government is understood to be submitting to the Secretariat of the League of Nations, and my Government considers that the direct consultations undertaken by it, and by the American Red Cross and private agencies, with the Government of Finland will adequately meet the necessity for avoiding confusion of effort.”

HULL

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