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United States Department of State

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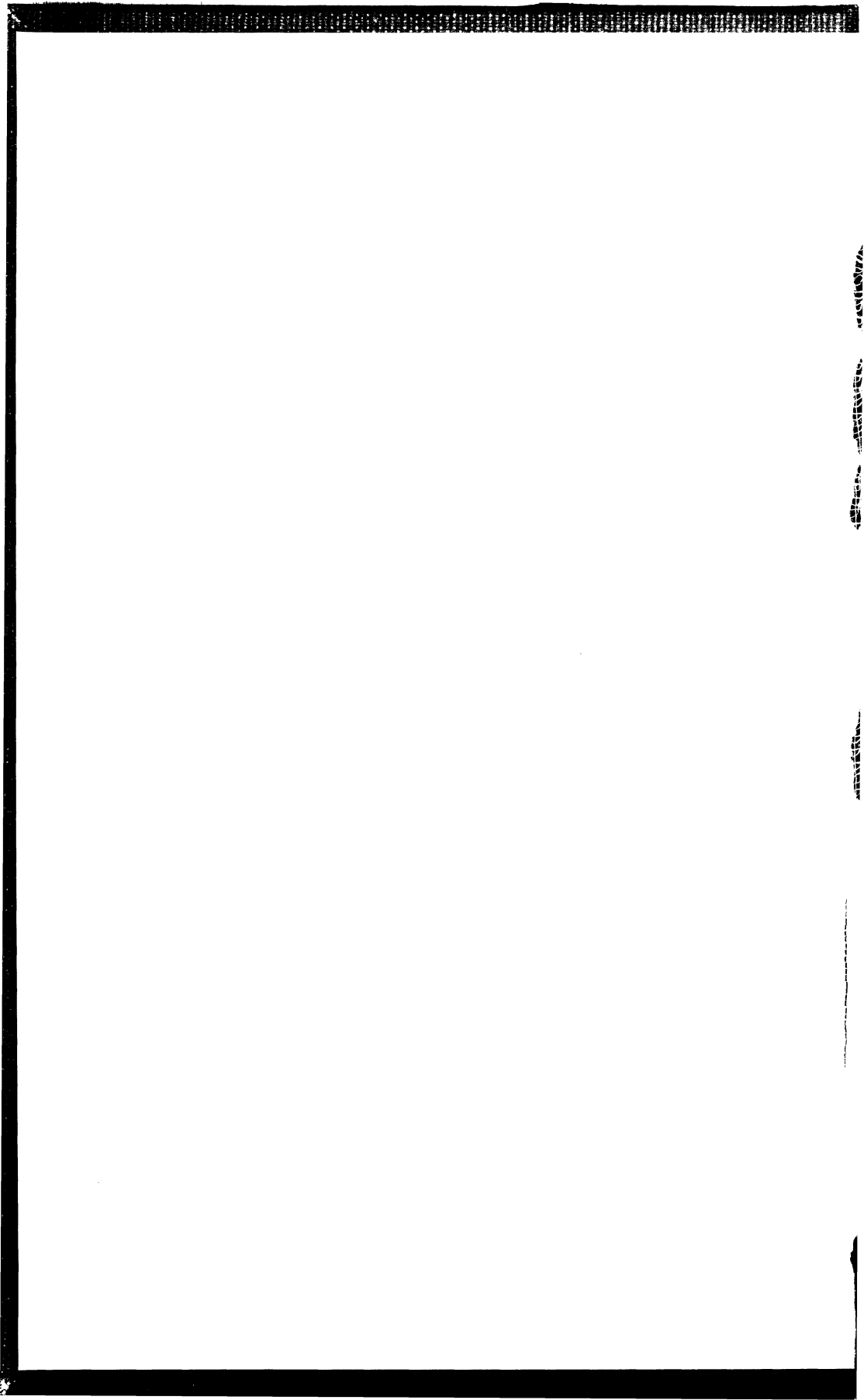
1940

Volume I

GENERAL

Department of State  
Washington









Foreign Relations  
of the  
United States  
Diplomatic Papers

1940

(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.

The responsibilities of the Historical Division for the preparation of the *Foreign Relations* volumes for 1940 were 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. Nuernberger.

The compilers of the 1940 volumes, with the subjects for which they were chiefly responsible, were as follows: Matilda F. Axton and Shirley L. Phillips, General; Rogers P. Churchill, The Soviet Union; N. O. Sappington and Kieran J. Carroll, The British Commonwealth and Europe; Morrison B. Giffen and Francis C. Prescott, The Near East and Africa; John G. Reid, Ralph R. Goodwin, and Louis E. Gates, The Far East; Victor J. Farrar, Richard B. McCornack, and Almon R. Wright, The American Republics.

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, Norris E. Drew, the editorial functions mentioned above are performed by the Foreign Relations Editing Branch in charge of Elizabeth A. Vary, Chief, and Ouida J. Ward, Assistant Chief.

For 1940, the arrangement of volumes is as follows: Volume I, General; Volume II, General and Europe; Volume III, The British Commonwealth, the Soviet Union, the Near East and Africa; Volume IV, The Far East; Volume V, The American Republics.

E. R. PERKINS

*Editor of Foreign Relations*

APRIL 2, 1959.





## CONTENTS

	Page
PREFACE . . . . .	III
Exchanges of views regarding possibility of peace and on postwar problems:	
I. Special mission to Europe of Sumner Welles, Under Secretary of State . . . . .	1
II. Approach of the United States to neutral countries regarding exchange of views on postwar problems . . . . .	117
III. Appointment by President Roosevelt of Myron C. Taylor as the President's personal representative to Pope Pius XII . . . . .	123
IV. Proposal by President Roosevelt to send special envoys to Turkey to confer with leaders of the Greek Orthodox and Mohammedan faiths in the cause of world peace . . . . .	129
Extension of the European War:	
I. Invasion of Norway and Denmark by Germany . . . . .	136
II. Invasion of the Netherlands, Luxemburg, and Belgium by Germany . . . . .	184
III. Invasion of France by Germany and collapse of French resistance . . . . .	217
IV. The Graeco-Italian War . . . . .	268
Activities of the Soviet Union in Eastern Europe, and Soviet relations with the belligerent powers:	
I. Relations between Finland and the Soviet Union, the Winter War and the Peace of Moscow . . . . .	269
II. Forcible occupation of the Baltic States and their incorporation into the Soviet Union . . . . .	357
III. Activities of the Soviet Union in the Balkans; the seizure of Bessarabia . . . . .	444
IV. Wartime cooperation between Germany and the Soviet Union . . . . .	539
V. Wartime attempts of the United Kingdom and France to obtain closer relations with the Soviet Union . . . . .	589
Relations of Japan with the Axis Powers and with the Soviet Union . . . . .	633
Cooperation among the American Republics in their reaction to the European War:	
I. Violations by the belligerents of the Security Zone established by the Declaration of Panama . . . . .	681
II. Attitude of the Department of State regarding a suggested protest by the American Republics against the invasion of Norway and Denmark by Germany . . . . .	724
III. Collective protest by the American Republics against the violation of the sovereignty and neutrality of the Netherlands, Luxemburg, and Belgium by Germany (Uruguayan proposal) . . . . .	727
IV. Argentine proposal that the American Republics declare they cease to be neutrals and announce they have become non-belligerents . . . . .	743
V. Proposal by President Aguirre Cerda of Chile to President Roosevelt for joint appeal by the American Republics for peace . . . . .	770

	<b>Page</b>
Cooperation among the American Republics in their reaction to the European War—Continued	
VI. Proposal by Costa Rica that the American Republics send a collective note to Spain expressing the hope that Spain would refrain from becoming involved in the European conflict . . .	773
VII. Efforts of the United States to secure among certain other American Republics legislation providing for the exclusion of belligerent submarines from their ports and territorial waters .	776
VIII. Attempts by the German Government to obstruct cooperation on neutrality measures among the American Republics . . . . .	787
INDEX . . . . .	813

## EXCHANGES OF VIEWS REGARDING POSSIBILITY OF PEACE AND ON POSTWAR PROBLEMS

### I. SPECIAL MISSION TO EUROPE OF SUMNER WELLES, UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE

121.840 Welles, Sumner/69½

*Telegram From the British Prime Minister (Chamberlain) to the  
British Ambassador in the United States (Lothian)*<sup>1</sup>

You may certainly take the earliest opportunity of informing the President that I am most interested in his proposal<sup>2</sup> and appreciate fully the motives that have inspired it.

2. The information which the President has received from Germany corresponds with what has been reaching His Majesty's Government, but in estimating the value of this information the President has no doubt observed that no announcement by any leading Allied statesman would justify the belief in Germany that Allied Governments intend upon victory to partition Germany. If German people do believe this it is because the German Government by means of their propaganda are forcing this belief upon them in the hope that by this means they may counteract any craving for peace among the German people and may be better able to reconcile them to further hardships and sacrifices.

3. As to the inevitability of a tremendous offensive in the spring this too has for some time past been put about by German propaganda as part of the war of nerves on which they are engaged. It must be realized that this war of nerves is directed not only against the belligerents but also against the neutrals. By keeping the neutrals on tenterhooks, especially those neutrals in close proximity to Germany, the German Government hope to create among them the general fear lest a continuance of the war will eventually involve them in hostilities either directly or indirectly. We do not therefore feel that this kind of propaganda is necessarily conclusive as to peace being more difficult of attainment later. It is not unreasonable to suppose that it is precisely the policy of the German Government to produce this impression under the mistaken idea that by this means they can mobilize world

<sup>1</sup> Photostatic copy of undated telegram obtained from the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, N. Y.

<sup>2</sup> Evidently the proposed mission to Europe of the Under Secretary of State had been discussed by President Roosevelt with the British Ambassador previously. No earlier record of these discussions has been found in Department files.



public opinion against the Allies who would be represented as being the sole obstacle in the way of peace.

4. I am gratified to note that the President is convinced of necessity that any peace settlement must include "guarantees that there would be no renewal of aggression during any of our life-times." That is really the kernel of the difficulty and it is clear that the President appreciates the fact. It might not be so difficult to devise a settlement that apparently righted the wrongs done in recent months: whole difficulty is to find some means of assuring Europe that this *could* not be followed sooner or later by a renewed attack on the rights and liberties of the weaker European States.

5. We cannot imagine how such an assurance could be attained so long as Germany remains organized on the present lines and is under the direction of her present rulers. To demand as the condition of a peace that the present German regime shall be overthrown or changed may have one or other of two effects. It might encourage the German people to throw off Hitler's regime or it might unite them behind Hitler from fear that the Allies and America are trying to disrupt Germany so as to destroy her. The former alternative is rendered rather remote by the fact of the complete grip which Hitler, the party and the party machine seem to have on a population that is traditionally and remarkably amenable to discipline. The latter alternative is to be feared because it is the obvious line for Hitler's propaganda machine to take and because we should have to anticipate that they would use it skillfully and to the full.

6. But to be quite frank there would be the utmost difficulty in persuading people of this country and I believe of France that *any* settlement is worth signing with Hitler or present regime.

7. We have hitherto felt best method of handling this difficulty is to state the conditions which while not such as to invite rejection by considerable elements in Germany, are yet such as Hitler would find it impossible to accept. I infer that this is not far from the President's thought, and 3 of the President's 4 "freedoms" imply the disappearance of the present regime in Germany which could neither allow nor survive "freedom of information, freedom of religion and freedom for trade."

8. We should of course fully subscribe to these but I should like further to make it plain that our [group corrupt]<sup>2a</sup> consider that any territorial or other settlement would have to be conditional on [group corrupt]<sup>2a</sup> provisions whereby these conditions were reasonably assured.

9. As to the President's proposed procedure I should feel considerable diffidence in making any suggestions as he alone can know what will afford him best means of obtaining data on which to form a judgement.

<sup>2a</sup> Brackets appear in the file copy.

10. In any discussions however it would surely be desirable that Polish Government should be associated with those of Great Britain and France. Invasion of Poland was the immediate cause of the war; Poland is the ally of Great Britain and France in this war; and all three Governments are pledged not to make separate peace. Moreover as the President recognises, restoration of Poland is a prerequisite of any peace negotiations. I venture to hope therefore that Mr. Sumner Welles will while in Europe make a point of consulting Polish Government now established in France as well as other Governments mentioned by the President.

11. The President doubtless has in mind problem arising out of Soviet aggression on Finland<sup>2b</sup> and in view of the strong feeling thereby aroused throughout the world in support perhaps may consider whether it would be desirable to extend Mr. Sumner Welles' enquiry in that direction.

12. The announcement of mission of Mr. Welles will of course produce a sensational impression throughout the world more particularly if it makes public full purpose of this initiative.

13. It may be that the President feels he cannot obtain data that he requires from his regular representatives in various capitals. But such a sensational intervention will raise hopes in some quarters and give rise to discussion—much of it ill-informed—in nearly all and if the President after weighing all considerations that I feel bound to submit to him feels full disclosure would best contribute to the ends he has in view, it would seem of great importance that he should give clear indication in announcement of his own conviction that first essential purpose to be achieved is durability of any settlement arrived at.

14. I must frankly admit to a good deal of anxiety lest the effect of this move however carefully presented should be to cause embarrassment to the democracies from which Germany, still unconvinced of the failure of policy of force, will reap advantage.

15. There is no doubt greater unity in France and England than there is in Germany but there are always elements in the community which do not share general opinion, and what I fear is that public announcement of the President's initiative will at once bring these elements into open and vocal prominence in countries where "freedom of information" already exists. Since German public and press will remain dragooned and controlled there will ensue a false appearance of unity in Germany which will contrast very unfortunately with an apparent disunity in democratic countries. Period of waiting while Mr. Welles collects his information will be a critical one, and I am concerned at the thought that it may be used by German Ministry of Propaganda to emphasise divisions in ranks of their opponents, and thus alter the situation to our disadvantage.

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<sup>2b</sup> See pp. 269 ff.

16. I am most anxious to avoid giving the President the impression that I do not fully appreciate the impulse which has inspired him to courageous proposal. On the contrary you may assure him that I will certainly cooperate to the best of my ability. But I earnestly hope that he will consider very seriously possible effects of a public announcement of purpose of Mr. Welles' mission before this becomes absolutely necessary.

17. I am sure that he will not object to my putting my views on this most important matter to him with the same frankness which he has displayed to me (and for which I am deeply grateful).

18. You may if you wish show this telegram to the President and leave him a copy.

---

121.840 Welles, Sumner/13a : Circular telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Chargé in France (Murphy)* <sup>3</sup>

WASHINGTON, February 9, 1940—4 p. m.

At his press conference this morning the President issued to the press the following statement:

"At the request of the President, the Under Secretary of State, Mr. Sumner Welles, will proceed shortly to Europe to visit Italy, France, Germany and Great Britain. This visit is solely for the purpose of advising the President and the Secretary of State as to present conditions in Europe. Mr. Welles will, of course, be authorized to make no proposals or commitments in the name of the Government of the United States. Furthermore, statements made to him by officials of Governments will be kept in the strictest confidence and will be communicated by him solely to the President and the Secretary of State."

The French Embassy in Washington was yesterday confidentially informed that the President intended to make this statement today and was likewise advised that the President requested that the highest authorities of the French Government receive the Under Secretary upon his arrival in Paris in order that he might be afforded the opportunity of talking with them. It was emphasized, as stated in the President's announcement, that any conversations so held would be regarded as strictly confidential and solely for the information of the President and Secretary of State and would be divulged to no one else.

You will be advised later of the exact date of Mr. Welles' expected arrival in Paris. It is his present intention to sail from New York on February 17 on the steamship *Rex* and to proceed first to Rome.

HULL

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<sup>3</sup> The same, *mutatis mutandis*, to the American Embassies in Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom.

121.840 Welles, Sumner/2: Telegram

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

ROME, February 10, 1940—11 a. m.  
[Received February 10—10:45 a. m.]

94. For Welles: This morning I read to Ciano <sup>4</sup> Department's circular telegram of February 9. He assured me that he will be glad to receive you and that while he had not yet spoken to Mussolini about your coming he was certain that Mussolini would also be happy to receive you. He added that while you were here he, Ciano, would wish to offer you some entertainment and asked for further details with regard to your stay in Rome.

Caroline and I are keenly looking forward to your visit and hope that you and whoever comes with you will stay with us where you will be far more comfortable and private than at a hotel. And may I add that I believe your trip will be of the greatest service to all concerned.

PHILLIPS

121.840 Welles, Sumner/8: Telegram

*The Chargé in France (Murphy) to the Secretary of State*

PARIS, February 10, 1940—4 p. m.  
[Received February 10—3:30 p. m.]

196. The Havas Agency gave out this afternoon the following semi-official statement of the French Government's views.

"The purpose of the mission with which Mr. Welles has just been charged is clearly understood in Paris. This initiative is connected with that taken by the President of the United States in December in sending Mr. Myron Taylor as personal ambassador near the Pope.<sup>5</sup>

Mr. Sumner Welles can be sure of being received in France with the same sentiments as those inspired by the various messages of the President of the United States.

At the same time it is learned that the Secretary of State, Mr. Cordell Hull, is engaged in conversations with certain neutral states relative to the economic organization of the world after the war.<sup>6</sup>

Informed circles emphasize that these two American initiatives are essentially distinct and apart. While Mr. Sumner Welles is sent to those countries that are belligerents, not as a mediator or even as a messenger between the different capitals but to make a general report to Washington on war conditions, Mr. Cordell Hull is consulting the neutrals on the future organization of peace. These are two separate fields, as M. Daladier <sup>7</sup> clearly pointed out in his speech in the Senate at the end of December.

<sup>4</sup> Count Galeazzo Ciano di Cortellazzo, Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>5</sup> See pp. 123 ff.

<sup>6</sup> See pp. 117 ff.

<sup>7</sup> Edouard Daladier, French Premier, Minister of War, and Minister for Foreign Affairs.



England and France actually seek by victory of their arms to obtain "material and positive guarantees" of peace without which no stable organization of international relations could be established, either in the political or economic field. These are the preliminary conditions to all negotiations and it is this aspect of the problem that Mr. Sumner Welles is charged with studying.

The economic or other plans that could be envisaged in the course of the exchange of views that the Department of State is engaged in which [*with*] the neutrals could be realized in concrete form only if the recurring menaces to peace of which the English Laborites spoke in their recent proclamation are definitely eliminated from the horizon.

It is evident from the French point of view that the constant peril of a Germany that periodically subjects Europe to war crises for purely political and imperialistic reasons must be wiped out before the world of the future can take contractual form."

MURPHY

121.840 Welles, Sumner/11: Telegram

*The Chargé in France (Murphy) to the Secretary of State*

PARIS, February 10, 1940—5 p. m.

[Received February 10—4: 11 p. m.]

197. I asked Charveriat, Director of Political Affairs at the Foreign Office, whether some of the commentaries on Mr. Welles' forthcoming European visit especially that of "Pertinax"<sup>8</sup> might have been inspired by the French Government. He replied that the attitude of the French Government to Mr. Welles' plan to visit France is (1) that of extreme sympathy for Mr. Welles personally and pleasure over the President's selection of such an exceedingly well-qualified diplomatic representative and (2) reserve as to the purposes of the visit, believing that the President's objective is within the good discretion of the American Government. It is not for the French Government Charveriat said to indulge in idle speculation but rather to await Mr. Welles' visit and at that time to extend to him every cooperation.

Charveriat added that "Pertinax"'s comments distinctly are not inspired by the Foreign Office which does not attempt to control "Pertinax"'s imagination in all its aspects. He also said that the Havas' commentary linking Mr. Welles' visit with that of Mr. Taylor's trip to Rome simply referred to the coincidence in the case of the travel of those gentlemen on the same ship.

MURPHY

<sup>8</sup> Pen name used by André Géraud, editor of *L'Europe Nouvelle*, a weekly review of international affairs.

121.840 Welles, Sumner/2 : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, February 12, 1940—1 p. m.

32. From the Under Secretary. Your 94, February 10, 11 a. m. I greatly appreciate your personal message. Since Mathilde is coming with me and there will be two members of my staff,<sup>9</sup> I believe it would be better for me not to accept your invitation to stay at the Embassy, and I shall consequently be grateful if the Embassy will reserve necessary accommodations at the Excelsior Hotel. I will radio from the boat details as to accommodations required.

Please express to the Foreign Minister my great appreciation of his message and of the invitation extended through you. I hope it will be possible for you without embarrassment to explain that owing to the nature of my mission, as well as because of present conditions in Europe, I would greatly prefer not to accept any entertainments while I am in Europe. My stay will be so short in each capital that I feel I would profit more if I could devote my entire time to conversations with officials of the Government in the country which I am visiting. If, as I hope, it may be convenient for the Foreign Minister and the Chief of Government to receive me immediately after my arrival in Rome, which I assume will be on February 26, my stay in Rome will presumably be limited to 2 days. [Welles.]

HULL

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121.840 Welles, Sumner/25 : Telegram

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

ROME, February 13, 1940—noon.

[Received February 13—9 a. m.]

101. Department's 32, February 12, 1 p. m. For Welles. I conveyed to Count Ciano this morning your appreciation of his message and he assured me that he and the Chief of the Government will be glad to receive you immediately after your arrival, presumably on the 26th.

PHILLIPS

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<sup>9</sup> He was accompanied by J. Pierrepont Moffat, Chief of the Division of European Affairs, and Hartwell Johnson, Foreign Service Officer.

121.840 Welles, Sumner/42

*Statement by the Secretary of State, February 14, 1940*

This news item<sup>10</sup> seems to be one more attempt at trouble-making. I think the President and I have agreed on policies and methods pertaining to our foreign affairs as nearly uniformly as any other two persons who have occupied our respective positions. Nothing out of the ordinary occurred in the discussions and conferences between us leading to the announcements made by the President of the special mission to Europe, and later by myself relating to the problems of economic restoration and of disarmament after the war.

As to Mr. Welles, I regard him as one of my most trusted personal friends and loyal co-workers, and it is always in that spirit that we discuss the various phases of our duties and problems. I do not think a more capable person could be sent upon the proposed European mission than Mr. Welles.

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121.840 Welles, Sumner/32: Telegram

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

BERLIN, February 14, 1940—1 p. m.

[Received 5:26 p. m.]

388. For the Secretary and Under Secretary. My 363, February 11, noon.<sup>11</sup> Although the official reserve on the matter of the visit to Europe of the Under Secretary still continues there is reason to believe from information received up to the present that his impending arrival in Berlin has aroused the greatest interest in the highest governmental circles here and it is said that particularly close contact with Rome is being maintained in regard to the significance and possible consequences of his mission. I have received no indication from authoritative sources as to the reception which may be contemplated but I have received an indirect intimation to the effect that there is the present intention that he be received by the highest authorities. There is furthermore the definite impression that if the Under Secretary proceeds directly from Rome to Berlin and concludes his journey in Europe by visits to England and France the purpose of his visit will be colored in the minds of the German authorities.

In the absence of instructions I have made no representations or inquiries at the German Foreign Office in regard to the visit. I have merely communicated to State Secretary Weizsäcker in a personal

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<sup>10</sup> i. e., an article on the special mission to Europe of the Under Secretary of State, written by the chief of the Washington bureau of the *Chicago Tribune* and printed in the *Washington Times-Herald*.

<sup>11</sup> Not printed.

and informal letter the substance of the Department's circular telegram February 9, 4 p. m., and have received a courteous acknowledgment thereof.

KIRK

---

121.840 Welles, Sumner/41 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Poland (Biddle), Then in France, to the Secretary of State*

ANGERS VIA PARIS, February 16, 1940—6 p. m.

[Received February 17—5:10 p. m.]

11. 1. Minister Zaleski<sup>12</sup> pointed out following among other signs that Hitler might conceivably attempt to exploit Secretary Welles' visit as an occasion to launch another "peace offensive".

(a) Prime Minister Chamberlain several days ago told Zaleski during latter's London visit he expected strategic near future peace offensive by Hitler;

(b) Polish Ambassador to the Vatican just cabled he had been strictly confidentially informed by a high ranking Vatican source that Marshal Goering had just communicated to Signor Mussolini in effect that Germany would be ready to talk peace on the following terms: (1) protectorate for Austria; (2) home rule for Czechoslovakia; (3) re-creation of a Polish state a little larger than the old Duchy of Warsaw. Minister Zaleski feels that if this report is true Marshal Goering's instead of Hitler's presentation of these proposals indicate that Hitler wants them to serve as a "pulse feeler" rather than a firm offer.

2. Zaleski is gratified to learn from Ambassador Potocki<sup>13</sup> that he will have opportunity to meet Secretary Welles during his European visit.

BIDDLE

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121.840 Welles, Sumner/50 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, February 20, 1940—10 a. m.

[Received 11 a. m.]

457. My 388, February 14, 1 p. m. I would appreciate information as to the itinerary of the Under Secretary which may have already been determined as well as regarding the reply which the German Embassy in Washington may have made to the request outlined in the Department's circular of February 9, 4 p. m., paragraph 3.

KIRK

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<sup>12</sup> August Zaleski, Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>13</sup> Count Jerzy Potocki, Polish Ambassador in the United States.

121.840 Welles, Sumner/50: Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, February 21, 1940—2 p. m.

436. Your February 20, 10 a. m. I suggest you consult the Under Secretary on his arrival in Rome as to his itinerary.

The German Chargé d'Affaires informed his Government of the information given him (Department's February 9, 4 p. m.) and has advised Department orally that his Government would be glad to receive Mr. Welles. The German Government added that since the departure of Ambassador Wilson<sup>14</sup> relations between the United States and Germany have been unsatisfactory, and they welcomed the opportunity of discussing this matter with Mr. Welles.

HULL

121.840 Welles, Sumner/54: Telegram

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

BERLIN, February 24, 1940—5 p. m.

[Received 6:05 p. m.]

491. I am informed that the following statements were made by the official spokesman at an informal conference at the Propaganda Ministry today. When asked by correspondents if anything could be said about the impending visit to Berlin of Mr. Welles, the reply was made that no official information and only press reports had been received but that the Under Secretary apparently was coming to Berlin directly from Rome. It was stated that an American correspondent in Berlin had sent a story yesterday saying that the American Chargé had called on State Secretary Weizsäcker yesterday when all the details of Mr. Welles' visit had been arranged, that Mr. Welles would arrive in Berlin Tuesday,<sup>15</sup> and that he would remain Tuesday and Wednesday. The spokesman stated that correspondents in Berlin should expect to receive from German sources no information regarding Mr. Welles' visit other than certain facts concerning his formal program such as his calls and appointments as it would be incorrect and ill-advised to give out information about the visit of which the entire purpose would be negatived if any Government with which Mr. Welles discussed the situation should give out information concerning the discussions. The spokesman added that it was not to be expected that the German press would give much publicity to the visit and concluded that the Americans themselves apparently desired no extensive publicity in the matter.

<sup>14</sup> See *Foreign Relations*, 1938, vol. II, pp. 355 ff.

<sup>15</sup> February 27.

I understand that at the press conference at the Foreign Office at noon today the Chief of the Press Section stated in reply to a question that the program for Mr. Welles' visit had been fixed but that he could give out no information regarding the program or regarding any other aspect of Mr. Welles' visit in Berlin. He stated that the visit "will take place outside the press" and added that he did not know when Mr. Welles was expected in Berlin.

As regards the statement above in reference to my visit yesterday at the Foreign Office, I desire to point out that no information was forthcoming concerning the program of Mr. Welles' visit; that I do not expect any advices on the matter until Mr. Welles arrives in Rome and that in reply to inquiries I have so notified American Press correspondents here.

Repeated to Rome.

KIRK

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121:840 Welles, Sumner/61: Telegram

*The Ambassador in Turkey (MacMurray) to the Secretary of State*

ANKARA, February 27, 1940—1 p. m.

[Received 6:55 p. m.]

20. 1. The German Ambassador<sup>16</sup> called on me yesterday to ask for such information as I could give him about Welles' mission and about our Government's discussions with neutrals.

2. As to the former, he expressed the hope that soundings at belligerent capitals might disclose possibilities of American action to bring about reconciliation before the war develops its full intensity and bitterness (see my despatch No. 1344, January 30<sup>17</sup>). He said that he found reason for hope in Chamberlain's "moderate" speech of the 24th, which seemed to him to contemplate something not very different from what Hitler had offered in October<sup>18</sup> and to constitute perhaps a first step toward peace; and that possibly means might be found to have Germany take a corresponding step. In that connection he remarked that an adjustment of differences did not seem impossible; that the Reich had never contemplated the actual incorporation of Czechoslovakia (except the Sudetenland) but its autonomy under conditions similar to those of Luxemburg before 1914 or of Egypt now; and that although there may be "a little difference" between that intended status and the conditions at present necessitated by the war he looked forward to an arrangement giving Bohemia and Moravia complete independence, except for the establishment of a customs and fiscal union with Germany and a prohibition upon their

<sup>16</sup> Franz von Papen.

<sup>17</sup> Not printed.

<sup>18</sup> See bracketed note, *Foreign Relations*, 1939, vol. I, p. 503.

maintenance of armed forces. That he concluded would leave outstanding no questions except—(at this point he shrugged his shoulders and broke off the sentence without specifying what other questions he had in mind).

3. As to the discussions with the neutrals he remarked that he particularly welcomed this leadership on the part of the United States as he had himself been endeavoring to persuade the Turks that they should not passively await their fate but be active in arousing other neutrals to join in a movement to stop the war before it spreads. I pointed out that these discussions (which thus far were in the stage of consideration of procedure) were not concerned with peace in the sense of bringing hostilities to an end but with the world order to be established thereafter. He asked what proposals our Government had in mind and I answered that I had no information as to concrete plans but that in my own mind I assumed the point of departure would be the liberalization of international trade. He assured me that his Government was thoroughly sympathetic with that principle although it had been compelled to resort to a system of autarchy to meet the emergency created by its loss of colonies and its lack of means of payment. In conclusion he expressed the hope that if anything "of common interest" were to develop along this line of economic readjustment I would give him the opportunity to be of what help he could as he believed he still had sufficient influence with his Government to assure its consideration of his views.

4. I am uncertain whether his visit was merely exploratory or whether it was intended to implant certain impressions as to its attitude which the German Government wishes to have conveyed to Welles or to you.

Repeated to Berlin.

MACMURRAY

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121.840 Welles, Sumner/68½ : Telegram

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

ROME, February 28, 1940—5 p. m.

[Received 6:50 p. m.]

132. Welles' brief visit to Rome has been exceedingly helpful. As the Department is aware the Chief of Government <sup>13a</sup> has refused to receive any Americans since February 1938 and this was the first opportunity therefore since that date in which our views on various matters could be presented to him personally as [by?] a responsible American. I have always been in doubt whether my opinions given from time to time to Ciano have reached the Duce, nor in my fre-

<sup>13a</sup> Benito Mussolini, Italian Prime Minister, and Head of Government.

quent contacts with the Foreign Minister has the latter ever attempted to explain the views of his chief on international trends or events.

This total absence of contact with the Chief of Government as well as the continued uncertainty of his opinions make it very difficult to report with any degree of certainty the Italian Government's position on matters of interest and concern to us.

Welles' visit and the autograph letter from the President<sup>19</sup> have afforded a needed occasion to sound Mussolini on various matters.

But in addition to the information which Welles obtained, his friendly approach to the subjects touched upon during both conversations seemed to strike a responsive chord, which Hitler<sup>19a</sup> too has been lacking, especially on the part of Mussolini.

It is probable that Mussolini and Ciano will interpret the cordial sentiments expressed as an indication of our desire to let "bygones be bygones" and for a closer collaboration hereafter between the two countries.

I would welcome such an interpretation and at the same time I venture to express the hope that we on our part will not let occasions pass when we could properly convert friendly sentiments into mutual beneficial actions.

While it is clear that the Italian Government has gone out of its way to extend to Mr. Welles all courtesies including elaborate floral decorations at the stations in Naples and Rome, private car from Naples to Rome and then to the Swiss frontier and official automobiles during his stay in Rome, the Italian press has been reserved in discussing the visit. Such articles as have appeared have come from Italian correspondents in other European capitals.

PHILLIPS

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711.41/457 : Telegram

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

[Extracts]

LONDON, February 28, 1940—9 p. m.

[Received February 28—5:50 p. m.]

491. I saw Lord Halifax<sup>20</sup> this afternoon at my own request. . . .

Lord Halifax made only a passing reference to the coming visit of Mr. Welles, which he said would be very welcome here and that the Government would be glad to talk to him with the utmost frankness. He said that he had sent a message to this effect to Mr. Welles through

<sup>19</sup> See footnote 37, p. 29.

<sup>19a</sup> Adolf Hitler, German Chief of State, Führer, and Chancellor.

<sup>20</sup> British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.



Sir Percy Loraine, the British Ambassador at Rome. He did not go at any length into the general war situation but he queried whether any sort of peace with Hitler would be possible and whether any faith could be put in his word. He asked me what I thought about it and I said that I did not know but that possibly the present regime in Germany might eventually realize that it was in its own material interest to agree to rational terms of peace and to keep the agreement. . . .

JOHNSON

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121.840 Welles, Sumner/105: Telegram

*The Chargé in France (Murphy) to the Secretary of State*

PARIS, March 9, 1940—3 p. m.

[Received March 9—12 noon.]

316. From Welles: I have just concluded a long and particularly helpful and interesting interview with Paul Reynaud, the Minister of Finance. I left with him a copy of the 3-paragraph memorandum<sup>21</sup> and in my presence he dictated an official statement to the press to be issued today expressing entire concurrence of the French Government in the views therein contained. He told me that he felt the issuance of this statement by his own Government at this time was particularly desirable in order to counteract contrary views which were being formulated by various groups within and without the legislative branch of the Government. He said that you and I would recognize that he had shown in practice his devotion to the principles contained in this memorandum and that he believed the policy therein set forth was the only policy which could promise any hope for a lasting and durable peace when the moment for the establishment of such a peace arrived. [Welles.]

MURPHY

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121.840 Welles, Sumner/108: Telegram

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

LONDON, March 9, 1940—3 p. m.

[Received March 9—12: 07 p. m.]

605. I saw the Prime Minister. Nothing much to report pending Mr. Welles' arrival and departure. The Prime Minister said he was very much concerned at first with the thought of sending Mr. Welles to Europe but it had been made so clear by Washington that the trip was not for the purpose of "putting over a peace plan" that he was now completely happy. He also thought Mr. Welles had handled the

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<sup>21</sup> See telegram No. 340, March 14, noon, from the Chargé in France, p. 16.

trip in such a masterful fashion as to allay any suspicion or unrest that might be in the mind of anyone. He was well pleased with the whole situation regarding the visit as it stands today.

I gave Mr. Welles information I gathered in Rome, regarding the prospective visit of Von Ribbentrop<sup>22</sup> which is made public today. I do not know whether Mr. Welles advised you at that time but, strangely enough, the real reason behind the visit is the request the German Government sent the Pope asking whether Von Ribbentrop could come there to talk over the whole situation with him. The Pope was rather upset about the request because usually a request of this kind has foreshadowed a series of disagreeable incidents on the part of the Germans and he did not know just what this meant. The visit purported to be a discussion of peace.

Chamberlain says he will be pleased if the Finns and Russians work out an armistice<sup>23</sup> because he believes the Russians, instead of having more time to devote to the German cause, will not feel the need of toadying to the Germans to get their moral assistance if the Russians should run into a more disagreeable situation in the Scandinavian countries. Chamberlain feels that they have been obliged to do a great many things currying favor with the Germans which they would be glad to get away from and that he already has had 2 or 3 gestures from the Russians in which they indicate that they are not playing ball with the Germans as much as the Germans pretend. Of course Chamberlain always adds that he would not believe them on their oath, never had and never would, but nevertheless he feels that this is an interesting development on their part. He thinks that once the Russians do not need any assistance from the Germans in their fight with Finland they will then draw back and it will be much more difficult for the Germans to do business with them. Whether this is borne out is of course a question.

KENNEDY

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121.840 Welles, Sumner/125a : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, March 13, 1940—6 p. m.

481. For Welles: Our files contain several drafts economic memorandum and therefore difficult to identify text handed by you to Reynaud. Will you please cable text?

HULL

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<sup>22</sup> Joachim von Ribbentrop, German Foreign Minister.

<sup>23</sup> See pp. 269 ff.

121.840 Welles, Sumner/126: Telegram

*The Chargé in France (Murphy) to the Secretary of State*

PARIS, March 14, 1940—noon.

[Received 12:05 p. m.]

340. From Welles: Your telegram No. 481, March 13, 6 p. m., to London. The following is the text of the memorandum which I handed to Reynaud on March 9:

"The base of the economic foreign policy of the United States is as follows:

1. Sound international trade relations are an indispensable foundation of economic well-being within nations and of enduring peace among nations. International trade can fulfill this vital role satisfactorily only when it enables each nation to have an adequate access to the resources of the entire world, rather than merely to those confined within its frontiers, and to find outlets for its surplus production, on terms of mutual benefit and on the basis of nondiscriminatory treatment.

2. International trade cannot prosper when its flow is diverted and distorted by attempts at exclusive bilateralism or discriminatory arrangements.

It cannot prosper when its flow is obstructed by the barriers of excessive tariffs, of quantitative regulation, and of controls of foreign exchange transactions. All these are instruments of economic warfare. The world's recent experience has clearly demonstrated their destructive effects on peacetime international commerce—and hence, their depressive influence on standards of living and general economic wellbeing within nations, as well as their significance as breeders of international illwill, animosity and conflict.

3. If, after the termination of present hostilities, the world is to build the foundation of stability and peace, which would eliminate resentments and fears and open the way to economic progress, the process of international trade must be restored to a sound basis.

This will require a gradual elimination of excessive and unreasonable barriers to the flow of goods across national frontiers; the acceptance of the rule of nondiscrimination in commercial treatment through the implementation of the most-favored-nation principle; and the creation of conditions in the fields of foreign exchanges and of credit necessary to a multilateral functioning of the trade process."

[Welles]  
MURPHY

121.840 Welles, Sumner/127: Telegram

*The Ambassador in Belgium (Cudahy) to the Secretary of State*

BRUSSELS, March 14, 1940—6 p. m.

[Received March 14—3 p. m.]

60. The Secretary-General of the Foreign Office has expressed interest in the memorandum on economic matters handed on March 9 by

Under Secretary Welles to the French Minister of Finance. He inquired whether Mr. Welles has delivered a similar memorandum to the appropriate officials of the other Governments he has visited and whether it will be sent to the Governments of other states. I informed him that the Embassy had received no instructions from the Department on this matter and that I was therefore unable to supply him with this information. He inquired whether it would be possible to obtain it. If the Department perceives no objection I should appreciate receiving such information as it may be considered desirable to furnish the Belgian Government.

CUDAHY

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121.840 Welles, Sumner/127: Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Belgium (Cudahy)*

WASHINGTON, March 15, 1940—4 p. m.

34. Your 60, March 14, 6 p. m. Department is requesting Paris to repeat to you text of memorandum handed to Reynaud by Mr. Welles. It is understood that Mr. Welles delivered same memorandum to other Governments he visited. The Department is contemplating a more comprehensive communication to the states in consultation.<sup>24</sup>

HULL

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121.840 Welles, Sumner/130: Telegram

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

ROME, March 16, 1940—noon.

[Received March 16—11:05 a. m.]

190. For the President from Welles: I was received by the King this morning and had with him a conversation lasting just under an hour. In the conversation which was in general terms the King expressed his highest admiration and regard for yourself and for all that you have done in the cause of peace.

I have just concluded a conversation of an hour and a half with the Minister for Foreign Affairs. The Minister emphasized even more than he had done in our conversation 2 weeks ago the determination of Italy to do everything within its power to further the reestablishment of peace, to adhere strictly to its present line of

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<sup>24</sup> See telegram No. 33, April 4, 7 p. m., to the Minister in Switzerland, and footnote 91, p. 122.

policy and to take no steps which would further trouble the world situation.

In my conversation with him I was given full opportunity to evaluate the recent Ribbentrop conversations here in connection with the course of my present mission. 20. [?]

I am being received by Mussolini this afternoon. Count Ciano requested me to postpone my departure from Rome which had been scheduled for Monday until the following day in order that I might before my departure receive personally and secretly from him further impressions which they were now obtaining from Berlin. I shall consequently sail from Genoa on March 20th instead of from Naples on March 19th. [Welles.]

PHILLIPS

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121.840 Welles, Sumner/142b : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, March 19, 1940—noon.

66. For Welles: United Press reports from Rome that German peace proposals said to have been given you and termed "far from satisfying the desires of the Allies" are 11 in number. Matthews in *New York Times* says the 11-point proposals are the terms of Hitler's original peace proposals as they were understood in high Vatican circles, that you discussed with Pope Pius the German peace proposals "which the Pontiff had heard from Ribbentrop and Mr. Welles from Herr Hitler. On the Pope's side there was unwavering insistence that injustice be rectified and on the Under Secretary's side there was the reserve necessitated by the fact that he has no power to commit the United States or President Roosevelt, and the knowledge he had gained in London and Paris that the Allies would not accept such a peace."

In view of the interpretations and rumors about your tour, it is suggested that you issue immediately the following statement: "In order to lay the flood of rumor about my mission I want to state categorically that I have not conveyed any peace proposals or plans to or from any belligerent, nor am I bringing back to the President any such proposals. My mission has been solely one of gathering information for the President and Secretary Hull as to present conditions in Europe."

HULL

121.840 Welles, Sumner/135 : Telegram

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

ROME, March 19, 1940—8 p. m.

[Received March 19—5: 09 p. m.]

198. From Welles: Your No. 66, March 19, noon. I am issuing immediately the following amended text of the suggested statement.

"In order to allay the flood of rumors about my mission, I wish to state categorically that I have not received any peace plan or proposals from any belligerent or from any other Government; that I have not conveyed any such proposals to any belligerent nor to any other Government; nor am I bringing back to the President any such proposals. My mission has been solely one of gathering information for the President and the Secretary of State as to present conditions in Europe."

Matthews of the *New York Times* late this evening showed me the text of the story he had yesterday cabled and to which you refer. I told him that he had written a story of which there was not one solitary vestige of truth. [Welles.]

PHILLIPS

740.00119 European War 1939/301

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State*

[WASHINGTON,] March 22, 1940.

The British Ambassador called at his own request. He said the purpose of his call was to thank the President and myself for the prompt way in which this Government had acted to check and dispel the spread of the "peace at any price" sentiment based on all sorts of rumors about what Under Secretary Welles might do in Europe to bring about a negotiated peace, which would be the equivalent of a German victory. Efforts directed toward bringing about a negotiated peace might in any event be calculated to prejudice the British and French war situation. He referred especially to the President's 10-minute address on peace,<sup>25</sup> which was made just at the psychological moment to be effective. I made it clear to him that we had not overlooked the slightest phase of this entire question during recent weeks and that when the occasion for a sweeping denial came, the President was ready either to make a 10-minute speech on the kind of peace we should have or not have, as the situation might demand, and that this was followed up by concurrent public statements on the same day by

<sup>25</sup> Radio address in connection with the Christian Foreign Service Convocation, March 16, 1940; see *Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, 1940 volume, p. 102.

the White House, the State Department and by Sumner Welles just before he sailed for Europe. The Ambassador said that his Government was immensely pleased at the way the matter had been dealt with by this Government, and especially pleased that Mr. Welles had come and gone without any development of a dangerous or harmful nature.

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*Statement by President Roosevelt, Issued to the Press  
March 29, 1940<sup>27</sup>*

Under Secretary of State Welles has concluded the mission upon which he was sent to Europe and has reported to me and to the Secretary of State.

As I said when the announcement of Mr. Welles' mission was made, Mr. Welles was sent to Europe in order to obtain information with regard to existing conditions. He was neither authorized to make, nor has he made, any commitments involving the Government of the United States, nor was he empowered to offer, and he has not offered, any proposals in the name of this Government. He has not received, nor has he brought back to me, any peace proposals from any source.

The information which he has received from the heads of the governments which he has visited will be of the greatest value to this Government in the general conduct of its foreign relations. As was announced at the time of his departure from the United States, the information communicated to him by the Italian, German, French, and British Governments will be regarded as entirely confidential by this Government. It relates to the views and policies of the European Governments mentioned.

I am glad to say that Mr. Welles' mission has likewise resulted, through personal contacts and through the conversations which he held, in a clarification of the relations between the United States and the countries which he visited and will, I believe, assist in certain instances in the development of better understanding and more friendly relations.

Finally, even though there may be scant immediate prospect for the establishment of any just, stable, and lasting peace in Europe, the information made available to this Government as a result of Mr. Welles' mission will undoubtedly be of the greatest value when the time comes for the establishment of such a peace.

To Mr. Welles go my thanks and full appreciation for carrying out this difficult mission with extraordinary tact and understanding and in accordance with the best American diplomatic traditions.

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<sup>27</sup> Reprinted from Department of State *Bulletin*, March 30, 1940, p. 335.

121.840 Welles, Sumner/132½

*Report by the Under Secretary of State (Welles) on His Special Mission to Europe*<sup>28</sup>

ROME, February 26, 1940.

At 10 a. m. on Monday, February 26, the day after my arrival in Rome, Ambassador Phillips accompanied me to my first interview with the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Count Ciano received me in his office in the Chigi Palace, the temporary Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the permanent Ministry being now under construction in the 1942 Exposition grounds.

Count Ciano made an impression upon me quite different from that which I had anticipated. From his photographs, and from the reports which had been given me by persons who had been in contact with him, I had pictured him as overwhelmingly filled with a sense of his own importance. In my conversations with him I found him quite the reverse. He looks older than his thirty-eight years, but appears to be in exceptionally good physical condition. His manner was cordial and quite unaffected, and he could not have been simpler nor more frank in the expression of his views. He speaks easily in colloquial English.

I commenced the interview by saying how much I appreciated the courtesies which had been shown me on my arrival by the Government, and how much I welcomed the opportunity of talking with the Chief of the Government and with himself in order that I might report the views so communicated to me to the President and to the Secretary of State. I said that I wished to make clear at the outset my very strong conviction that during these past years relations between Italy and the United States had been far from satisfactory. I was going to be quite frank in adding that I believed there had been misunderstandings and misapprehensions on both sides, errors of omission and commission by both parties, regrettable attacks upon the United States in the Italian press, regrettable speeches in criticism of the Italian Government in the United States, and that I felt sure the Minister would agree with me that the time had now come when in the best interests of both countries such a situation, which had no real reason for existing, should cease. Count Ciano immediately said, "I fully agree: It is not a question of forgetting the past, because there really isn't any 'past'; but we must at once start in with a completely satisfactory 'future'."

I then went on to say that the President desired me to refer to what he himself had said to Ambassador Colonna<sup>29</sup> a little while ago

<sup>28</sup> Photostatic copy obtained from the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, N. Y. This report, in the form of a separate memorandum for each conversation, was apparently brought back by Mr. Welles when he returned to Washington on March 29, 1940.

<sup>29</sup> Ascanio dei principi Colonna, Italian Ambassador in the United States.



in expressing his own great satisfaction at the great change which had recently taken place on the part of public opinion in the United States with regard to Italy. The President wished me to emphasize the real pleasure of the American Government that the American people were viewing in so friendly a manner the efforts which the Italian Government had made to avert war, and with such favor the policy of neutrality being pursued by Italy since war had broken out. I said that this very friendly feeling in the United States towards Italy on the part of the public was fully shared by my own Government, and created, I hoped, a particularly propitious moment for an immediate return to that cordiality of relations between our two countries which for so many generations had been traditional. At this moment, the United States, in complete harmony with the other American Republics, constituted one great neutral influence; Italy constituted the other. In the interest of civilization itself it seemed to me desirable that those two great neutral influences should pull together, and not apart, so that, if at any moment there seemed to be an opportunity for the establishment of world peace, of a permanent and stable nature, those two great neutral influences could effectively cooperate morally together for the construction of lasting and sound peace foundations.

The Minister very heartily concurred.

I said that since I was happy to see that we were in full agreement on this premise, I believed it might be desirable to emphasize in some practical and open way the friendly relationship between our two countries. The American people had been greatly impressed with the splendid contribution which Italy had made both to the New York and San Francisco Expositions. My Government had also greatly appreciated the decision of the Italian Government to continue this coming year its participation in the New York World's Fair. I said that I was glad to tell the Minister that the day I left Washington a bill had been introduced in the United States Senate providing for the appropriation of \$2,000,000 for participation by the United States in the Rome Exposition of 1942, and that the President was personally interested in seeing that this legislation be enacted. I felt that this would constitute a practical demonstration of the kind I had in mind.

Count Ciano expressed his very great satisfaction. He said this Exposition, while constituting a permanent embellishment of Rome—since all the new Exposition buildings would eventually become Government offices—would be in reality Mussolini's monument, and that participation by the United States would be profoundly appreciated by the Duce.

I continued by saying that another desirable and practical demonstration of cordiality between us would be an increase of beneficial trade relations. At this moment all neutral countries found their

normal export trade severely curtailed. It would surely be helpful to Italy and the United States to find some satisfactory method of enlarging a mutually beneficial volume of trade between them. I emphasized that, of course, to make possible such an arrangement the two Governments must find a meeting of minds as to principles and policies, but that I hoped that friendly study and consideration of all the factors involved might pave the way for the desired solution.

The Minister once more heartily concurred, and said that the experts of his Government would be at our disposal whenever we desired them. Since the Ambassador had told me that Count Ciano does not interest himself in commercial questions nor in any economic problems, I did not continue in any detail this topic of conversation.

I then said to the Minister that he was, of course, fully familiar with the purpose of my mission. I said that I was directed by the President to report to him upon the present possibility of the establishment in Europe of a stable and lasting peace—that was the only kind of peace in which my Government was interested; the President was not interested in any precarious or temporary peace which would, in essence, be no more than a patched-up truce.

I felt it desirable to make very clear that I was not empowered to offer any proposals, nor to enter into any commitments. I would, however, be most grateful for any views which the Minister might care to express to me, and the Minister could be confident that any views so expressed would be maintained by me as completely confidential and as solely for the information of the President and of Secretary Hull.

The Minister said that he fully understood the situation, and that he would talk with me with the utmost frankness. And that he proceeded to do.

He commenced by saying that he was glad that I did not intend to offer any proposals, or any set formula as to a possible peace treaty. He doubted whether the moment was propitious for any effort of that character.

I took occasion at this juncture to remark that I had been privileged to follow from a distance his own brilliant career and to estimate with much admiration his own efforts to prevent war at the end of August, and since that date, to limit the spread of war. I said that I was particularly interested in knowing whether the Italian Government was still considering the possibility of the kind of a meeting between representatives of the belligerents which it had suggested last August 31.<sup>30</sup>

Count Ciano said that the initiative then taken had been his own idea, taken, of course, after consultation with Mussolini.

<sup>30</sup> See telegram No. 1689, August 31, 1939, midnight, from the Ambassador in France, *Foreign Relations*, 1939, vol. 1, p. 398.

He got up and from a safe took out his famous red diary in which he records in his own handwriting his daily activities. He read me excerpts from it covering the period in question. It appeared that during the three days commencing August 31 he had been constantly on the long distance telephone, speaking personally with Foreign Ministers Halifax and Bonnet and with Hitler himself, urging a meeting between them and Mussolini to be held at Stresa on September 5. He had recorded that Hitler had agreed to such a meeting on September first, but that he had had no replies from Bonnet and Halifax until September 2, and that while the latter had then agreed in principle, Halifax had insisted that as a condition precedent German troops must be withdrawn back beyond the German frontier with Poland. Ciano felt that if the reply from Halifax had come on September first, Hitler would have agreed to this condition, but that by September 2 German troops had advanced so far and German military enthusiasm had reached such a pitch, as to make this condition impossible of acceptance.

The Minister doubted whether any similar meeting at this time would be productive of any useful purpose.

Count Ciano then spoke at very considerable length of German-Italian relations. He spoke with no effort at concealment of his hearty dislike of Ribbentrop. He said, "If Hitler wants anything—and God knows he always wants enough—Ribbentrop always goes him one better." He likewise made it clear that he bitterly resented not only the lack of courtesy shown the Italian Government by Hitler in failing to consult it with regard to German policy, but also by what he claimed was Hitler's complete disregard for the terms of the understanding between Italy and Germany.

He stated that during the past summer when he had twice conferred with Hitler and Ribbentrop, the subject of the negotiations then progressing between the Soviet Union and France and England<sup>31</sup> had, of course, come up for discussion. The Germans had told him that in order to impede these negotiations they were attempting to conclude a commercial agreement with Russia,<sup>32</sup> and that this would be merely in the nature of "a petit jeu". "Can you conceive," Count Ciano added with great bitterness, "of our being asked to regard a military alliance between Germany and Communist Russia as being merely 'a petit jeu'?" "Do you further realize," he asked, "that Hitler called me on the telephone only on August 21 last to announce the conclusion of this alliance to me, and that before I had even had time to get Mussolini on the telephone to break the news to him, this very radio in my own office here was carrying the report

<sup>31</sup> See *Foreign Relations*, 1939, vol. I, pp. 232 ff.

<sup>32</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 312 ff.

already broadcast to the whole world?" "That," he said, "was the way in which Italy was advised as to German foreign policy." "And with regard to Poland," he continued, "the clear-cut terms of our understanding with Germany provide that if Germany undertakes any military adventure, Italy must be first afforded the opportunity of consultation. We did everything we could to prevent the invasion of Poland, but we were never given any real chance to exert any influence upon Hitler to prevent it."

The Minister went on to say that the Italian Government had the deepest sympathy for the "real Poles". It believed that Poland must be reconstituted. To that end the Italian Government continued to recognize a Polish Embassy in Rome, and the Minister himself continued to spend a great part of his time in bringing what influence he could to bear upon Germany to mitigate the severity of its treatment of Polish nationals in occupied territory.

The Minister then talked about Russia and Russian policy. He said that Italy had always proclaimed that Russian policy was frankly imperialist in that the Soviet was bending every effort, at times in one way, at other times in another, to bring about the hegemony of Soviet influence in every part of the world. At the same time Russia had been maintaining that it only desired world peace, and that any form of conquest was abhorrent to it. Now he said that mask had been removed, and Russia had been revealed not only as avid for communist revolution throughout the world, but likewise as determined to conquer as much territory in Europe as it could get away with. Against this he said Italy would stand "like a wall".

The sympathy of Italy was overwhelmingly with Finland. The reaction in Italy against Russian occupation of Poland had been extreme; but it had been violent against the assault on Finland. He stated that the Italian Government had furnished Finland with munitions and airplanes, and that when Germany had refused to permit the planes to be shipped by rail through Germany, they had been sent by sea.

I asked Count Ciano if any volunteers from Italy had been permitted to go to Finland. He said not, but that the reason for this was not any objection on the part of Italy to their fighting against Russia, but solely because Italy did not think Finland could hold out for long, and that if any considerable number of Italians fought in the Finnish army, and Finland was defeated, it would be very difficult for Italy to repatriate her own nationals without actually declaring war on Russia, which she was not prepared to do because of Finland. For geographical reasons Italy could not do what she had done in Spain. The Minister doubted whether the Allies would render any effective aid to Finland before it was too late.

With regard to the Balkans, the Minister said I undoubtedly knew all that Italy had done to preserve peace in that region. He alone, he said, through his meeting with Count Csaky<sup>33</sup> in Venice had persuaded Hungary to refrain from provoking a conflict with Rumania so long as the present war continued, and Hungary had now agreed not only to postpone her claims for the territorial readjustments she desired, but also to refrain from press attacks against Rumania.

Italy had definitely entered into an agreement with Rumania—and Count Ciano emphasized that this agreement was completely secret—that if Russia attacked Rumania, Italy would at once come to the assistance of Rumania, not through open declaration of war on Russia, but through the furnishing of every form of military assistance, including the furnishing of troops and airplanes.

The Minister here interjected that while volunteers had not been permitted to go from Italy to Finland, Italian aviators had gone in some numbers, and that today Count Ciano's private pilot was leaving to fly an Italian bomber on the Finnish front.

Italy would keep Russia out of the Balkans, and would do her utmost to keep the Balkans out of war. Italy had no interest in the Balkans save the preservation of peace, and the fomenting of Italian trade interests in that region.

At this point, Count Ciano reverted to Germany. He said, "No country would want to have Germany as a neighbor. We now have her as a neighbor, and we must do the best we can to get on with her.

"You will wonder why Italy did nothing at the time of the Dollfuss assassination,<sup>34</sup> and nothing later when Hitler occupied Austria.<sup>35</sup> I will tell you, for there is a great deal of misunderstanding on that score. There are many people in Austria today who are unhappy, who are tormented, many who wish the *Anschluss* had not taken place. But, as an Italian, I tell you the great majority of Austrians would even today rather be a part of Germany than have to live the life they lived in independent Austria.

"Before the occupation of Austria Dr. Schuschnigg<sup>36</sup> came to Rome, and, sitting in the same chair you are sitting in, (and at this I shifted in my seat), he admitted to me frankly that if Germany occupied Austria the majority of Austrians would support the occupation, and that if Italy sent troops into Austria to prevent the occupation, the Austrians as one man would join with the Germans to fight Italy.

"For that reason, when peace terms are considered it would be stupid to support the French thesis that an independent Austria must be reconstituted. If any country would logically desire that objective it would be Italy. But Italy knows that the Austrians are primarily

<sup>33</sup> Count Stephen Csaky, Hungarian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>34</sup> See *Foreign Relations*, 1934, vol. II, pp. 1 ff.

<sup>35</sup> See *ibid.*, 1938, vol. I, pp. 384 ff.

<sup>36</sup> Kurt von Schuschnigg, Austrian Chancellor.

German, and that an Austrian people will never be content to go back to the state of starvation and inanition which they endured for twenty years after 1918."

In October last Count Ciano said he had spent two days in Berlin conferring with Hitler. At that time—and he emphasized the words—he believed Germany would have been willing to agree upon a peace based upon the retention of Austria, or a plebiscite in Austria—knowing full well that a real plebiscite would result in an overwhelming vote in favor of continued amalgamation with Germany; an independent Slovakia, and an independent Bohemia-Moravia, both under the protectorate of Germany; and the reconstitution of a completely independent Poland, Germany retaining Danzig, the Corridor and the territory in Western Poland occupied by German minorities, and Russia retaining Eastern Poland, removing therefrom the truly Polish inhabitants to the new Polish state, which would be given access to the sea. German peace terms at that time likewise comprehended the return of her former colonial possessions or their equivalent.

Whether Germany still maintained this position, Count Ciano was not sure.

Throughout our conversation Count Ciano made no effort to conceal his dislike and contempt for Ribbentrop or his antagonism towards Hitler. He did not hide his anxiety with regard to Germany and his apprehension with regard to her military power. At the same time he indicated not the slightest predilection towards Great Britain or France.

His chief interests at the moment, I would judge, are to arrest by every means Russian expansion in the Balkans and Near East; to maintain a balance between the Allies and Germany so that Italian neutrality may be preserved and so that when peace negotiations are undertaken, Italian claims may receive preferential consideration; and finally to take every safeguard available to Italy against German domination of Southeastern Europe.

Our interview took place in a very beautiful hall of the Palace, hung with tapestries. The moving-picture apparatus had been already installed. As soon as the conversation terminated the moving-picture men were sent for, and the Minister posed with me for a rather unduly protracted period. That was the only time I saw the "chest out, chin up" Ciano of which I had heard. Until the cameras began clicking, he could not have been more human, more simple, nor more seemingly frank in everything he said.

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ROME, February 26, 1940.

Accompanied by the Ambassador and by Count Ciano's chief of cabinet, I called at 5 p. m. on February 26th at the Palazzo Venezia where I was received by Mussolini.

I entered the Palace by the side entrance used by the Duce, and going up in a small elevator was escorted through a long corridor hung with paintings, and filled with vitrines holding examples of old Italian porcelain, to a hall where Count Ciano was waiting to receive me. From there we passed to the Hall of the Grand Fascist Council, which, while on a far smaller scale, and hung in blue instead of red, is reminiscent of the Hall of the Doges in the Doges' Palace at Venice. At the end of the Hall is a raised and very large armchair for the Duce, while on a lower level, around a horseshoe table, are other chairs for the members of the Grand Council. The walls are hung with superb portraits.

After a wait of three minutes, we were summoned to Mussolini's office in the "Sala Mapa Mondo". The hall, of which so much has been written, is very long, but did not impress me as so long as usually depicted by newspaper correspondents. There is no furniture except the desk of the Duce at the extreme end, with three chairs placed in front of it for the Ambassador, Count Ciano, and myself. On the desk was a reading-lamp, which was the sole illumination in the whole vast room.

The Duce met me very cordially at the door, saying he was particularly happy to welcome me, and walked with me the length of the hall to his desk. He greeted the Ambassador very pleasantly, making no reference whatever to the fact that he had been unwilling to receive him for over a year.

I was profoundly shocked by the Duce's appearance. In the countless times I had seen him in moving pictures and in photographs, and in the many descriptions I had read of him, he had always seemed to me as an active, quick-moving, exceedingly animated personality. The man I saw before me seemed fifteen years older than his actual age of fifty-eight. He was ponderous and static, rather than vital. He moved with an elephantine motion. Every step appeared an effort. He is very heavy for his height, and his face in repose falls into rolls of flesh. His close-clipped hair is snow white. During our long and rapid interchange of views, he kept his eyes shut a considerable part of the time, opening them with his dynamic and oft-described wide-open stare only when he desired particularly to underline some remark. At his side was a large cup of tea which he sipped from time to time.

Mussolini impressed me as a man laboring under some tremendous strain; physical unquestionably, for he has procured a new and young Italian mistress only ten days ago; but in my definite judgment, mental as well. One could almost sense a leaden oppression.

Count Ciano commenced the conversation by saying that Mussolini desired him to act as interpreter, since in view of the importance of the conversation he would prefer to speak in his own language rather than in French or in English.

I said that I wanted first of all to express my gratitude for the many courtesies shown me, and for the privilege of being received by Mussolini and his Minister. I then handed Mussolini the President's autograph letter.<sup>37</sup> He found it difficult to read the President's writing, and asked Ciano to translate it for him. As the reading went on a smile of gratification came over Mussolini's face, and with the last sentence in which the President expressed the hope of seeing him soon, he smiled openly. "I have hoped for a long time," he said, "that this meeting of which I have heard so often would really take place, but I am beginning to fear that there are too many miles of ocean between us to make it possible." I quickly interjected, "But, of course, there are half-way points, which would halve that distance." He stopped smiling, and looked at me searchingly. Then he added slowly, looking at me all the time, "Yes, and there are ships to take us both there." He paused a moment, and then reaching over and taking the President's letter out of Ciano's hands, said, "I will answer this letter personally."<sup>37a</sup>

At the outset of our conversation I referred to American participation in the Exposition of 1942 and to the desirability of studying the possibility of agreeing on such policies and principles as would make possible more satisfactory commercial relations between the two countries. It was evident that Ciano had already reported to him our conversation of the morning, since he referred to notes he had made.

Mussolini expressed great appreciation of the President's interest in the Rome Exposition. He said that while he hoped peace would be reestablished before 1942, the Exposition would be held in any event. It would represent his own endeavor to build up the new Italy and the new Rome.

He expressed his hearty concurrence in the view that relations between Italy and the United States should be close and friendly both in the interest of the two peoples as well as in the interest of the reestablishment of world peace. He said there was nothing he would welcome more than increased trade relations with the United States, since Italy's trade was increasingly prejudiced due to war conditions,

<sup>37</sup> The letter which follows and similar letters to the President of France and the British Prime Minister were dated February 14, 1940 (121.840 Welles, Sumner/31½, 32½, 33½) :

"MY DEAR SIGNOR MUSSOLINI: My old friend Mr. Sumner Welles, my Under Secretary of State, will give you this when he has the privilege of being received by you.

"You may be sure that whatever views you express to him will be transmitted by him solely to myself and to the Secretary of State.

"At this grave moment I deeply hope that this exchange of views between us may be of real value to Italy, to the United States, and to the future of the world.

"I still hope to meet you some day soon !

"Faithfully yours,

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT"

<sup>37a</sup> No reply found in Department files.



and to British war policies. He said he trusted a commercial treaty could be negotiated to mutual advantage, and that now that every other nation of the world, including the Soviet, had recognized the Ethiopian conquest,<sup>38</sup> that technical point would no longer be an impediment to the United States.

I said that I was specifically authorized by the President to speak very frankly to him in that regard. The President felt that recognition of the Empire by the United States would not be an obstacle, provided that question were a part of a whole general and permanent peace settlement and readjustment, especially if it were accompanied by some utilization by Italy of some portion of Ethiopia for the settlement of European minorities. But the President wished me also to remind Mussolini very frankly that we could not regard the matter as an isolated question, because of its inevitable relation to our whole problem in the Far East.

Mussolini smiled and said if he had to wait until we had concluded our negotiations with the Japanese, he was afraid he would have to wait a long time, since there was no race that took a more interminable time in finishing any negotiation than the Japanese. In view of what I said, he added, pending further developments, it would be better to envisage the conclusion of a more ample *modus vivendi*, rather than a commercial agreement, and on that he hoped both sides would make every effort to agree.

I then spoke to Mussolini of the inquiry addressed to [by] my Government to the other neutral powers, asking whether they did not consider it desirable to exchange views with regard to the possibility of finding a common point of view concerning a future sane international economic system, and concerning post-war reduction and limitation of armaments.<sup>39</sup> I said Italy had in reply asked what the views of the United States might be in these two regards. I stated that I had brought with me a brief written statement of the views of the United States with regard to a sane international economic relationship,<sup>40</sup> and that since I knew well the views expressed by Mussolini himself in his address to the Chamber of Deputies on May 26, 1934, I felt sure the views of my Government coincided very completely with his own.

Mussolini at once asked for the paper and read it word for word. As he read, he commented. His comment on the first paragraph was "*molto bello*, I agree with every word. Unfortunately, however, Italy has never been in a position where she could anticipate a situation

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<sup>38</sup> See section entitled "Continued Non-Recognition by the United States of the Italian Annexation of Ethiopia," *Foreign Relations*, 1938, vol. II, pp. 723 ff.

<sup>39</sup> See pp. 117 ff.

<sup>40</sup> See memorandum quoted in telegram No. 340, March 14, noon, from the Chargé in France, p. 16.

where she would have access on equal terms to raw materials." When he came to the portion which related to discriminations, he said, "and could there be greater discriminations than those found in the Ottawa agreements? <sup>41</sup> Or in the tariff policy pursued by the United States prior to the Roosevelt Administration?"

When he had concluded his reading he said, "I subscribe to every word in this. It coincides completely with what I said in 1934, and what I believe now. But you must remember that Italy was the last country to enter upon an autarchic system, and she did so solely as a last resort, and in self-defense. A poor country like Italy had no other remedy after Britain had entered on the Ottawa policy, and after the other European nations had adopted autarchy, and France had imposed her quota systems and other restrictions. This policy outlined in this document represents the ideal which nations must come to, but I want to remind you that if and when the time comes that nations again can trade freely with each other, no such ideal as this can be realized unless simultaneously the powers agree upon a practical and positive disarmament plan. So long as peoples are draining their national economies in the construction of armaments, there can be no hope of a sane international economic relationship."

I, of course, stated at once that the President and Secretary Hull fully shared these views. I said it was exactly for that reason we had suggested that if the neutral powers could now agree upon the principles he had set forth, the neutral influence would be of great service when peace came in bringing these ideals into practical realization.

Mussolini replied that in his opinion the only neutral powers which had any influence were the United States, Japan and Italy, and that Italy was not technically a neutral because of her relationship to Germany. (This was his only reference in our conversation to the Axis.) He said that when peace came the influence of the United States would be decisive, and that our views on economic relations, which he would support, would have to be accepted, if we insisted.

But he felt that no efforts at moral influence at this time would prove effective. What was required before any constructive steps could be taken was the finding of a just political peace in Europe.

I then said that as he already knew I was charged by the President with the duty of reporting to him on the present possibilities of the establishment of the bases for a permanent and stable peace in Europe. I would greatly value Mussolini's views, and I was sure he knew from Count Ciano that any views he expressed to me would be reported solely to my President and Secretary of State.

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<sup>41</sup> *British and Foreign State Papers*, vol. cxxxv, pp. 161 ff.

Mussolini said he knew this, and that he would speak to me with utmost frankness. He would answer any questions I desired to ask.

He then set forth what he believed would be the terms Germany would accept. Austria to remain a part of the Reich after a plebiscite had proved Austrian determination in that regard; an independent Slovakia and Bohemia-Moravia under German protection. He then came to the question of Poland. He drew himself up and with much vigor said, "The Polish people have a right to their untrammelled independence and sovereignty, and I will support them in that endeavor. But that does not mean that Poland should again become a crazy-quilt of diverse nationalities. The poison of Europe during these past twenty years has been the question of minorities. That cardinal error must not be committed again. The real Germans of Danzig, of the Corridor, of Posen should remain in the Reich, but the real Poles should have their free Poland, with access to the sea." I interjected, "How about the real Poles who are now under Russian subjection?" Mussolini answered that they should emigrate from Russian controlled Poland to the new Polish state just the way in which Germans were emigrating from the Upper Adige back to Germany. "What other solution is there," he said, "unless we are all prepared to fight Russia?" In saying this he gave me no impression of being bellicose.

He then stated that I should attribute great importance to Hitler's speech of February 23rd. That speech had been precise: "Vital interests in Central Europe" meant what he had just indicated, and colonial restoration was the additional factor. Germany, he believed, had every right to such a position in Central Europe, and there could be no lasting peace unless such a solution were found.

He quickly added, "And when peace negotiations are undertaken, Italy's just claims must be satisfied. I have not raised them now because the mad-house which is Europe will not stand further excitements. But there can be no peace which is real until Italy has free egress from, and access to, the Mediterranean. You have just come to Italy on the *Reax*. You were held up at Gibraltar by the British and mails and passengers were taken off. In the western Mediterranean you have seen for yourself that we are the prisoners of the British. Do you also realize that an Italian cannot send a ship from Trieste, an Italian port, to Massowa, another Italian port, without having the British take off half the cargo? How would you like it if the British did that to your ships plying between New York and New Orleans?"

Mussolini spoke with the greatest bitterness of the British, but he gave no evidence whatever of antagonism towards the French.

He then came back to the question of peace terms. He said that in his judgment the Allies gravely underestimated the military strength and the efficiency of the organization of Germany.

I then asked him the flat question: "Do you consider it possible at this moment for any successful negotiations to be undertaken between Germany and the Allies for a real and lasting peace?"

His answer was an emphatic "Yes". He said that of one thing he was profoundly certain, and that was that none of the peoples now at war desired to fight. The situation now in that regard was utterly different from that which existed in 1914. He went on, "But I am equally sure that if a 'real' war breaks out, with its attendant slaughter and devastation, there will be no possibility for a long time to come of any peace negotiation."

He paused, and I asked him if he would give me any suggestions as to my conversations in Berlin. He said he would be glad to be helpful, but he believed I would be told in Berlin more or less what he had just said to me.

In conclusion, I said that Count Ciano had been good enough to ask if I would talk with him again before I sailed home. I said I would welcome the privilege of talking also with the Duce before I departed for the United States. He replied, in a very friendly way, that he would be glad to talk with me again at any time, and that he believed he would probably receive reports from Berlin, Paris and London after my visits to those capitals, which would be of value to the President and myself, before I returned to Washington. It was agreed that if my plans made it possible for me to return to Rome on March 16 or 17 I would see him again at that time.

Mussolini then got up and joined me on the other side of his desk. He spoke to me in English for a while and then turned into French. I asked him if he still rode every morning, and he said that he did, but that he had now taken up a new sport, tennis; that he had always thought of tennis as a young ladies' game but that he had now discovered that it was almost as hard exercise as fencing. He was delighted to say that he had that very morning beaten his professional 6-2.

He walked with me to the door, gave me a particularly cordial handshake, and said he would look forward to seeing me again.

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BERLIN, Friday, March 1, 1940.

At noon on the day of my arrival in Berlin I was escorted to the Foreign Office Building, adjacent to Bismarck's old Chancery in the Wilhelmstrasse, by the Chief of Protocol, Herr von Doernberg, to an interview with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Herr von Ribbentrop. Mr. Kirk, the American Chargé d'Affaires, who had never previously been received by Ribbentrop, accompanied me at my request to the interview.

Every official of the Foreign Office was dressed in military uniform, and at the top of the stairs, after passing the two sphinxes at the portal which date from Bismarck's time, there were stationed storm-troopers in stained uniforms.

After waiting in an anteroom for three minutes, I was shown into Herr von Ribbentrop's office.

The Minister received me at the door, glacially, and without the semblance of a smile or a word of greeting. I expressed my pleasure at being afforded the opportunity of talking with him, and spoke in English, since I knew that he spoke English fluently, having passed—as a wine salesman—several years in England, and four years in the United States and Canada. The Minister looked at me icily and barked at the famous Dr. Schmidt, the official interpreter, who stood behind him, "Interpret".

We then sat down. The Minister turned to me and asked in German whether I had had a comfortable journey. I turned to Dr. Schmidt, and saying in English that I had lost my facility in speaking German, expressed my appreciation of the courtesy of the German Government in sending a private car to the border and an official to meet me there.

I then said that I believed it desirable at the outset to make quite clear the nature of my mission. I was requested by the President to visit Italy, Germany, France and England to report to him on the existing situation. It was the President's desire to ascertain whether there existed any possibility of the establishment of a sound and permanent peace in Europe. I wished to emphasize that my Government was not interested in any precarious or temporary peace. Whatever views the officials of the German Government were good enough to express to me would be regarded as solely for the information of the President himself, and of the Secretary of State, and for no other individual, and in conclusion I desired to make it very clear that I had, in the name of my Government, no proposals to offer, and no commitments whatever to put forward on the part of the United States.

I should be appreciative of any views the Minister desired to express to me.

Ribbentrop then commenced to speak and never stopped, except to request the interpreter from time to time to translate the preceding portion of his discourse, for more than two hours.

The Minister, who is a good looking man of some fifty years with notably haggard features and grey hair, sat with his arms extended on the sides of his chair and his eyes continuously closed. He evidently envisioned himself as the Delphic Oracle.

He started in with the subject of American-German relations. He said that relations between the two countries had been steadily deteriorating for several years, and that so far as the German Government

was concerned, there was no reason for such a situation. It desired to maintain close and friendly relations between the two countries. A year and a half ago the United States had withdrawn its Ambassador, Mr. Wilson, for whom he, the Minister, and the Fuehrer had the highest regard, and in consequence the German Reich had withdrawn its Ambassador. Such a situation was in detriment to the best interests of the two peoples. The German Government believed expanded trade relations between our two countries were highly desirable. Such were now impossible under present conditions. The German Government had no feature in its foreign policy which conflicted with the interests of the United States; no ambitions which in any sense impinged upon the Western Hemisphere; and insofar as internal matters were concerned, all representatives of the German Government had received the most stringent orders never to interfere, directly or indirectly, in the domestic policies of the United States, nor in those of any other American Republic. Since all of these things were so, the Minister concluded, he could see no valid ground whatever for the completely unsatisfactory state of relations between the United States and Germany. He could only assume that lying propaganda had had a preponderant influence.

At this point I determined it was wiser for me to refrain from making the reply I desired to make until the end of the Minister's discourse. He was so obviously aggressive, so evidently laboring under a violent mental and emotional strain, that it seemed to me probable that if I replied at this juncture with what I intended to say, violent polemics was [*would?*] presumably ensue, with the possibility that things would be said that would not only make my interview with him entirely unfruitful, but which might also jeopardize the interview I was scheduled to have with Hitler on the following morning.

The Minister then continued. He passed to a narration of Germany's participation in European history, as he saw it, from January 30, 1933, the day Hitler became Chancellor, until the present time.

The German occupation of the Rhineland had been the first step in the reconstruction by Germany. That was a step which today was accepted by the entire world as a rightful step, as a step which returned to Germany an intrinsic part of Germany, and as a step which marked the end of the régime of Versailles. The Minister said that he was glad to remember that I myself in public addresses had criticized the inequities of Versailles.

Then had come the consolidation of Austria into the German Reich. This had marked the union of two severed portions of the old German Empire, of the old Roman Empire, and had brought back into one German family German peoples who had always desired such union since 1919. It had been attained without the shedding of blood and

in accordance with the will of the overwhelming majority of the Austrian people.

Then had come the Sudeten question. Here again the German Government had desired no more than the return to Germany of German peoples, who had been ground down under Czech domination for twenty years. He detailed the efforts which Hitler had made to achieve a friendly solution of this problem with the Czechoslovak Government, and the continuous obstacles which other Governments had placed in the way of such an understanding. He narrated—it seemed to me from memory—all of the pages in the German white books which had led up to the agreements of Munich.<sup>42</sup>

He emphasized the agreement entered into by Chamberlain and Hitler. And what had happened only a few weeks later: Chamberlain and his Duff Coopers, Edens and Churchills had announced in the British Parliament that Britain was embarking on the biggest armament program of its entire history so that “no agreement like Munich would ever again be necessarily accepted by the British Government”. (I did not remind the Minister that neither Duff Cooper, Eden nor Churchill was at that time in the British Cabinet.)

From this moment on in the Minister’s monologue, the word “England, England, England” punctuated his speech like the toll of a funeral bell. I could not help but think of the “Gott Strafe England” of the years 1917–1918.

The keystone of Hitler’s foreign policy had been the creation of close and cooperative relations with England. From the year 1933 on Hitler, time and time again, had consulted England on the steps he had intended to take, and time and again England had not only repulsed his overtures with scorn—and the German word “Hohn” came out like the hiss of a snake—but had with craft and with guile done her utmost to prevent the German people from once more assuming their rightful place in the family of nations. Hitler had no ambitions which conflicted with the maintenance of the integrity of the British Empire; on the contrary, he believed the integrity of the British Empire was a desirable and a stabilizing factor in the world. For that reason he had entered into the naval agreement of 1935 with Great Britain,<sup>43</sup> voluntarily pledging German[y] to a minimum naval ratio, as a pledge to England that Germany had no designs upon the Empire. Until the last moment Hitler had sought peace and understanding with England, always to find hatred, scorn and trickery as her reward.

Germany had offered to guarantee the frontiers of the new Czechoslovakia agreed upon at Munich. But how could this commitment be carried out? The new Czech authorities had proved weak tools of

<sup>42</sup> See *Foreign Relations*, 1938, vol. I, pp. 657 ff.

<sup>43</sup> See *ibid.*, 1935, vol. I, pp. 162 ff.

the enemies of Germany. They had been unable or unwilling to prevent foreign agents from stirring up agitation and from concocting plots, with the connivance of the Czechoslovak military, against Germany. How could Germany guarantee the frontiers of a nation which was being deliberately turned into a menace to the heart of Germany? That, and that alone, had been the reason for the occupation of Bohemia and Moravia, and the support by Germany of the independence of Slovakia, and the consent by Germany for the earlier movements affecting Czechoslovak territory by Poland and Hungary.<sup>44</sup>

And then the Minister turned to Poland.

The Fuehrer had always maintained that the separation of the German city of Danzig from the Reich, and the complete divorce of East Prussia from Greater Germany were provisions of the Versailles Treaty which could not endure. But at the same time he had been convinced that these questions could be solved satisfactorily by means of a direct understanding between Poland and Germany. In that spirit the non-aggression pact between Germany and Poland had been entered into. Early in the year 1938 negotiations had been commenced between the German Foreign Office and Colonel Beck<sup>45</sup> looking towards the restoration of Danzig to the Reich, and the granting to Germany of an extraterritorial motor road and railroad across the Corridor between Greater Germany and East Prussia. These conversations had prospered. They had reached a complete agreement in principle when Colonel Beck had visited Berlin and Berchtesgaden early in 1939. In a few months, granted there had been no foreign interference, the entire arrangement would have been concluded to the entire satisfaction of Poland, and Germany would have abided permanently by this settlement.

And what had happened? The German Government now had the complete archives of Warsaw. It had incontrovertible proof that England had incited the Polish Government to refuse to conclude this agreement; it had incontrovertible proof that England had incited the Poles to determine upon war against Germany, and it had incontrovertible proof that statesmen of countries not in the slightest degree connected with the issues involved had urged the Polish Government to make no concession of any nature to Germany.

Here the Minister paused and looked pointedly at me. My belief is that he desired me to understand that the German authorities have records of representations made to Poland by Bullitt through Biddle and the Polish Ambassador in Paris,<sup>46</sup> in addition to Bullitt's tele-

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<sup>44</sup> For correspondence regarding the occupation of Czechoslovakia, March 15, 1939, see *Foreign Relations*, 1939, vol. 1, pp. 34 ff.

<sup>45</sup> Col. Josef Beck, Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>46</sup> For texts of documents released by the German Foreign Office in late March 1940, see *The German White Paper: Full text of the Polish documents and the report on American Ambassador Bullitt's war attitude* (Howell, Soskin and Co., New York City, 1940), pp. 43 and 51.



phone conversation with Biddle, already published by the German Foreign Office.

Finally, the German Government had proof that the British guarantee of military support had been thrust upon Poland, against the wishes and advice of Colonel Beck, and solely as a means of persuading Poland against reaching any fair understanding with Germany.

When this stage had been reached the Poles had undertaken every kind of cruel repression against the German minority in Poland. The German Government had attempted time and again to point out to Poland the dangerous results of such a policy. Torture and mutilation of Germans were so unbelievable that the Minister would give me photographs and documentary evidence if I so desired.

And finally Germany, to protect Germans in Poland, and as a means of self-defense against Polish mobilization had been forced to take military action. She had even at this last moment attempted to keep peace with England and France. The Fuehrer had made every effort to make clear to England and France that Germany wished in no way to endanger British or French security. It had been England and France who had insisted upon declaring war on Germany. Germany would not have declared war on England and France.

Germany wished for nothing more in Europe than what the United States possessed through the Monroe Doctrine in the Western Hemisphere. As a great power she was entitled to the safeguarding of her vital interests. He had been in the United States, and he knew how every American citizen felt, and he thought quite legitimately, that the preservation of the Monroe Doctrine was fundamental in insuring the safety of America's world position. Germany was entitled to the same situation in Central Europe. Germany desired nothing more than the unity under the German Reich of the German people in Europe; the return of the colonies which had been stolen from her at Versailles, so that she might thence obtain the raw materials she could not herself produce, and make possible the profitable emigration to them of German nationals; the ensured recognition by the other Great Powers of her sphere of influence in Central Europe—just as she was willing to respect the spheres of influence of the other great European powers; the independence and autonomy of the smaller powers of Europe which had a clearly established historical right to independence. With regard to such powers, the Minister said, Germany had not the faintest design upon them, although she must expect that in trade matters the independent powers within her sphere of influence would have close economic ties with the Reich. And in that connection I must not forget that one thousand years ago German Emperors had been crowned in Prague. Germany, however, had no desire or intention of preventing the Czech people from having their complete

cultural and municipal autonomy—something which the Germans in Czechoslovakia had never possessed under Czech rule.

Germany must have her "Monroe Doctrine" in Central Europe. She would never again discuss any question affecting her interests in Eastern Europe except with Soviet Russia, and with Russia she had already reached a complete and satisfactory delimitation of interests in that area. But the days of encirclement—of British and French political meddling in Central and Eastern Europe—were passed and [gone?] forever.

(It was particularly significant that Italy was never mentioned by the Minister throughout the conversation.)

British policy made any such recognition of German rights impossible—Britain was determined to annihilate Germany and the German people. In October, Hitler had publicly announced the bases upon which he was willing to make peace. They had again been rejected with contempt. Only last night Eden had publicly declared that the war aim of England was to destroy "Hitlerism". The Minister wanted me to know that every German national was a part of Hitler. The destruction of "Hitlerism" meant only the destruction of the German people, for Germany would never again be governed by any form of government other than Hitlerism.

Germany was strong and completely confident of ultimate victory. She had immense military superiority, and from her eastern and southern neighbors she could obtain the raw materials she required. She was prepared for a long war, but the Minister was confident it would be a short war.

Germany wanted peace, but only on condition, the Minister said, "that the will on the part of England to destroy Germany is killed, once and for all. I see no way in which that can be accomplished except through German victory."

By the time this stage had been reached, I said I would not attempt to speak at any length, but that I could not refrain from making certain comments upon what the Minister had said.

First of all, the Minister had referred to American-German relations and had drawn the inference that propaganda was responsible for their bad condition. I said I had no doubt that propaganda was active in almost every part of the world, and that I felt very deeply, with my own President, that the more peoples drank from the well of truth, and had freedom of true information, the more peaceful and happy the world would be.

But if the Minister thought that the unsatisfactory state of American-German relations was due to propaganda, he was sadly deceived. The American people, I said, were idealistic, emotional people, profoundly moved by humanitarian considerations. They resented in

their inmost soul the ill-treatment of human beings in any part of the world. The cruel treatment of minorities in Germany was one of the two compelling causes of American feeling towards Germany. The other was the overwhelming feeling in the United States that international controversies can and must be settled by pacific methods, and that the use of force, such as had been exercised in recent years, destroyed international relations and those bases of international life which alone could give real security to the United States and to other nations. Those, I said, and not propaganda, were the real reasons for the feeling in the United States towards Germany. So far as trade relations were concerned, the Minister must know that so long as Germany pursued her present autarchic policy and indulged in every form of discrimination against us, there was no opportunity offered the United States for improved trade with Germany.

With regard to the Minister's reference to the desirability of having Ambassadors in Berlin and Washington, I would be careful to report to the President the Minister's observations, but I wanted to make it clear that my Government had every confidence in Mr. Kirk, the American Chargé d'Affaires. (Here the Minister interjected that he had only "good reports" of Mr. Kirk, but that he had been referring to the rank of the representation, and not to the individual.)

I further desired to refer to the Minister's reference to the Monroe Doctrine, for it seemed very clear that the Minister was laboring under a misapprehension as to the nature of that policy. Many years ago, I was quite willing to admit, the Monroe Doctrine had been occasionally misinterpreted by earlier administrations in the United States as entitling the United States to exercise some form of hegemony in the Western Hemisphere or to intervene in one way or another in the affairs of our neighbors. But the Doctrine had never in reality been other than a unilateral declaration by the United States that it would not permit any non-American power to exercise any kind of sway, military or political, within the Western Hemisphere. It had never implied the exclusion by the United States of non-American powers from having the same trade relations with the other American Republics such as we ourselves possessed, and on equal terms. It had never rightfully implied the assumption of any political control by us over our neighbors. At this moment, I was glad to say, a new relationship existed in the Western Hemisphere. The Monroe Doctrine existed, and would continue to exist, but only in its true interpretation, and it was now reinforced by the unification of all the American Republics in the common policy of considering any menace from abroad to the peace of any one Republic as a menace to the peace of them all. The United States was an equal partner in a partnership of twenty-one partners.

If, consequently, the Minister desired to use the term "Monroe Doctrine" as synonymous with the term "sphere of influence", whether political or economic, he should find some more accurate synonym.

Finally, I said I would, of course, regard it as inappropriate to comment upon the remainder of the Minister's exposition. That would be outside of the scope of my mission.

I believe, however, that if a war of devastation now took place all that civilization held most dear, all the remaining material and social structure of Europe, would be in great part destroyed. The loss of lives would be appalling. No country on earth would remain unaffected, and the United States as the most powerful neutral would suffer every form of repercussion upon her own social, commercial and financial structure. It was for that reason that my Government hoped most earnestly, while there was still time, that there might still exist the way towards some durable and just peace. The President of the United States had officially stated last year, as the Minister knew, that if the way to a just political peace could be found by the nations directly concerned, of which the United States was not one, my Government would participate whole-heartedly in a parallel common attempt to bring about a real limitation and reduction of armaments, and a return by the nations to a sane economic system of international trade relations. On these latter two points, as the Minister doubtless knew, my Government was even now discussing the possibility of finding common views with the neutral powers. All of these opportunities towards a return to a world of security, sanity and prosperity would be grievously, if not fatally, prejudiced, if a war of devastation now broke out.

The Minister made a brief rejoinder. He attempted, without success, to modify his interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine. He expressed the hope of the German Government, after the war was over, of being able to return, in cooperation with other powers, to a liberal international trade system. With regard to the prevention of a war of devastation, he said over and over again, "We have not attacked England. She has attacked us. I see no way by which we can attain the peace we want and which we seek, save through German victory."

I then terminated the interview, which had lasted from midday until quarter before three.

Ribbentrop has a completely closed mind. It struck me as also a very stupid mind. The man is saturated with hate for England, and to the exclusion of any other dominating mental influence. He is clearly without background in international affairs, and he was guilty of a hundred inaccuracies in his presentation of German policy during recent years.

I have rarely seen a man I disliked more.

BERLIN, Friday, March 1, 1940.

At six o'clock I called upon Staatssekretär von Weizsäcker in his office at the Foreign Office. His position corresponds to Under Secretary in our system.

Herr von Weizsäcker is a typical example of the German official of the old school of the nineteenth century. He is reminiscent of the first Bernstorff and of the first Bülow, and not of their more famous sons. He is, I believe, sincere, and spoke throughout our hour's talk with deep feeling.

He had had a particularly happy home life—very typically German in the devotion to him of his three sons. His greatest pleasure, he told me, was when he and his wife and the three boys could have an evening of chamber music together in their house. Today the family is shattered. His youngest son of twenty was killed in the Polish war. The other two sons are serving on the Western Front.

He is retained at the Foreign Office, I was told, solely because of his expert knowledge of German foreign relations, and is never permitted to advise on policy.

I outlined to the Under Secretary the nature of my mission.

At the conclusion of my statement, to which I added some excerpts of my earlier conversation with Herr von Ribbentrop, Herr von Weizsäcker hesitated a moment and said, "I am going to be quite frank with you. I have been strictly instructed not to discuss with you in any way any subject which relates directly or indirectly to the possibility of peace."

He then drew his chair towards the center of the room, and motioned to me to do likewise. (I assumed that the omnipresent German Secret Police dictaphones must be installed in the walls rather than in the central lighting fixtures.)

We had for a while a desultory conversation, in the course of which he took occasion to say how highly he regarded Kirk, who, in his opinion, had done wonders in a singularly difficult situation, and I corresponded—to his obvious pleasure—by saying that I thought Thomsen <sup>40a</sup> in Washington had shown great tact and discretion in an equally difficult situation.

I then reverted to my conversation with Ribbentrop. I said that if the feeling of the German Government was as decisive as that of Herr von Ribbentrop that was [*war*] was the only course, I would be needlessly taking up the time of the German authorities by prolonging my stay. I said, however, that while, as Herr von Weizsäcker would be the first to appreciate, my conversations in Rome would be regarded as entirely confidential by me, I, nevertheless, felt entirely able to tell him that my impressions after talking with the Duce were

<sup>40a</sup> Hans Thomsen, Counselor of the German Embassy and Chargé at Washington.

that in the latter's judgment a basis for a just and lasting peace could still be found before it was too late.

Herr von Weizsäcker thought a good three minutes before saying anything. He then leaned towards me and said, "It is of the utmost importance that you say that personally to the Fuehrer."

I waited a moment myself, and then asked: "Let me have your personal advice, for I am now asking an entirely personal and individual question. Do you believe that any suggestions for peace conversations proffered by the Duce would have any favorable reception here?"

This time Herr von Weizsäcker waited a good five minutes before answering. His reply was: "What I have already said about the Fuehrer answers a part of your question. But (and he motioned to the Foreign Office in which we were) here the relations between Germany and Italy have *narrowed* (and I use his exact English word) greatly."

The interpretation I give to this statement is that if the Duce approaches Hitler directly and secretly, it will have decisive influence. If Ribbentrop knows of the approach, he will do his utmost to block it.

During the remainder of our hour's talk, Weizsäcker talked of his regard for Nevile Henderson<sup>47</sup> and of his belief that in August war could have been averted by a more intelligent policy by the Poles. As I took leave, the tears came into his eyes as he said he knew I would realize how earnestly he hoped that the mission with which the President had entrusted me might show there still was a way by which an absolute holocaust could be avoided.

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BERLIN, Saturday, March 2, 1940.

At eleven o'clock several Foreign Office officials, headed by Herr von Doernberg, came for me at my hotel to take me to my interview with Hitler at the new Chancery, which had been completed last year within a period of eight months. Workmen had worked night and day in order to have it ready for the Chancellor's New Year's Day reception for the Diplomatic Corps so that they might have a taste of what the new Berlin was going to look like.

Kirk accompanied me at my request. He had never before been permitted to see the Fuehrer except at a distance.

The façade of the new building on the Wilhelmstrasse reminds me of a factory building. My car drove into a rectangular court with very high blank walls. At one end was a flight of broad steps leading into the Chancery. Monumental black nudes flanked the portico to which the steps led. The whole impression of the court was reminiscent of nothing other than a prison courtyard. A company of soldiers was drawn up on each side to give me the Nazi salute as I entered.

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<sup>47</sup> British Ambassador to Germany in 1939.

At the head of the steps I was greeted by the Reichsminister Meissner, the head of Hitler's Chancery. He spoke to me most cordially in English, as did all the other officials present.

We then formed a procession of some twenty couples headed by Meissner and myself, and with very slow and measured tread first traversed a tremendously long red marble hall, of which the walls and floor are both of marble; then up a flight of excessively slippery red marble steps into a gallery which, also of red marble, has windows on one side and tapestries on the other. The gallery is lined on the tapestry side by an interminable series of sofas, each with a table and four chairs in front of them. From the gallery open off a series of drawing rooms. Finally, we deployed into one of these, and I was requested to sit down until the Chancellor was ready to receive me.

In a very few minutes Meissner came to announce that Hitler was ready to see me, and I went with Kirk into the adjoining room, a very long drawing-room furnished with comfortable upholstered sofas and chairs, and overlooking the garden of Bismarck's old residence, in which Hitler now lives.

Hitler received me near the door. He greeted me very pleasantly, but with great formality. Ribbentrop and Meissner [*Schmidt, the interpreter*] were the only two German officials present at the interview.

Hitler is taller than I had judged from his photographs. He has, in real life, none of the somewhat effeminate appearance of which he has been accused. He looked in excellent physical condition and in good training. His color was good, and while his eyes were tired, they were clear. He was dignified both in speech and movement, and there was not the slightest impression of the comic effect from moustache and hair which one sees in his caricatures. His voice in conversation is low and well modulated. It had only once, during our hour and a half's conversation, the raucous stridency which is heard in his speeches—and it was only at that moment that his features lost their composure and that his eyes lost their decidedly "gemütlich" look. He spoke with clarity and precision, and always in a beautiful German, of which I could follow every word, although Dr. Schmidt, of course, interpreted—and at times inaccurately.

After we were seated, and Hitler placed me next to him, he looked at me to indicate I was to commence the conversation.

I set forth the detailed purposes of my mission as I had already explained them to Ribbentrop. I made particular reference to the confidential nature of my interviews, and to the fact that I had no proposals to offer. In as eloquent terms as I could command, I then emphasized the President's hope that there might still be a way open for a stable, just and lasting peace, not a truce or a precarious breathing spell. I pointed out that if a war of annihilation now broke out,

whether it was short or whether it was long, it would definitely preclude for the present the negotiation of a reasonable and just peace because of the human suffering it would create and of the human passions it would arouse, as well as because of the exhaustion of the economic and financial resources which still existed in Europe. From such a war as that, I said, who would be the victors? It seemed clear that all would be the losers. And in that sense not only would the belligerents be the losers, but also the neutrals, of which the United States was the greatest and the most powerful. We as a people now realized fully that such a war must inevitably have the gravest repercussions upon almost every aspect of our national structure.

The President of the United States had, in communications addressed to Chancellor Hitler himself, made it clear that if a just political peace could be found—and in the negotiation of such a peace we could not be directly involved—the United States would play its full part in cooperating towards two fundamental needs of a sane and ordered world—limitation and reduction of armaments and the establishment of a sound international trade relationship. If such bases could still be found, was it not worth every effort to seek the way of peace before the war of devastation commenced, and before the doors to peace were closed? I spoke, I said, only of a just peace, a peace which promised stability and security for the future. Personally, I said, I could not conceive of a lasting and real peace unless it envisaged as an essential component part a united, prosperous and contented German people, a German people satisfied with their own domain and their own security; but at the same time I could conceive of no lasting or real peace unless as an equally important factor Germany no longer was regarded by her neighbors as a threat to their independence or to their security, and unless Germany made it evident that she was, in fact, not striving for constantly increasing objectives—and objectives which implied aggression and a threat to the rights of free peoples.

The Chancellor knew, I said, that I had had the privilege of speaking with the Duce in Rome. That conversation, the Chancellor would appreciate, I must retain in complete confidence, but I felt at liberty to say that I had happily gained the impression from that conversation that the Duce believed the foundations of a just and lasting peace might still be laid. I hoped the Chancellor would find it possible to confirm that impression. I would be most grateful for any views he felt able to express.

The Chancellor then very quietly and moderately outlined his foreign policy during the past seven years. The outline pursued exactly the lines followed in my conversation of the day before by the Minister for Foreign Affairs. (It is noteworthy that in every conversation I had with every member of the German Government, except



Dr. Schacht, exactly the same historical survey prefaced the conversation. It is entirely clear that either the Chancellor or the Foreign Secretary had dictated the course which the conversations to be had with me by the members of the German Government were to follow.)<sup>48</sup>

Hitler, however, emphasized even more strongly than had Herr von Ribbentrop his desire to reach an amicable and lasting understanding with England. He stressed particularly the naval agreement of 1935 as an indication that Germany, under his Government, had no intention of challenging British naval supremacy nor the security of the British Empire. When he came to the account of the negotiations with Poland which had resulted in the invasion of Poland by Germany in September, he turned to me and said, "I have never in my life made a more earnest nor a more sincere appeal than I did to the British Ambassador, Sir Nevile Henderson, when I sent for him just prior to the break with Poland. He was sitting in the same place where you are now sitting, and I besought him to tell his Government that Germany had no intention of attacking England nor of impairing directly or indirectly British interests, but that Germany could not permit a continued domination by the Western European powers of the smaller States of Eastern Europe, nor the continuation of a state of affairs which resulted in a continuous attack and a continuous threat upon German vital interests." The Chancellor then concluded by saying, "That appeal, like every other approach made to England in seven years, was rejected with derision."

Hitler then said that I had referred to the problem of limitation and reduction of armaments. Time and again, he said, he had offered England and the other powers of the world the opportunity for a real and practicable reduction of armaments. He had guaranteed that Germany would maintain her standing army at 200,000 men; then at 300,000 men; he had expressed German willingness to outlaw certain types of munitions and implements of war. Never once, however, had these offers on his part received the slightest attention or, much less, consideration, as a basis of agreement. The Chancellor then said, "The present armament burden is crushing the life out of all peoples; it cannot continue much longer. The national economy of every nation will crash before much further time elapses."

He stated that he believed these were two practicable methods of securing a real disarmament. The first was for the great powers of Europe to agree upon their minimum ratios of military and of naval strength, outlawing all but a minimum of offensive armaments, and

<sup>48</sup> A translation of the text of Hitler's directions for the conversations with Mr. Welles, dated February 29, 1940, is printed in Department of State, *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, series D, vol. VIII, p. 817.

upon that basis further to agree that in the event of any threat to their security, or to the peace of Europe, these powers would pool their military and naval resources as a police power. He had formally made this proposal to Great Britain and to France. He had never received the slightest response.

The other alternative was for the powers to agree upon a progressive and gradual reduction in their respective military strength; with the gradual elimination at the same time of certain categories of offensive armament. This he believed would take a very long time, and was the less satisfactory of the two methods.

I had also mentioned the problem of a liberal, most-favored-nation international trade relationship as an objective towards which the nations of the world should strive. He felt quite in accord with me, he said, that that was a desirable goal and Germany, under more normal conditions, would gladly cooperate towards that end. He did not, however, believe that unrestricted international trade was the cure for all of the world's economic problems. He said, for example, that while Germany would doubtless profit by taking a considerable portion of America's agricultural surpluses, an industrial country like Germany could not take any considerable portion of industrial products from the United States, nor could the United States take any considerable portion of Germany's industrial exports. It was, consequently, necessary for Germany to intensify her trade relations with countries in Central and Southeastern Europe who desired to take Germany's industrial exports, which they themselves did not produce, in return for raw materials desired by Germany.

At this point I interjected to say that the Chancellor appeared to overlook the fact that while the United States, it was true, was a large industrial producer as well as an exporter of agricultural surpluses, nevertheless, trade between the United States and Germany over a period of many generations had been highly profitable to both sides. The Chancellor, I said, must not forget that Germany produced many forms of industrial products which were produced either more cheaply or in more efficient form than similar products produced in the United States, and that such exports from Germany had always been profitably sold by Germany to the United States. The question, I said, was not one of a purely bilateral nature but involved necessarily the problem of profitable triangular trade which had always entered into the picture of Germany's trade relations with the United States. Furthermore for Germany to be able to sell profitably the bulk of her luxury manufactured products she had to find countries where the standard of living was relatively high. Surely I believed the standard of living in the countries of Southeastern Europe was not sufficiently high to make it possible for Germany to find there any profitable market for a very large percentage of her industrial production.

Hitler did not seem to comprehend this problem, and dropped the topic after remarking that a country with a population of 140 individuals to the square kilometer must increase its production if those individuals are to find the where-with-all to survive. I said that it seemed to me that there was no country in the world that would profit more immediately and more greatly than Germany from a restoration of liberal international trade relations, and that through such a restoration the 140 individuals to the square German kilometer of whom he had spoken would obtain an increased standard of living and derive therefrom an immediately greater purchasing power, particularly if their work was dedicated to constructive production, rather than to the sterile manufacture of munitions.

Hitler then said that Germany's aims and objectives were simple and that he would outline them to me; he would classify them as (a) historical, (b) political and (c) economic.

From the historical aspect Germany had existed as an empire five hundred years before Columbus had discovered the western world. The German people had every right to demand that their historical position of a thousand years should be restored to them; Germany had no ambition and no aim other than the return by the German people to the territorial position which was historically theirs.

Germany's political aims were coordinate. Germany could not tolerate the existence of a State such as Czechoslovakia which constituted an enclave created by Versailles solely for strategic reasons, and which formed an ever-present menace to the security of the German people; nor could Germany tolerate the separation from Greater Germany of German provinces by corridors, under alien control, and again created solely for strategic reasons. No great power could exist under such conditions. Germany, however, did not desire to dominate non-German peoples, and if such peoples adjacent to German boundaries did not constitute a military or political threat to the German people, Germany had no desire permanently to destroy, nor to prejudice, the independent lives of such peoples.

From the economic standpoint, Germany must claim the right to profit to the fullest extent through trade with the nations close to her in Central and Southeastern Europe. She would no longer permit that the western powers of Europe infringe or impair Germany's preferential situation in this regard.

In brief, the German people intended to maintain the unity which he had now achieved for them; they intended to prevent any State on Germany's eastern frontier from constituting again a military or strategic threat against German security and, finally, Germany intended to obtain recognition for her economic priority in Eastern and Southeastern Europe.

Germany, further, would insist that the colonies stolen from her at Versailles be returned to her. Germany had not obtained these colonies through military conquest; she had obtained them through purchase or through pacific negotiation; she had never utilized her colonies for military purposes. She now required them in order to obtain for the German people raw materials which could not be produced in Germany, and as a field for German emigration. Such a demand, Hitler felt, was not only reasonable, but just.

At no time during the course of our conversation did Hitler mention the subject of German-American relations, nor did he refer directly or indirectly to German relations with Soviet Russia and with Italy.

The Chancellor then passed to the subject of the war aims of the Allies. He asked me if I had heard or read the speech made in England the night before by Sir John Simon.<sup>48a</sup> I told him that I had not. He said that if I had read the speech, I would gain therefrom the same clear understanding that he had gained, namely, that the speech constituted a clear-cut definition of English aims, that is, the total destruction of Germany.

He said, "I am fully aware that the allied powers believe that a distinction can be made between National Socialism and the German people. There was never a greater mistake. The German people today are united as one man, and I have the support of every German. I can see no hope for the establishment of any lasting peace until the will of England and France to destroy Germany is itself destroyed. I fear [*feel?*] that there is no way by which the will to destroy Germany can be itself destroyed, except through a German victory. I believe that German might is such as to ensure the triumph of Germany but, if not, we will all go down together (and here he added the extraordinary phrase) whether that be for better or for worse." He paused a moment and then said textually, rapidly and with impatience, "I did not want this war. It has been forced upon me against my will. It is a waste of my time. My life should have been spent in constructing, and not in destroying."

I said that the Chancellor would, of course, understand that it was the belief of my Government that if some way could be found towards a stable and lasting peace which promised security to all peoples, no nation could [*would?*] have to "go down", let alone all of them. For that reason I earnestly trusted that such a way and such a peace might still be found.

Hitler looked at me, and remained quiet for a moment or two. He then said, "I appreciate your sincerity and that of your Government, and I am grateful for your mission. I can assure you that Germany's

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<sup>48a</sup> British Chancellor of the Exchequer.

aim, whether it must come through war or otherwise, is a just peace." I replied by saying that I would remember the phrase the Chancellor had used. The interview then terminated.

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BERLIN, March 3, 1940.

I talked at some length with the Italian and Belgian Ambassadors in Berlin,<sup>49</sup> who are by far the most experienced members of the local Diplomatic Corps. They are both of them confident that the internal and army opposition to Hitler, which had assumed some proportions in November 1939, has now completely died away.

They told me that both the German army and the German people have by now been thoroughly convinced by propaganda of the German Government that the aims of the Allies are to destroy Germany and the German people, and that recent propaganda of the Allies, and recent speeches by British and French statesmen, had strongly increased this feeling in Germany. Both of the Ambassadors are confident that the Allied Governments grossly underestimate Germany's military strength and the ability of the German people to withstand a protracted war. Both of the Ambassadors are in agreement that a war of devastation will make any discussion of peace utterly impossible, and that the time within which peace terms can be discussed before Germany strikes is very brief indeed.

The Belgian Ambassador assured me that Germany's stores of oil are far greater than is realized by the British and French Governments, and that a large-scale offensive can be undertaken by Germany without bringing the German army to a point where it will suffer any lack of its full requirements.

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BERLIN, Sunday, March 3, 1940.

At ten o'clock, accompanied by officials of the German Foreign Office and by Dr. Schmidt, the official interpreter, I called upon Rudolf Hess, the Deputy to Hitler as head of the Nazi Party organization.

Hess received me in his offices in the party headquarters built in the modern German style, the walls being completely bare of molding or decoration of any kind.

Herr Hess bears the unmistakable appearance of being devoid of all but a very low order of intelligence. His forehead is low and narrow, and his deep-set eyes are very close together. He is noted for his dog-like devotion to Hitler. During our conversation he reverted again and again to the years when he was imprisoned with Hitler and of their service together in the Great War.

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<sup>49</sup> Bernardo Attolico and Vicomte Jacques Davignon. The conversation took place the afternoon of March 2.

At the outset of our conversation, I outlined to him the nature of my mission and said that I would be glad to receive any views that he cared to express to me.

Herr Hess took out of his pocket a typewritten memorandum, in which were noted the points he had been obviously told to make in his talk with me. His exposition followed precisely the lines set forth by Ribbentrop in his talk with me, and there was no deviation from that outline other than a paragraph or two which related to Nazi Party organization. This was brought up in connection with Hess's statement to me that the German people were convinced that the war aims of the Allies were solely the destruction of Germany and of the German people, and that the German people stood as one man behind Hitler. Hess said that as active Head of the Nazi Party he was in a better position than anyone else to know what the real feeling of the German people was, since every district leader and every local leader under his jurisdiction was in turn in touch with the unit leaders, who were in hourly contact with the German masses, and that he could assure me that never before in the history of the Nazi Party had the German people themselves been more completely identified with their Fuehrer than at the present moment.

There is nothing to be gained from any detailed account of this conversation, which lasted about one hour. Hess was quite as vehement as Ribbentrop, and in his presentation of German objectives infinitely less temperate than Hitler himself. He closed the door completely to the possibility of any negotiated peace and stated flatly that in his judgment, as head of the Nazi Party, there was only one possibility for Germany to achieve a lasting peace, and that was through a German military victory.

It was so obvious that Hess was merely repeating what he had been told to say to me, and that he had neither himself reasoned about the problems at all nor thought anything out for himself, that I made no attempt to set forth any views of my own. At the conclusion of our interview I merely stated that I regretted to learn his opinion, that there now existed no hope of a lasting peace save through the force of arms.

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BERLIN, Sunday, March 3, 1940.

Immediately after the termination of my interview with Rudolf Hess, I was accompanied by Dr. Schmidt, the official interpreter, to the home of Field Marshal Goering, <sup>50</sup> known as Karinhall, which lies about an hour and a half's motoring distance from Berlin.

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<sup>50</sup> The translation of a German memorandum of this conversation between Mr. Welles and Field Marshal Goering is printed in *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, series D, vol. VIII, p. 850.

The Field Marshal's home has been built in the middle of a national game reserve. After reaching the entrance of the reserve, one drives some ten miles through a thin forest of pine and scattered birch to the Marshal's house, which has been built around a log cabin which he used in earlier years on hunting trips. The building which he has constructed is already immense, and he is now adding a new portion which will make the entire building, when completed, about the size of the new National Art Gallery in Washington. We arrived at the house in a driving snow at twelve o'clock. The Field Marshal, who had just returned to Berlin from a week's visit to the Western Front, received me immediately. At my request, and by the expressed desire of the Marshal himself, there was no one present except Dr. Schmidt and the American Chargé d'Affaires.

Goering looks exactly like his photographs. His thighs and arms are tremendous, and his girth is tremendous. His face gave the impression of being heavily rouged but, since at the end of our three-hour conversation the color had worn off, the effect was probably due to some form of facial massage which he had received prior to seeing me.

He wore a white tunic, on which were plastered various emblems and insignia in brilliants, and over the Iron Cross, which hung from his neck, dangled a monocle on a black cord. His hands are shaped like the digging-paws of a badger. On his right hand he wore an enormous ring set with six huge diamonds; on his left hand he wore an emerald at least an inch square.

His manner was simple, unaffected and exceedingly cordial, and he spoke with far greater frankness and clarity than any other German official whom I met. We dispensed with the services of the interpreter, except for the translation by Dr. Schmidt into German of what I had to say.

The Field Marshal, after I had once more set forth the nature and purposes of my mission, reiterated the history of German foreign policy during the past seven years along exactly the same lines as those followed by Hitler and Ribbentrop.

At one point, however, Goering deviated from the account given by the two others. In discussing the causes of the war against Poland, Goering stated with the utmost precision that at the time Ribbentrop had visited Paris on December 6, 1938, to sign the non-aggression pact between France and Germany,<sup>51</sup> Bonnet, then Foreign Minister, had assured him in the name of the French Government that as a result of the conclusion of the agreements of Munich, France would renounce all interests in Eastern Europe, and specifically that France would refrain from any further influencing of Polish policy. While I had seen, of course, the recently published official declarations of the French and

<sup>51</sup> The French Yellow Book, *Diplomatic Documents (1938-1939)*, p. 35.

German Governments in regard to this question,<sup>52</sup> I had not before received so precise a statement of the alleged commitments made by Monsieur Bonnet at that time.

I consequently asked the Marshal to repeat this statement, and the Marshal turned to Dr. Schmidt who, it appeared, had been present in Paris at the interview between Monsieur Bonnet and Herr von Ribbentrop when the alleged commitments were made, and Dr. Schmidt related textually what had been said upon that occasion. The exact statement, according to him, which Monsieur Bonnet had made, was that France renounced all political interests in Eastern Europe, and specifically agreed not to influence Poland against the conclusion of an agreement with Germany whereby Danzig would return to Germany, and Germany would receive an extraterritorial corridor across the corridor from East Prussia to Greater Germany.

In his statement of German objectives, the Field Marshal was very clear. Germany had renounced forever any ambitions upon Alsace-Lorraine. Germany not only had no desire to impair the integrity of the British Empire; it believed in her own interest that the British Empire should be maintained intact. Germany must retain as an integral part of the German Reich, Austria, the Sudetenland, and all of those portions of Poland inhabited by German peoples. During the war Germany would continue her military occupation of Bohemia-Moravia and of Poland. If peace came, Germany would grant independence to the Czechs, but upon the understanding that they would remain completely demilitarized, so that never again would the Czechs or the Slovaks constitute a threat to Germany's military security in Central Europe. The Polish people who were really Poles would be installed in a free and independent Poland with access to the sea. Germany must regain her colonies. In addition to this, Germany must possess a recognized position of economic preference in Eastern Europe.

From this point the Field Marshal went on and discussed British policy, and the inability of Hitler to reach any form of understanding with England. The Field Marshal said that he knew Hitler so well that he realized that, as a result of so many years of failure in this regard, Hitler had now hardened, and that he doubted whether Hitler could bring himself to believe that there was any way of destroying the British will to destroy Germany, except through military victory. He recounted to me his own conversation with Lord Halifax when the latter visited Germany two years ago. He told me he had warned him time and again not to encourage Poland and Czechoslovakia to refuse to reach a reasonable and pacific understanding with Germany. He told him that if England persisted in this course, war was inevitable, and that there was no justifiable need of war.

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<sup>52</sup> The French Yellow Book, pp. 36-38.



Both the problem of the German minorities in Czechoslovakia, and the Czechoslovak military threat to the military security of Germany, as well as the problem of Danzig and the Corridor in relation to Poland, could have been settled readily if England and France had not refused to permit such a settlement.

The Field Marshal himself had never believed that there was any possible justification for war, and he had done everything within his power to avert it, but England and France had persisted in bringing it about.

Now, the situation from the military standpoint, was this: Germany's air force was supreme and would remain supreme. Her military strength was far greater in proportion to the strength of the Allies than it had been in 1914. Today Germany had "all the trumps in her hands." In 1914 Germany had been attacked on all fronts. Today, Russia and Italy were friendly, and the Balkans were neutral. The British blockade had already proved ineffective, and every day that passed made it easier for Germany to procure the raw materials which she required from the East and from the South. He could assure me that the stocks and supplies on hand in Germany were more than sufficient to meet every requirement, and I might be interested to know that the Germans were now even manufacturing butter and other fats in very great quantities from coal. While the Marshal believed that the war would be short, and that a German victory would soon be attained, nevertheless, if the war were prolonged five or ten years, Germany would strengthen and consolidate her position with every month that passed.

I stated that it seemed to me that no matter who would win such a war, the devastation and loss of life, and the destruction of economic resources, would inevitably be so vast as to result in the early destruction of much of what modern civilization had built up. I said that in that regard the American people were directly concerned. I said that we in the United States now realized that the repercussions from such a war would affect us profoundly in many ways, and particularly because of our realization that in a world where war reigned supreme, where the rule of force replaced the rule of reason, security for all peoples, no matter how remote they might be from the scene of hostilities, was inevitably undermined. If a war of devastation broke out, the vital interests of all neutral peoples, no matter how much they were determined to keep out of the war, would correspondingly be affected.

The Field Marshal here interrupted to say that he did not see how the American people could feel that their vital interests were affected through war in Europe. He said, "It is needless for me to say to you that Germany has no ambitions of any kind other than those I have

indicated to you, and least of all any ambitions which could affect the Western Hemisphere."

I replied that the Field Marshal must remember that while the American people today were overwhelmingly determined not to be drawn into the war, and that it was the consistent policy of the Government of the United States to keep the American people from being drawn into war, nevertheless, he would also remember that in 1916 President Wilson had been re-elected on a platform which amounted to "he has kept us out of war"; the Republican candidate Mr. Hughes, set forth in his platform that he, if elected, would keep the American people out of war; and yet not six months after the election in November 1916, the American people overwhelmingly supported our entrance into the war. I said it must never be forgotten that the American people are quick to act when they believe that their vital interests are at stake.

I discussed at some length with the Field Marshal the conversations which my Government had recently undertaken with the neutral powers in order to ascertain whether it was possible to find an agreement in principle upon the problems of the limitation and reduction of armaments and of a sound international trade policy. I said to the Field Marshal that I had brought with me a brief memorandum setting forth the views of my Government on the latter subject. The memorandum was read to him. The Field Marshal immediately stated that he was entirely in accord with every word contained in the memorandum, and that the German Government, at the time of any peace negotiations, would whole-heartedly cooperate in restoring to the countries of the world such a policy as that indicated. He stated that there was no country on earth that would stand to gain more than Germany by the adoption of such an international trade policy. He said that at the first appropriate opportunity he himself, in a public speech, would indicate Germany's intention to cooperate towards that end.

Insofar as the question of the limitation and reduction of armaments is concerned, Goering made to me very much the same statement as that made to me by Hitler the day before. He said that the armament race was ruining the economy of the entire world, and that no people could stand the strain much longer. He said that time and time again the German Government had offered in all sincerity to participate in any reasonable plan for disarmament, and time and time again her offers had been rejected. If peace came, Germany would enter into any practical plan which would make a real reduction of armaments possible.

Goering reverted to the British war objectives. He said that he was completely convinced that the British and French Governments were determined to destroy the German Régime, to subjugate the Ger-

man people, and to split Germany into small units under military control. He said, "The English say that that is the way to get a lasting peace, because early in the 19th century, when Germany was a collection of small independent states, with an infinity of customs barriers, the Germans were only a race of musicians and poets. But they have never made a greater mistake. If they succeeded today in carrying out that plan, they would find, not a race of musicians and poets, but a horde of Bolsheviks and Communists."

At the end of our interview the Field Marshal said to me very simply, but with a great deal of feeling, "My Government is grateful to your Government for your mission. I fear that when you visit Paris and London you will realize that there is no hope for peace. You will there learn what I now know, and that is that the British and French Governments are determined to destroy Germany, and that no peace, except on that basis, will be considered by them. If there is any way of averting the war which I believe is inevitable, your Government will have accomplished the greatest thing which human beings could desire. From the bottom of my heart I wish you success."

Before I left Karinhall to return to Berlin, the Field Marshal escorted me through all the miles of rooms in the first floor of his house.

I have never seen so incredibly ugly a building. The walls are lined with paintings, some of them superb examples by old Italian and German masters, placed side by side with daubs by modern German painters. Many of the halls are filled with glass cases, in which are placed gold gifts that have been presented to the Field Marshal during recent years. Goering told me that he personally had arranged the placing of every object in the house.

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BERLIN, March 3, 1940.

I had an interview with Dr. Schacht<sup>53</sup> at the private house of Mr. Kirk upon my return to Berlin from my interview with Field Marshal Goering.

Dr. Schacht told me that he was grateful for my having requested the Foreign Office to arrange this interview with him, since, if I had not taken the step in that way, it would have been impossible for him to see me. He had taken the precaution, he said, to call the day before upon Hitler, whom he had not seen for many months, to ask whether he had Hitler's permission to talk with me. He said that Hitler had given him permission, but with the understanding that Dr. Schacht was to return to see Hitler the day following my departure, in order to relate to him the topics discussed in our conversation.

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<sup>53</sup> Hjalmar Schacht, Minister without Portfolio; President of the Reichsbank until January 20, 1939.

Dr. Schacht said: "I cannot write a letter, I cannot have a conversation, I cannot telephone, I cannot move, without its being known."

Then, leaning over and talking in a whisper, he said, "If what I am going to tell you now is known, I will be dead within a week." He gave me to understand that a movement was under way, headed by leading generals, to supplant the Hitler régime. He said that the one obstacle which stood in the path of the accomplishment of this objective was the lack of assurance on the part of these generals that, if such a movement took place, the Allies would give positive guarantees to Germany that Germany would be permitted to regain her rightful place in the world, and that Germany would not be treated as she had been in 1918. If such a guarantee as this could be obtained, he said, the movement would be pushed to a successful conclusion.

Dr. Schacht said that he was unable to mention any names and that he felt sure I would understand the reasons therefor. He said that he had been wanting to leave Germany, in order thus more readily to further this conspiracy, and that he was going to try to persuade Hitler, in his next conversation with him, to send him as Financial Adviser to the Embassy in Washington, or to permit him at least to go to Rome for the purpose of giving a series of lectures at the Royal Academy of Italy. He asked me if I could help him to secure an invitation from the Royal Academy in Rome for such a series of lectures.

I said that I feared it would be very difficult for me to intervene in such a delicate matter as this, but that it seemed to me that if he could persuade Hitler to let him go as Financial Adviser to the Embassy in Washington, he would not have to consider the trip to Rome of which he spoke.

Dr. Schacht said that another possibility was for him to be invited by some leading American university to give a series of lectures in the United States.

He wanted to know whether it would be possible for him to maintain some form of contact with me after my departure from Berlin. I told him that I would be glad to receive any message that he might care to send to me, and that if he would communicate such messages as he might have in mind orally to Mr. Heath, Secretary of the American Embassy, the latter would see that they were conveyed to me safely. Dr. Schacht said that every cable sent by the American Embassy in Berlin was immediately read by the German Foreign Office. I said that I was fully aware of that fact, and that we had various ways in which confidential messages could be transmitted to me from Berlin without their having to go by cable.

I asked Dr. Schacht whether he believed such a movement as that to which he had referred could successfully take place if an offensive

were undertaken either by Germany or by the Allies. His reply was that if an offensive were undertaken, it would make it much more difficult, but that he believed the individuals sponsoring the movement were in such a position as to prevent the offensive from being undertaken by Germany, and that they would, in any event, be able to delay it for a considerable period.

Dr. Schacht said it would take a few months perhaps, even if no offensive took place, before the conspirators would be ready to take action.

Dr. Schacht referred to Hitler as the "greatest liar of all time", and as a genius, but an amoral, a criminal, genius. He said with much satisfaction that he himself was the only man who had ever dared tell him the truth.

Dr. Schacht further said that the atrocities being committed in Poland were so far worse than what was imagined, as to beggar description. People in Germany were only now beginning to know about them, and the reaction was intense.

At the end of our talk Dr. Schacht turned to me and asked very earnestly, "What do you think of me? Do you think I'm a 'terrible' person for working against my Government, when I'm a Minister in it?" I limited myself to replying that his reputation as a great financial and economic expert was world-wide, and that I could of course not undertake to question any course which he might determine to lay down for himself.

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PARIS, March 7, 1940.

I was received by President Lebrun at the Elysée Palace at 4 o'clock on the afternoon of March 7. The American Chargé d'Affaires accompanied me, as he did to all my interviews with the members of the French Government at my particular request.

President Lebrun greeted me with the utmost cordiality, and I outlined to him the nature of my mission and emphasized the confidential character of any views he might care to give me.

The President read to me the text of the message which he had addressed in November to the Queen of the Netherlands and the King of the Belgians<sup>54</sup> indicating the nature of the peace which the French Government regarded as being indispensable. He emphasized the words "a durable and just peace" and the insistence of France that no peace could be made unless France obtained thereby complete guarantees of security for the future.

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<sup>54</sup> See telegram No. 2330, November 10, 1939, 8 p. m., from the Ambassador in the United Kingdom, *Foreign Relations*, 1939, vol. I, p. 530.

I said to the President that the President of the United States had especially charged me to make it clear that the Government of the United States was not interested in the possibility of any temporary or precarious peace, but solely in the possibility which might today exist of finding the basis for a peace based on justice and security. I said that in this regard the views of my Government corresponded very exactly to the views already enunciated by the French Government, although I desired to make it clear that at this stage my Government had no suggestions or proposals to offer.

President Lebrun then launched into an historic dissertation covering the sixty-nine years of his life. He spoke of his having been born in a French province adjacent to the German border, and of his earliest recollections being memories of German officers and troops occupying that portion of France. The gist of the argument was the argument which has been so frequently set forth, and which is today being so frequently set forth—and with so much reason—by French statesmen, namely that the oldest generation of Frenchmen living today has seen three wars involving France, brought about as the result of German policy, and that it is the vital need of France to assure herself that at least one generation of Frenchmen can be born to live a normal span of life, and die, without having seen their country involved in war as the result of German aggression.

There was nothing in the slightest degree significant in any of the details mentioned by the President, and his memory is evidently failing rapidly, because it seemed to be impossible for him to remember with any accuracy names or dates, or even facts.

At the end of our interview he asked me to convey his most friendly personal greetings to the President; he spoke of the deep appreciation of his wife for the courtesies shown her when she visited the United States some years ago, and of his great regret that he himself would be unable to visit the United States this coming summer as he had planned. He said that he had done his utmost to prevent his own re-election to the Presidency, but that, in view of the critical situation in Europe, he had been forced to accede to the insistent demand of the French political leaders for his re-election. He then took me upon a tour of the Elysée Palace—being absolutely unable to remember the name of the subjects of any of the portraits which he pointed out to me—and we then spent some ten minutes before the photographers.

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PARIS, March 7, 1940.

As soon as I left the Elysée Palace I proceeded immediately to the Ministry of National Defense, where I was received at once by Prime Minister Daladier. My conversation with M. Daladier lasted just short of two hours and was exceedingly frank and entirely informal.

The Prime Minister first reminded me of a conversation I had had with him in the critical days of September 1938, and of all of the events which had taken place since that time.

M. Daladier desired me to express to the President the undying gratitude of himself personally, and of the French people, for the unfailingly sympathetic and understanding attitude taken by the President of the United States, and of their tremendous appreciation of the leadership displayed by the President which had resulted in the revision of the neutrality legislation of the United States. More than that, M. Daladier wanted me to say to the President that the repeated efforts of the President to prevent the outbreak of war, and to bring about that kind of a just settlement of European controversies which would make possible a just and permanent peace, involving security for all the nations of Europe, had, in the opinion of the French Government, been of the utmost value in bringing to the minds of men and women in Europe the moral issues involved.

I made it very clear to M. Daladier that my Government had at this juncture no proposals to proffer, much less any commitments to offer, but that the President had sent me to Europe in order to ascertain whether there was still any hope that a basis for the negotiation of a peace of the right kind could be found.

I said that in the few days I had been in Europe I had reached the conclusion that if an offensive were undertaken this Spring, and if a so-called "real war" broke out, there would not be the slightest possibility for some time to come of any peace through negotiation. I said I believed that the kind of war which would be waged would be such as not only to result in the destruction of the material resources of the nations involved, but also to result in the unloosing of human passions to such a degree as to bring with it a breakdown of most of the spiritual, social, and economic factors in the fabric of our modern civilization. It was clear to the Prime Minister, I said, that the Government of the United States realized that such a state of affairs as that which I had mentioned would inevitably have most intimate repercussions upon the social, political, financial and economic life of all of the neutral Powers, and particularly of the United States.

I said that I would be particularly grateful for the views which M. Daladier might express to me as to the possibilities for the negotiation now of a just and lasting peace, and that the views which he would give me would be entirely confidential and solely for communication to the President and Secretary Hull.

I said that he would recognize that for this very reason I was not in a position to comment upon, or to disclose, any of the views which had been communicated to me in Rome or in Berlin, but that I felt

sure that I was violating no confidence when I said to him that I gained the very definite impression from my conversations with the Duce that the latter believed that there was still time for the establishment of such a peace, and that the Duce himself was disposed to do what he could to further that objective.

We then spoke for some moments upon the subject of Italian policy and the history of Franco-Italian relations since the Sanctions controversy of 1935.<sup>55</sup> M. Daladier expressed the very positive belief that both British and French policy at that time had been unrealistic and in the highest degree unwise.

He said that in 1935 French policy towards Italy had been neither one thing nor the other. It had neither prevented the Italian Government from obtaining the raw materials it required in order to carry on successfully its war in Abyssinia, nor had it made possible the continuation of really friendly relations with Italy. Publicly France had said to Mussolini that Sanctions would be imposed for high moral reasons; privately France had said to Mussolini: "All of this is just for public consumption, and we will really let you get the oil and other supplies that you need." The result naturally had been to throw Italy into the arms of Germany, and M. Daladier expressed the very positive conviction that the mistake made by Great Britain and France in 1935 had been the direct cause of Mussolini's supporting the occupation by Hitler of the Rhineland, and acquiescing in the seizure of Austria. If from 1935 to 1938 the French and British had reached a realistic understanding with Mussolini, the calamities of the moment would in all likelihood have been prevented.

M. Daladier stated that he was entirely willing to concede to Mussolini the port of Djibouti, the French railroad in Abyssinia, and fair representation in the Suez Canal. He said that he had no objection whatever towards granting Italy the rights for her nationals in Tunisia which she had demanded, but that it was his own observation, after his recent visit to Tunis, that the 100,000 Italians living there were strongly anti-Fascist and not in the least desirous of obtaining the special rights demanded by the Italian Government.

On none of these points, he said, would there be the slightest difficulty with France; the real difficulty he thought was an adjustment between Italy and Great Britain. Mussolini was constantly complaining that Italy was "the prisoner of the Mediterranean", and that no Great Power could continue to agree to having British police at Gibraltar blocking one end of the Mediterranean, and the British and the French blocking her at Suez at the other end, and that furthermore the British fortifications at Malta and the French fortifications at Tunis constituted an ever-present threat to Italian security.

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<sup>55</sup> See *Foreign Relations*, 1935, vol. 1, pp. 662 ff.



M. Daladier trusted that the British would take a reasonable point of view with regard to these problems, although he could not concede that the Italian contention was in reality justified. He said that certainly the British fortification of Gibraltar and Malta was of no real danger to Italian security under modern conditions of warfare, and that he had the belief in the back of his own mind that Mussolini's ultimate objectives were territorial acquisitions by Italy in Northern Africa, primarily in Tunis at the expense of France, and that the limited objectives now stated by Italy were only a part of the whole picture.

He said that a year and a half ago he had been fully prepared to reach an immediate settlement with Italy, but that just at that juncture the Italian people had been deliberately stirred up to make public demands for Corsica, Nice, et cetera, in addition to the demands which France was prepared to concede, and that under those conditions no French Government could have survived politically if it had attempted to reach an agreement with Italy. During recent months he said the attitude of the Italian Government had been reasonable and moderate. The French economic arrangement with Italy was in general working out well, and none of the economic difficulties which had arisen between the British and Italians had so far arisen in the case of France and Italy.

I took occasion at this point to say that in all of my conversations in Rome I had never heard one word said by the Italian authorities which was in the slightest degree in the nature of any recrimination against France, and that my own observation had led me to the conclusion that whatever antagonism to France might have existed last year, there was no overt sign of such antagonism at the present moment.

I stated that it seemed to me that the Italian Government was now in a position where from the standpoint of the possibility of peace it occupied a singularly strategic place. I had gained the impression that the Italian Government believed that if a "real war" broke out its own position would become increasingly precarious with every week that passed. Its economic situation would become prejudiced because of the greatly increased difficulties under such conditions of obtaining the raw materials, such as coal, which were indispensable to its national economy. The military pressure which would undoubtedly be brought to bear upon Italy from one side or the other, or from both, would result in serious disquiet on the part of the Italian people, and it was therefore my judgment that Italy desired to do what she could to further peace, although of course always taking it for granted that in the negotiation of any agreement which might result in peace Italy would be out to get for herself everything that could be obtained.

M. Daladier then went on to a discussion of French peace objectives. He said that obviously neither France nor England could agree, from the political standpoint, to any peace which did not provide for the restoration of an independent Poland and for the independence of the Czech people. He said that in his own judgment there was every reason why the really German peoples of Central Europe should live under German rule, provided they so desired. The City of Danzig was clearly a German city, and it was equally obvious that the Germans of the Sudetenland or of Western Poland should be afforded the opportunity of uniting with the Reich if they so desired. That, he said, had been his point of view at the time of the Munich Agreement.

But he emphasized that he did not believe at the time of Munich, and he did not believe now, that this one factor—the unity of the German peoples of Central Europe—was what the German people really desired, much less what their present leaders desired. He repeated to me how Hitler had said personally to him at Munich that the Czechs were an inferior people, and that Germany would never consent to defile the purity of the German race by incorporating Bohemia and Moravia in Greater Germany, and now of course Hitler had proved that the assurances given in that sense had been lies, knowingly uttered. He believed that the German Government had been following very intelligently a policy of ultimate domination of Europe and of the Near East. He was by no means sure that the ultimate ambitions did not go further. In any event, he said, the point had been reached where France could no longer submit to the kind of experience to which the present German regime was forcing Europe to submit, and France consequently must fight until she had gained actual security for herself.

He knew thoroughly well that the assurances continually uttered by Hitler, that he had forever renounced any aspirations upon Alsace-Lorraine, were as untruthful as the assurances he had earlier given with regard to Czechoslovakia, since he had absolute evidence that German propaganda agents long before the outbreak of war had been attempting to create the same kind of emotional stir among the German-speaking peoples in Alsace as that which had been created by German agents in 1938 in the Sudetenland. He said that he even had documents showing that these German agents were instructed to follow exactly the same lines as those followed by Henlein<sup>56</sup> in the Sudetenland.

At this stage I interrupted to ask, with reference to the Prime Minister's statement that he believed that the German peoples of Central

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<sup>56</sup> Konrad Henlein, founder of the Sudeten German Party; appointed Reich Commissioner for Sudeten German territories in October 1938 and *gauleiter* in May 1939.

Europe had a right to unite, what his view might be with regard to the attitude of the Austrian people, so far as continued amalgamation with the German Reich was concerned. I told him that I had been frequently told that the majority of the Austrian people preferred continued amalgamation with the Reich to the kind of national semi-starvation which they had undergone during the twenty years following 1919. M. Daladier replied that his own judgment was that if a fair plebiscite was held in Austria an overwhelming majority would indicate their desire to separate from the Reich, and possibly to amalgamate with some other country, such as Hungary, but that, from the standpoint of French policy, with regard to any possible peace basis, France would agree to a continued domination by Germany of Austria, if a really impartial plebiscite showed that the Austrian people so desired.

The Prime Minister made it very clear to me that he did not believe that political or territorial adjustment would create any insuperable difficulty in reaching peace. He made it equally clear that whatever he might say in public, he would not refuse to deal with the present German regime, but always upon one fundamental and essential basis, namely that France should thereby obtain actual practical, physical security, which would make it impossible for her again to find herself involved in war with Germany. I asked him what his views might be with regard to the machinery that might be created—machinery of an international character—that could afford such actual physical security.

M. Daladier said that the real problem was that the military forces of the opposing Powers were in some ways equivalent. Clearly disarmament was the only solution; and yet how could any actual step towards disarmament be undertaken by France or by England unless they were confident that Germany and Italy were in reality disarming at the same time? How could France have any confidence in any disarmament which Germany might allege she was undertaking, in view of the experience France had had during the post-War years, and especially during the latter portion of that period? (He referred to the period before Germany publicly announced that she was rearming.) The French military mission in Germany under General Nollet had been perfectly well aware that every time stocks of German armaments were destroyed, equivalent or greater stocks were being constructed secretly in other parts of Germany. He said it would seem as if only the neutral Powers could insure disarmament in Europe by means of the assumption by them of the responsibility for seeing that disarmament was actually undertaken, and this in the last analysis meant the possibility of the use of force by the neutral Powers. None of the European neutral Powers had any military strength whatever,

and there was clearly only one neutral Power which had the military strength to assume such responsibility, and that was the United States.

I said that as he knew this was a field for conjecture outside of the strict limitations of my mission, but that I felt I would be remiss if I did not give him immediately my own personal feeling on this point, and that I believed I was entirely accurate in expressing the views of my own Government, and of the American people, when I said that the United States would not assume any responsibility of this character which implied as a potential obligation the utilization of American military strength in preserving the peace of Europe. I said that that determination on the part of the American people had been made clear time and again in the course of the history of American policy in the last twenty years.

On the other hand, I said, I thought that it was conceivable that if some practical plan for the gradual, progressive, reduction of armaments in Europe was agreed upon by the European Powers, and they desired to create commissions composed in part of neutral representatives in order to insure the faithful compliance with the reduction of armament agreements which might be reached, the Government of the United States in its desire to further a real and lasting peace in Europe, and in the world, might agree to the utilization of American citizens in such a capacity, but always with the clear understanding that the service of American citizens in such capacity did not involve in any sense an obligation on the part of the United States to see that the parties to such an agreement lived up to their obligations.

M. Daladier said that he thought aviation was the crux of the problem. He said that he thought it was entirely possible, as he himself had indicated in Geneva on earlier occasions, for an aviation force composed of units from the various European Powers to be set up, under some form of international authority, as a police power in Europe to insure the maintenance of peace, and the compliance by the various Powers with the commitments into which they might enter. He said he was confident that such a police force, if properly administered, would be sufficient to prevent any nation in Europe from undertaking aggressive action. He said that he could not believe that, with modern aviation being what it was, the threat which the utilization of such a police force would involve would not be sufficient to have prevented those European Powers which had pursued a policy of aggression in recent years from carrying out such acts of aggression, had such a police force existed.

He said that he further believed that a very clear distinction could be made, as President Roosevelt had indicated, between offensive and defensive categories in armaments. He said that he believed that security could be obtained by the destruction of all offensive types of

armaments and the retention by the individual nations of only those categories of armaments which were clearly defensive in nature.

We discussed the nature of the authority which might be set up under international agreement and, while it did not seem to me that he had reached any precise or detailed views with regard thereto, he made it very clear to me that his mind was open on the subject and that if practical machinery of this kind could be worked out he would favor it as the basis for French security in the future. Our conversation on this subject was premised upon the continuing mobilization of the Powers now in conflict until the first practical steps had been taken to carry out such a disarmament scheme, with progressive demobilization over a considerable period of time.

The Prime Minister then went back to his experiences at Munich and to a discussion of the personality of Hitler. He said that during the Munich meetings Hitler had been intolerant, and intolerable, for long periods during the discussions, and then would suddenly change completely and become moderate and conciliatory in his manner. He spoke with real appreciation of the efforts of Mussolini at that time, and of the fact that it had been Mussolini time and again during the Munich conferences who had brought Hitler back to a more reasonable point of view. He spoke with contempt of Ribbentrop, and with great antipathy, but of a different kind, for Goering, although he expressed the belief that the substitution of Hitler by Goering would not in any real sense change the present character of the régime in Germany.

The Prime Minister had asked me to dine with him at the Quai d'Orsay at 8:30, with three or four members of the Government, and I therefore left him at this point in our conversation since the hour for dinner had nearly arrived.

Before dinner I made a brief call of courtesy on M. Champetier de Ribes, the Under Secretary of Foreign Relations, who said nothing of interest beyond expressing his gratification that the President had designated a special representative to the Vatican,<sup>57</sup> and beyond emphasizing his own belief that this recognition by the President of the United States of the moral force of the Church was of real practical value in the present world situation.

I also spent a quarter of an hour in conversation with M. Alexis Léger, the Secretary General of the French Foreign Office. M. Léger, whose mind is typical of that kind of French mentality which is logical, and mathematically precise, and very clear, but which makes no allowances for the imponderables of human nature such as human emotion, devoted himself to a discussion of French relations with Italy. To M. Léger the fault throughout had been on the side of

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<sup>57</sup> See pp. 123 ff.

the Italians, and French policy had been correct from beginning to end. It was very clear that on this question he differed entirely from M. Daladier, and I gained the impression that the latter had complained of the results of the policy toward Italy which the French Foreign Office had been carrying on. M. Léger also informed me that the French Government had ready at Brest, waiting to sail, a number of French vessels sufficient to transport 50,000 French troops to Finland by way of Norway and Sweden, but that up to the present moment the French Government had been unable to persuade the Government of Finland to request officially the sending of this military assistance by France. M. Léger told me that the Government of Sweden had informed the French Government, and also the Government of Finland, that if these troops were sent over Swedish territory the Swedes would destroy the railroad lines so as to make it impossible for the troops to reach Finland, and that it had been this attitude on the part of Sweden, in addition to the fear on the part of Finland of German intervention on the side of Russia, which had caused the unwillingness of Finland to ask for such assistance.

The Prime Minister had me to dinner with MM. Chautemps,<sup>58</sup> Bonnet,<sup>59</sup> Léger, Champetier de Ribes, and Coulondre.<sup>60</sup> The conversation both at dinner and after dinner was of no particular significance except for the graphic details given by the Prime Minister of his expedition to Munich in September 1938 and except for the discussion of Franco-Italian relations. The Prime Minister made it very clear, and with the open assent of MM. Chautemps and Bonnet, that if a general peace settlement could be reached France would agree to sell the Abyssinian railroad to Italy, concede the Port of Djibouti to Italy, give Italy fair proportionate representation on the Board of the Suez Canal, and to give Italy the rights requested with regard to Italians resident in Tunis. My conversation with the Prime Minister in the afternoon had evidently brought relations with Italy to the forefront of his mind, since he instructed Léger in my presence and in the most categorical manner to see to it that every possible consideration was given from now on to the sensibilities of both Mussolini and Ciano, quite apart from the taking of a conciliatory attitude with regard to any negotiations that might be in progress, or which might be later undertaken, between the two Governments.

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<sup>58</sup> Camille Chautemps, Deputy Prime Minister of France and Vice President of the French Council of Ministers.

<sup>59</sup> Georges Bonnet, Minister of Justice.

<sup>60</sup> Robert Coulondre, Chief of the Cabinet of the French Minister for Foreign Affairs; the last French Ambassador to Germany before the invasion of France by Germany.

PARIS, March 8, 1940.

I first visited Senator Jeanneney, the President of the Senate. The Senator received me in his official residence overlooking the Luxembourg Gardens. He has now reached the age of seventy-seven, and he prefaced our conversation by calling my attention to the fact that the bust of Clemenceau was on the chest of drawers above his head. He said to me that Clemenceau had been the dominating influence in his life.

The Senator told me that he, like President Lebrun, came from a French province adjacent to Germany, and that his earliest recollections had to do with the German military occupation of the village where he was born. He reminded me that since that time as a result of German policy France had been plunged into two new wars, and he assured me that the sentiment of the French Senate was unanimous in favoring a continuation of the present war until Germany was defeated, and until Germany had been taught such a lesson as to make it impossible for the German people ever again to bring about a European conflagration.

It seemed to me, as I listened to the Senator, that I was hearing the voice of Clemenceau himself: "There is only one way in which to deal with a mad dog. Either kill him, or chain him with steel chains which cannot be broken."

I next visited M. Herriot, President of the Chamber of Deputies. M. Herriot spoke with the deepest admiration for the President, and with much appreciation of his visit to Washington in 1933.

He then delivered to me an address which lasted well over an hour, and which was beautifully phrased and highly emotional in character. The gist of the address was that his entire life, during the past twenty years, had been devoted to the attempt to lay the foundations for a real and lasting friendship and understanding between the German and French peoples; that time and again his efforts had failed; that time and again German statesmen like Stresemann and Marx had lied to him, and had deceived him, and that he had reached the positive conviction that the German people were themselves the cause of the present situation, and not their leaders alone. He told me that when he had visited London in 1924 in order to meet the members of the German Government who were then visiting England upon the invitation of Ramsay MacDonald, then Prime Minister, Stresemann in a secret meeting with Herriot had done his utmost to persuade the latter to enter into an alliance with Germany to the exclusion of England. Herriot said that he had rejected the proposal in no uncertain terms.

Insofar as the present situation was concerned, M. Herriot saw no solution other than a military victory by France. He told me that

the result of a "real war" would be devastating, that French economy would be in ruins for many decades to come, and that he believed that as a result of the war the social and economic structure of Europe would be completely changed. He was utterly pessimistic, completely without hope, and without an iota of any constructive suggestion or proposal with regard to the possibility of any lasting peace at this time.

In the afternoon I had separate interviews of approximately two hours each with MM. Chautemps and Bonnet. In my conversation with the former, M. Chautemps indicated an entirely receptive attitude towards the possibility of the negotiation of a peace with the present Government of Germany, provided that the political terms of such a peace agreement included the reconstitution of Poland, the independence of Bohemia and Moravia, and the independence of Austria. He insisted that the Austrian people desired their liberty and independence, and that no plebiscite was either necessary or expedient. With regard to the possibility of obtaining security for France through an international agreement for the destruction of offensive armaments, and for the maintenance of an international police power, he said that his mind was entirely open and that if some practicable plan could be devised which would give real security to France he, personally, would strongly recommend the entrance upon negotiations of that character rather than a continuation of the war.

We talked at some length upon the economic features of a lasting peace, and he assured me that his own belief was that in the interests of France herself France should adopt the liberal policy supported by the United States.

In my conversation with M. Bonnet, the latter gave me a detailed account of the history of negotiations between Germany and France since September 1938. There was nothing of any importance in his relation beyond an account of correspondence and conversations already published in the French Yellow Book. He insisted upon it that when Ribbentrop came to Paris early in December of 1938, and the question of French policy in Eastern Europe had come up for ventilation, he had never directly or indirectly given Germany any assurances that France would wash her hands with regard to the fate of Poland [as Goering in Berlin had assured me had been the case].<sup>61</sup> M. Bonnet said that the only statement he had made to Ribbentrop in that connection had been that the French Government signed the Pact of Non-aggression with Germany with the sole reservation that the Non-aggression Pact should not be construed as impairing France's obligations under her two then-existing treaties of alliance, namely those with Soviet Russia and with Poland. M. Bonnet told me that

<sup>61</sup> Brackets appear in the original.



Ribbentrop had stated in reply to the above declaration of the French Minister that the French reservation in regard to Poland could in no sense be regarded as prejudicial to Germany by the German Government, inasmuch as Germany herself then had a pact of non-aggression with Poland, and inasmuch as the German Government believed that relations between Germany and Poland would be increasingly friendly during the next four or five years. M. Bonnet said that Ribbentrop with regard to this question had lied brazenly and directly, and that in the official documents covering that period which had already been made public he had attempted to set forth the facts as they really were.

M. Bonnet spoke at some length of the situation with regard to the French Labor Unions, and assured me that Labor in France was cooperating solidly with the Government, and that in that sense the situation was far more satisfactory in France than had been the situation in 1914-18.

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PARIS, March 9, 1940.

I had an hour's interview with M. Paul Reynaud, the French Secretary of the Treasury, and afterwards had lunch with him alone in his office in the Louvre, which occupies the former bedroom of the Prince Imperial, and which overlooks the Tuilleries Gardens and the Champs Elysées.

In my judgment M. Paul Reynaud has a greater grasp of Foreign Relations, and has a keener mind, than any other member of the present French Government.

I first touched upon economic questions, and emphasized my hope that the French monopoly would continue its purchases of American tobacco, and that the French Government would continue to buy as many agricultural supplies as might be possible in the United States.

M. Reynaud told me bluntly that the situation of the French Government was fast reaching the point where it would have to utilize all of the foreign exchange it obtained in the purchase of armament constructed in the United States, and that consequently purchases of non-essentials like tobacco, et cetera, could not be undertaken on any considerable scale by the French authorities. He said that he fully realized the international significance of this decision, and the distress which would be occasioned our American producers, but that in a time of grave crisis such as this he saw no other way out of the difficulty.

I said to the Minister that as he undoubtedly knew my Government had been in contact with other neutral Governments during recent weeks, with the hope that these diplomatic interchanges might result on the part of the neutrals in a crystallization and coincidence of views with regard to the after-war problems of the limitation and reduction

of armaments, and the creation of a liberal international economic system. I said to the Minister that I had brought with me in memorandum form the outline of the views of my Government with regard to the latter problem, and that I would very gladly have him read this memorandum. The Minister read it, and expressed emphatic acquiescence in all of its details. I then said to the Minister that if the principles so laid down were supported by the French Government, I believed it would be of the utmost importance that the policy of the French Government in such regard, insofar as the post-war period is concerned, be made known to the public. He immediately adopted the suggestion, said he would dictate a few sentences expressing the adherence of the French Government to the principles so outlined, and said that he would issue a communiqué to the Press in those terms before the end of the day. This he subsequently did.

During our conversation in his office, and at lunch, the Minister discussed in an exceedingly temperate, moderate and constructive fashion the present situation, the problems created by the actions of Germany in the past three or four years, and the post-war settlements which would arise after the war.

He said that he was rightly regarded as the "hardest" man in the French Government with regard to French relations with Germany. He added that in September 1938, as I undoubtedly remembered from a conversation I had had with him at that time, he had believed that France should declare war upon Germany in order to save Czechoslovakia, and that he was convinced that if France had done so at that time, England would have been forced into the war on the side of France. Munich had been a cardinal error in French and British policy.

But that was past history. His well-known sentiments on this subject, and on the general subject of Franco-German relations, made it easier for him to follow an objective policy now.

He stated to me quite plainly that he believed the political and territorial issues now at stake could be solved without any considerable difficulty through negotiations between the Allies and Germany. He stated that the real problem was the problem of how France could obtain security and insure herself against a repetition of German aggression. He said that if a practical scheme could be devised, upon the basis of an international air force as a police power, and the abolition of all categories of offensive armament, he would support such a negotiation, believing it to be infinitely more in the interests of the French people than the continuation of the present war, with the probable economic and social havoc and ruin which would result, quite apart from the inevitable losses in life and property.

M. Paul Reynaud spoke with deep appreciation of the cooperation shown the French Treasury by the American Treasury Department.

He especially asked that I convey his gratitude to Secretary Morgenthau.

As I was leaving, M. Reynaud said that he knew that I had arranged to see M. Daladier again on Thursday, March 14, and that he hoped that I would ask M. Daladier to let him, M. Reynaud, be present at this interview. To this request I made no comment, inasmuch as I was familiar with the strained relations between M. Daladier and M. Reynaud, and because I believed that M. Daladier would probably resent any such suggestion on my part.

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PARIS, March 9, 1940.

I called upon General Sikorski and upon M. Zaleski, the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of the recently constituted Polish Government.

General Sikorski impressed me as a man of character, of integrity, and of patriotism, but as being without any particular intellectual ability. His conversation was devoted entirely to an account of the recent atrocities committed in Poland by the Germans, and to the emphatic expression of his belief that if Poland had mobilized last August forty-eight hours before she actually did, Germany would never have been able to be victorious.

M. Zaleski handed me a written memorandum containing his views as to the present European situation and as to the situation of the Polish people. There was nothing really significant in my conversation with him. I inquired about the report I had received to the effect that Colonel Beck had reached a detailed agreement with Hitler at Berchtesgaden in January 1939, covering the restoration of Danzig to Germany, and the granting of extraterritorial communications to Germany between Greater Germany and Eastern Prussia. M. Zaleski assured me that no such detailed agreement had ever been reached, but that it was true that when Beck's interview with Hitler at that time terminated, Beck had said to Hitler that he believed the solution of this problem would not create any real difficulty between the Polish and German Governments.

M. Zaleski seemed profoundly pessimistic with regard to the present situation in Europe, and appeared to share none of General Sikorski's optimism as to the eventual victory of the Allied armies.

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LONDON, March 11, 1940.

The Ambassador<sup>62</sup> accompanied me at 3:30 p. m. to the Foreign Office, where I was received immediately by Lord Halifax.

<sup>62</sup> Joseph P. Kennedy.

Lord Halifax is exactly like his photographs: exceedingly tall, gangling, and with a rather inchoate face. But one cannot be with him for more than a few minutes before one is impressed with his innate sincerity, with the strength of his determination to pursue "the right", as he sees it; with his essential "goodness". One can question the ability of his intellect to cope with the more devious processes of other minds, or the breadth of his insight into the problems of the present world situation; but not, I think, his quality of "character".

The conversation began with very few preliminaries. I outlined to the Foreign Secretary the scope of my instructions, and made it particularly clear that I was not carrying with me any proposal, and that all that I was looking for on behalf of the President was the possibility at this juncture of the establishment of any real and lasting peace.

Lord Halifax reviewed the history of the past year and a half since Munich. He related in great detail the efforts of Mr. Chamberlain and of himself to adopt towards Germany a policy of conciliatory justice, with recognition by Great Britain of the legitimate right of Germany to economic benefits in Central and Eastern Europe, and with full willingness to concede that Germans under other jurisdictions in Central Europe should, if they so desired, be afforded the opportunity of living under the German Reich. He reminded me that every step taken by Great Britain in that direction has resulted not only in new and more far-reaching demands by Hitler, but also, what was far more intolerable, in the utter disregard by Hitler of the solemn agreements into which he had entered. He said that no international society in which powerful nations went back on their pledged word was a society which could long survive, unless one were willing to admit that physical force should be the determining factor in modern civilization—that, the British Government, he said, and likewise the United States Government, he felt sure, could not concede.

He gave me a very careful account of the statements made by the British Government to Hitler in August, 1939, to convince me that Chamberlain had made it completely clear to Hitler that the British were willing to favor a negotiation between Poland and Germany of the Danzig and German minority issues, but that if Germany invaded Poland Great Britain would fight. Whatever Ribbentrop may have told Hitler, Lord Halifax said, Hitler must have known beyond the shadow of a doubt that German invasion of Poland meant a general European War.

Lord Halifax mentioned his own journeys to Germany in recent years, and his conferences with Hitler and with Goering in the hope that personal contacts and explanations might help to solve the problem.

In summary, his conviction was, he said, that no lasting peace could be made in Europe so long as the Nazi régime dominated Germany,

and controlled German policy. Peace could not be made except on the basis of confidence, and what confidence could be placed in the pledged word of a Government that was pursuing a policy of open and brutal aggression, and that had repeatedly and openly violated its solemn contractual obligations?

I said that it seemed to me that the issue he raised was necessarily a fundamental issue, but that it occurred to me that there were other vital and basic issues to be explored in the present situation as well. I said that it seemed to me that the question Lord Halifax had raised had to do squarely with the question of security, but that under existing conditions I wondered whether it would be possible for any Government, or any people, to believe that the millennium had come and place complete confidence in the good faith of even a completely new government of Germany, or for that matter, of many other governments, so long as present armaments continued, and so long as every great nation had it within its power overnight to destroy civilian populations, to slaughter women and children, and to ruin industrial production. I wondered, I said, whether disarmament was not the real key to the problem, because it seemed to me that a real disarmament must tend towards the reestablishment of confidence, and towards the rebuilding of economic security which in turn always made less likely the urge towards military conquest.

At this stage the conversation ended because the King and Queen had invited the Ambassador and myself to tea at Buckingham Palace at half past four.

Lord Halifax said that the Prime Minister was expecting me at six. He said that if I preferred to see Mr. Chamberlain alone he would of course quite understand, and would not be present at the interview. I replied that, on the contrary, I particularly hoped that Lord Halifax would be present at my conference with Mr. Chamberlain.

[Here is omitted the account of a courtesy call upon the King and Queen, March 11, 1940, at 4:30 p. m., at Buckingham Palace.]

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LONDON, March 11, 1940.

The Prime Minister received the Ambassador and myself in the Cabinet Room at 10 Downing Street at 6 p. m. Lord Halifax came in shortly afterwards.

The Cabinet Room, which runs across the back of the house on the ground floor, is considerably smaller than the Cabinet Room in the White House. A green baize table almost fills it. The windows look out upon the Park.

Mr. Chamberlain was sitting alone at his place at the Cabinet table when we were shown in. He is one man who does not in the

least look like his photographs. He is spare, but gives the impression of physical strength, and he seems much younger than his 71 years. His hair is dark, except for a strand of completely white hair across his forehead. In conversation one obtains none of the "puzzled hen" effect of which one hears so much, and which photographs emphasize. The dominating features are a pair of large, very dark and piercing eyes, and a low and incisive voice.

Mr. Chamberlain read the President's letter which I at once handed him.<sup>63</sup> I said that he was already fully informed of the nature and limitations of my mission, but that I wished to say to him, as I had to Lord Halifax, that I had no suggestions nor proposals to offer. As he had seen from the President's letter, I was here to listen and not to talk, and that I would be most grateful for any information he would give me, and for any views he might care to express, for the President's knowledge, as to the possibility at this stage of any negotiation of a real and lasting peace.

Mr. Chamberlain said Lord Halifax had reported to him the talk I had had with the latter earlier in the afternoon, and that he wished me to be assured that he and the members of the Government were completely at my disposal. They would give me all the information they possessed, and he himself was now prepared to answer any questions I cared to ask him.

I commenced by saying that I had been very much impressed, when I was in Berlin, by being told by every one of the members of the German Government with whom I had spoken that Germany was fighting a war of self-preservation; that England was determined to destroy the German Reich, to make impossible the unity of the German people, to annihilate Germany as such, and to crush the present German régime. I had been told that Germany had consequently been forced into war in order to preserve her integrity. I said I would be interested to know what the real policy of Great Britain might be in that regard.

Mr. Chamberlain said that only within the past two weeks he himself in an address at Birmingham had announced on behalf of Great Britain that his Government had no desire to crush the German people nor to mutilate the German Reich; that what England was determined to do was solely to defeat a Government in Germany which was set upon a policy of cruel military conquest, which rendered insecure the position of every nation of Europe, particularly the smaller neutral powers, so that peace could be restored to Europe upon a foundation of confidence and respect for the independence and integrity of all nations, and of faith in the sanctity of the pledged word. He said that subsequently both Sir John Simon<sup>64</sup> and Mr.

<sup>63</sup> See footnote 37, p. 29.

<sup>64</sup> Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Eden<sup>65</sup> had delivered addresses of a similar character, giving like assurance to the German people that the latter's independence and integrity were not assailed by the Allied Powers.

I replied that of course I had read these addresses with the most careful attention. I added that I wondered if Mr. Chamberlain fully realized how these addresses had appeared in Germany. I asked if he had time to study the reports his Government undoubtedly received of the German press and of the German radio. I said that it had seemed to me that while I was in Berlin, and reading the German press, and listening once or twice to the German radio, as if the very addresses to which he had referred had been so interpreted to the German people as to make them believe that the very words he had intended to use in order to make clear that the fate of the German Reich and of the German people was not at stake, were a direct threat to the safety and unity of the German nation. In countries like Great Britain and the United States it was difficult to grasp how complete was the black-out in Germany of the power of the individual to comprehend what was going on in the rest of the world, and in particular what the declared and official policies of Germany's antagonists might be.

I said that I had gained the impression—perhaps erroneous, because my stay in Germany had been so short—that the German people today really believed that their own life as a nation was at stake, and that at least some of the rulers of Germany had so identified in their own minds the fate of Germany with the fate of the Nazi régime, as to give them the same conviction.

Mr. Chamberlain did not reply for a minute or two. He then said, "You are probably right. And that is a problem we here have got to think more about. But I can't think now what the solution may be. It makes more than ever clear in my own mind the truth of what your President has said, that one of the essentials to a lasting peace is freedom of information."

He then went on to say that we might take as a premise the positive assurance that England had no intention of destroying the German people, nor of impairing the integrity of the German Reich. England however could not in the first place consider the possibility of peace unless Germany was forced to restore complete independence to the Polish people, and reconstitute a free and independent "Czechia". Germany must furthermore cease to be a continuing menace to the political and economic security of the other smaller nations of Europe.

He continued by stating that Lord Halifax had given me the full details of his own efforts to maintain peace by making every possible concession to Germany during the past two years. He had been de-

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<sup>65</sup> Anthony Eden, Secretary of State for the Dominions.

ceived. He had been lied to. It was clear that Hitler did not desire a peaceful Europe founded upon a structure of justice and reason, but a Europe dominated by German Hitlerism. England had been forced into war as the last resort in order to preserve the institutions of liberty and of democracy which were threatened with extinction.

Mr. Chamberlain said flatly that so long as the present Government of Germany continued there could be no hope of any real peace. You could not envisage a peace between the great powers of Europe, when no one anywhere in the world could have any faith in the word of the Government of one of those powers. Mr. Chamberlain by this time spoke with a white-hot anger. It was very apparent that this particular issue had a deeply personal response from his individual emotions.

After a further pause, he went on to speak of his experiences at the time of Munich. He said that no Government in England could continue to receive popular support if it entered into any negotiations with the Hitler régime.

He then said that from what Lord Halifax had told him of our talk he agreed with what he understood was my own feeling that the key to the problem of today was the question of disarmament. But he said "I do not believe you can achieve real disarmament until you can reestablish confidence. You cannot obtain confidence until the German people show that they wish a real peace by changing their present government."

I said to Mr. Chamberlain that if he would forgive my apparent levity, the issue he presented reminded me a good deal of the old conundrum as to which came first, the hen or the egg. He spoke of disarmament being impossible until confidence in Europe was reestablished. I for one could not begin to see how any nation could have real confidence until disarmament had actually in great part taken place, and at least until certain types of offensive armaments had been abolished, and particularly bombing airplanes. I could not help but feel that the problem of physical and national security must be solved before the atmosphere could become propitious for the growth of that very tender plant, confidence.

Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Halifax both laughed. The former said that he was struck by what I said, and that he believed with me that the way to attack the disarmament problem, when the moment came was from the qualitative approach, rather than from the quantitative approach.

He then said "What exactly is your proposal?["]

I replied that, as I had already made very clear, I had no proposal. I said I was merely exchanging views in order to try and get as clear a knowledge as I possibly could of his point of view and that of his Government. The main issue I thought was security. I could conceive of a situation where the great powers of Europe could agree



upon a practical basis for actual and progressive disarmament. It would possibly have to envisage the control by some international commission, or commissions, of the actual destruction of agreed-upon categories of offensive armaments, and of the factories where they were manufactured, with full rights of inspection and determination. It might further perhaps include the constitution of a regional aviation police-force, divided, for reasons of practical expediency, into several units with bases in various of the smaller neutral European countries. All of this obviously implied limitation of sovereignty. I stated that this was a subject upon which I was not authorized to speak; upon which I had no expert knowledge, and upon which I consequently did not wish to dwell. And it was of course a problem which directly concerned the European powers, and in which the United States very definitely had no direct part to play. The general thoughts I had expressed were the result of conversations I had had during recent months with experts in this field, and they had come to my mind because of the Prime Minister's expressed belief that confidence must be restored before any approach could be made to disarmament. I said that I could not refrain from reminding him that between the years 1921 and 1932 there had apparently existed in Europe a very considerable measure of confidence. And yet in the field of practical disarmament not one concrete step had been taken. In the year 1933 President Roosevelt had made a very clear, and to my mind beneficial, proposal to all the nations of the world.<sup>66</sup> Again nothing had come out of it. It might perhaps be that the minds of statesmen and of military experts might more readily find the solution of the problem today when civilization hung on the edge of the abyss, than they had been capable of doing during the years when no immediate crisis was in sight.

By this time it was 7:45 and I was to be Lord Halifax's guest at dinner at 8:30 as the latter reminded the Prime Minister.

Mr. Chamberlain said that he would like to think over our conversation and talk with me again. He asked if I would come back to see him at 6 p. m. on March 13, the evening I was to dine with him and the night before I was due to leave London.

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LONDON, March 11, 1940.

I dined with Lord Halifax in his apartment at the Dorchester Hotel. He had to meet me the Marquess of Crewe, for half a century a prominent leader in the Liberal Party; Lord Snell, the leader of the Labor Party in the House of Lords; Anthony Eden, the Secretary

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<sup>66</sup> Message of President Roosevelt to various Chiefs of State, May 16, 1933, *Foreign Relations*, 1933, vol. 1, p. 143.

of State for the Dominions; Oliver Stanley, Secretary of State for War; Sir John Anderson, Minister for Civilian Defense; Sir Dudley Pound, First Sea Lord, and Sir Alexander Cadogan, Permanent Under Secretary of the Foreign Office.

At dinner Lord Halifax asked me confidentially to remember always in my conversations with the Prime Minister that Mr. Chamberlain had undergone the most harrowing human experience of which a statesman could conceive as a result of the Munich episode, and that as a result his point of view was necessarily affected in all that related to British policy towards Germany, and in particular towards the members of the present German Government.

After dinner, to my amazement, Lord Halifax conducted a seminar. He placed me opposite to him in the drawingroom, and ranged all of his guests facing me. He said that he would call upon them all so that they might freely express to me their views of the present situation, and of the possibility of the reestablishment of peace in Europe.

Lord Crewe was the first to speak. He said that he thought I should realize that feeling in England today was far more bitter towards the German people than it had been at any time during the Great War. This remark threw a good deal of consternation into some of the other guests, and Lord Halifax hurriedly interrupted to say that he thought there might be some divergence of opinion on that point, and what did Lord Crewe think about Austria. Lord Crewe then gave a very long and rambling account of how he and Count Adam Czartorynski had dined together in Paris in 1893, and of how the Count had told him that all of the Austrian Poles were more than satisfied to be under Austrian sovereignty. Lord Crewe reminded us that several Austrian Foreign Ministers had been Poles. His conclusion was that Austria should be reconstituted at the end of the war; that Bavaria and other portions of Southern Germany should be added to it, and that Poland, at least in part, should revert to Austrian jurisdiction.

The next to speak was Sir Dudley Pound, the First Sea Lord. His contribution was the assertion that the present war was the direct result of the erroneous military policy pursued by the Allies, and particularly by the United States, at the end of the Great War. He said that in 1918 the Allies should have occupied all of Germany, and, most important of all, should have razed Berlin to the ground. Now, he stated, the same mistake should not be committed again, and the present Allies should never permit themselves to be deflected from the proper course. At the conclusion of the present war, Berlin should be destroyed; Germany should be divided up into several small principalities, and the larger cities in these new entities should be occupied by British and French troops for a period of at least 50 years. That, he said will permit a new generation of Germans to come into existence before we try the experiment of letting Germany govern itself again.

Oliver Stanley then held the floor. He said he wished me to realize that the British people demanded that the German people be "taught a lesson". That could only be accomplished through a crushing military defeat imposed upon the German people, with the subsequent imposition of a peace which would make it impossible for the German people for a hundred years to have any illusion as to where the mastery in Europe lay.

The only remark I made during the evening was at this point. I asked whether Mr. Stanley felt that the defeat of Germany in 1918, and the terms of the peace then imposed had really "taught" the German people any lesson. I wondered whether an imposed peace could, by its very nature, teach any very lasting lesson. His reply was that the lesson of 1918, had hardly been a lesson at all; that Germany had not been devastated during the Great War, and that the German people had never directly suffered the effects of the war, as had the French and Belgians; and that the only kind of a lesson that would ever teach the Germans was the lesson of military might and domination on German territory.

Mr. Eden's singular—and only—addition to my information on this occasion was the very positive assertion that the real reason why Hitler had occupied Bohemia and Moravia in March, 1939, was because the authorities in Prague were still permitting foreign newspapers to be sold freely in Czechoslovak territory.

Lord Snell made a very sincere, and really moving, reference to why the Labor Party was supporting the Chamberlain cabinet in its war policy. He said that he and his colleagues in the Labor Party felt that if Hitlerism were to continue unchecked all of those human values in which they so earnestly believed—the liberty of conscience, of speech, and of information—would inevitably be destroyed; that men and women would become no better than slaves, and that for that reason, deeply opposed as they were to war, and hard as they had fought to avert it, they were supporting a Government which they would necessarily oppose on all other issues.

As the party broke up Sir John Anderson, the Minister for Civilian Defense, who had not spoken all evening, took me by the arm, and said, "Please do not for one instant believe that most of us agree with the opinions you have heard expressed tonight. I can assure you we do not."

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LONDON, March 12, 1940.

I had at 10 a. m., at the Embassy, an hour's conversation with Major Clement Attlee and Mr. Arthur Greenwood, Leader and Deputy Leader of the Labor Party in the House of Commons. . . .

Both Major Attlee and Mr. Greenwood took very much the same line as had Lord Snell the evening before—the Labor Party was supporting British participation in the war solely because of the moral values which were at stake. The Labor Party was not divided on the issue of British participation in the war as it had been in 1914. Today only a small percentage of the Party opposed British entrance into the hostilities. If any way could be found, or any plan be devised, which would give the British people real security and the independent nations of Europe positive assurance that they could live their lives in peace, and not be subject to the constant threat of aggression, the Labor Party would wholeheartedly support such a plan. The Party was not opposed to peace through negotiation with any government of Germany provided the objectives named could be attained. The continuation of the present war for any length of time, or the commencement of a war of devastation, would bring into ruins many of the social gains for which the Labor Party had striven. It would postpone any hope of economic recovery, and any chance of improving living standard. But the leaders of the Party saw no way out except the defeat of Hitler.

I was impressed with the patent sincerity of Major Attlee. But he seemed utterly discouraged and pessimistic. He had no constructive suggestion to offer.

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LONDON, March 12, 1940.

I had at the Embassy, at 11:30 [11?] a. m., an hour's conference with Sir Archibald Sinclair, leader of the Liberal Party in the House of Commons.

Sir Archibald, through his mother, is half American. His entire conversation was devoted to an analogy between the position taken by the North during the Civil War, and the position taken today with regard to Hitlerism by the British Government. He claimed that the Civil War had to be fought through to its bitter end, because the North could not afford to compromise on the two basic issues involved, Unity and Slavery, and any negotiation would necessarily have resulted in some form of compromise. Today any peace negotiation undertaken by the Allies with Germany would likewise result in compromise. There can be no compromise with Hitler. The British people have no aim of destruction of the German people. But Hitlerism must be eradicated, root and branch. This can only be accomplished through an Allied victory. Thereafter the German people, if they set up a decent Government, can once more be treated as members of the family of nations.

Sir Archibald Sinclair was clearly sincere and very earnest in the exposition of his convictions.

LONDON, March 12, 1940.

I received at the Embassy, at 12, the visit of Mr. Bruce, the Australian High Commissioner.

Mr. Bruce said that he had come to let me know that the Dominion Governments held views with regard to an eventual peace settlement, and to the policy to be followed at that time with regard to Germany, which were widely divergent from the opinions held by the majority of the members of the British Government. He was providing me with a memorandum setting forth the views of his own Government in that regard. A copy of this memorandum is attached hereto.<sup>67</sup>

Mr. Bruce asked me to convey his warmest regards to the President and to Secretary Hull.

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LONDON, March 12, 1940.

At one o'clock I lunched with Sir John Simon at 11 Downing Street.

The other guests were Lord Hankey,<sup>68</sup> Lord Chatfield, Minister of Coordination, Sir Kingsley Wood, Minister for Air, Sir Andrew Duncan, President of the Board of Trade, Sir Horace Wilson<sup>69</sup> and Sir Robert Vansittart.<sup>70</sup>

Sir John Simon discussed with me nothing beyond his own success in floating the first War Loan, which had been oversubscribed that same day. He expressed the opinion that his policy of issuing repeated War Loans in relatively small amounts, was the only sane financial policy to pursue, inasmuch as it would avoid in the future the need to refinance, or to pay off, staggering sums at any one given moment. Unlike his French colleague, M. Paul Reynaud, he made no reference to the relations existing between his own Department and the American Treasury Department.

Sir Kingsley Wood, who is a small, chirping, man, told me that British aviation production was coming along amazingly well. His greatest difficulty lay in finding enough physical space in England for the construction of airplane factories and trial airdromes. Now that production was also under way in a large scale in Canada and in Australia this handicap was largely overcome.

Sir Andrew Duncan, whose career up to recently had been removed from politics, as a large industrialist, spoke of the attitude of British labor. He expressed great satisfaction with the loyal support given by labor in the prosecution of the war. He said that this support was far more sincere and enthusiastic than in 1914-1918. He expressed

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<sup>67</sup> Not printed; this memorandum of 25 pages presented the case for a cooperative settlement based upon equality between the Allies and Germany as opposed to a peace in which Germany would be permanently deprived of all power of aggression.

<sup>68</sup> Minister without Portfolio in the British Cabinet.

<sup>69</sup> Permanent Secretary, British Treasury.

<sup>70</sup> Chief Diplomatic Adviser to the British Foreign Secretary.

great concern, however, with regard to the economic situation which would confront the United Kingdom if the war lasted for any considerable period. He hoped that some way might be found to achieve security and peace before the whole economy of Europe smashed. He expressed enthusiastic support for the liberal trade policies sponsored by Secretary Hull.

Lord Hankey, whom I had known before, told me Mr. Chamberlain had spoken with him of our talk the preceding evening. He said that I [*he?*] believed I would find I would receive some valuable information when I saw Mr. Chamberlain again the following day. I gathered that Lord Hankey and Sir Horace Wilson, who joined Lord Hankey and myself after lunch, were both striving to find some approach to the problem of security and disarmament which might offer some hope of preventing a protracted war of devastation.

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LONDON, March 12, 1940.

I called on Mr. Eden at the Dominions Office at 4 p. m. Mr. Eden was as charming and agreeable as always. He spoke with great enthusiasm of his visit to the United States, and of his two days in Washington. He spoke also of the deep impression made upon him by the President, and of his admiration for the President's foreign policy.

Mr. Eden expressed the belief that there could never be any solution of the present situation save through an allied victory, the destruction of Hitlerism, and the forcing upon the German people of a Government which would pursue policies that would not constitute a threat to the rest of Europe. In reply to my inquiry, he had no idea of how such a Government should be kept in control in Germany. He did not believe that the peace terms, when imposed, should contain provisions for either an indemnity or for reparations. Those provisions in the Versailles Treaty, he thought, had been a serious blunder.

He saw no hope of any peace negotiations at this time. He had no belief that any disarmament move could be considered until after Germany had been crushed, and taught that "war does not pay".

In brief, Mr. Eden's conviction is that nothing but war is possible until Hitlerism has been overthrown.

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LONDON, March 12, 1940.

I called on Mr. Winston Churchill at the Admiralty at 5 p. m.

As soon as the preliminary courtesies had been concluded, Mr. Churchill commenced an address which lasted exactly one hour and

fifty minutes, and during which I was never given the opportunity to say a word. It constituted a cascade of oratory, brilliant and always effective, interlarded with considerable wit. It would have impressed me more had I not already read his book "Step by Step" (of which incidentally, he gave me an autographed copy before I left) and of which his address to me constituted a rehash.

The gist of Mr. Churchill's remarks was that he was sitting in the same office in which he had sat twenty-five years before, confronted by exactly the same situation. The reason for it was that British Governments during the past twenty years had refused to follow a realistic policy towards Germany. The objectives of the German people had not changed, and would not change. These were world supremacy and military conquest; objectives which endangered the security of the United States as much as they imperilled the safety of the British Empire. He had foreseen the present crisis; time and again he had pointed out to previous British Governments the dangers they were incurring, but he had not been listened to, and now the crisis once more was upon them. There could be no solution other than outright and complete defeat of Germany; the destruction of National Socialism, and the determination in the new Peace Treaty of dispositions which would control Germany's course in the future in such a way as to give Europe, and the World, peace and security for 100 years. Austria must be reconstituted, Poland and Czechoslovakia re-created, and Central Europe made free of German hegemony. Russia, to him, offered no real menace and no real problem.

At the conclusion of the address . . . Mr. Churchill showed me the charts he had upon his desk, which showed the amount of British merchant tonnage destroyed during the war, and the manner of destruction, whether by submarine, mine, warship or airplane. According to the figures he showed me, out of a claimed total of some 18,000,000 tons of British shipping of all classes, some 770,000 tons had been sunk. The greatest percentage of losses was due to mines. Of the 770,000 tons of losses since the war, 550,000 tons were offset by new construction since the outbreak of the war, and by captured German merchant ships. The net loss consequently was about 220,000 tons.

Mr. Churchill told me that the convoy system was now functioning perfectly, and that British daily exports and imports were precisely at the normal daily level. England was furthermore daily receiving the required 1,500,000 tons of supplies by sea.

Mr. Churchill said that the German magnetic mines had been completely defeated. His naval experts had found the way both to demagnetize shipping so that it would not attract the mines, and also to attract the mines to special magnets so that they could be destroyed. He told me that ships whose hulks had been constructed south of the equator did not attract the magnetic mines.

With regard to submarines, Mr. Churchill stated the Germans were only putting out one a week. The British and French had positively destroyed forty-three since the outbreak of the war. The new invention for the pursuit of submarines—which he compared to a pack of hounds pursuing a fox—had eliminated the danger of submarines, as in any sense a serious menace to England's ability to continue her provisioning, and her export trade.

Aviation he recognized as the chief danger. But he believed the British and French could meet the danger, and over a period of a few months prove that it was mastered.

Before I left Mr. Churchill took me to the other end of the building to see the War Maps Room. In this room, which he told me represented the compendium of work being carried on in thirty other offices, large scale maps show the precise location of every merchant ship of British registry throughout the world. Every half-hour the locations are changed to bring them up to date in accordance with the latest radio bulletins of position. Every convoy is shown, as well as the position of those vessels which are either too speedy or too slow to be subject to convoy. This War Maps Room is one of the most impressive things I have seen. It is a demonstration of extraordinary efficiency, and I assume one of the reasons why British shipping losses have not been more severe.

Mr. Churchill expressed his deep regret that the President himself could not see this room, since he knew how interested he would be in the systems of protection for shipping which had been devised.

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LONDON, March 13, 1940.

With the Ambassador I called upon Mr. Lloyd George at his apartment at 10:30 A. M.

I had not seen Mr. Lloyd George for 17 years, but he has changed very little in the intervening period, although he has now reached the age of 77 years. He is alert, mentally very keen, and minutely familiar with every detail of both British domestic affairs and British Foreign Relations. The only sign of his increasing years is shown by his tendency to talk of earlier years, and his extreme loquacity.

I was with him for nearly two hours.

Mr. Lloyd George immediately referred to the present war as the most unnecessary war, the most insanelly stupid war, that had ever been forced upon England. . . .

He said that Great Britain had blundered into this war because of the egregious mistakes in policy of her recent Governments. He stated that there was no reason, from the standpoint of either Great Britain or France, why Germany should not unite under one Government the Germanic peoples of Central Europe, or why Germany should not obtain and enjoy a special economic position in Central Europe,



and, at least in part, in Southeastern Europe. If the German people were thus granted the recognition of their racial unity and of their economic security, such problems as disarmament, a possible European regional federation, and colonies, would automatically settle themselves. What was the key to the problem was the need to convince the German people that they had an equality of opportunity with the other great nations, that justice had been done them, and that they could look ahead with "confident hope" to the future. The policy of Great Britain and of France during the past years had achieved exactly the reverse.

Forgetting, apparently, his own direct responsibility for the terms of the Versailles Treaty, Mr. Lloyd George inveighed bitterly against the terms which had to do with German frontiers. He referred to the separation of East Prussia from Greater Germany by the Polish Corridor as "damnable", and spoke of the arrangement covering the institution of the Free City of Danzig—which he referred to as a completely German city—as a "criminal farce".

He spoke with particular bitterness of French policy towards Germany since 1921. All in all, it was his opinion that no policy could have been more criminally stupid than that pursued by the present Allies towards Germany during recent years.

He felt that it was not too late to remedy the mistakes, and repair the irreparable disasters which would result from a long-drawn out war of attrition, or a war of devastation. The territorial and political questions should present no real obstacles; the economic postulates for a sane world commercial and financial relationship could be established with the aid of the United States; the problem of security could then be determined through disarmament and international control of armament. If the opportunity were offered the British people now for a peace built upon these terms, the overwhelming majority of them would enthusiastically support such a peace, and he himself would publicly support it up and down the length and breadth of the land.

"Do not believe them," he said, "when they tell you that the British people want this war. I know them, and I know they do not—they want security, and if they can obtain it on the terms I have mentioned, they will demand peace."

Mr. Lloyd George spent most of the time talking of the last war, and of his Prime Ministership. He spoke of President Wilson with respect, but with no particular enthusiasm, and of French statesmen with neither respect nor enthusiasm.

Mr. Lloyd George expressed the conviction that if peace were restored as the result of an understanding of the kind he had mentioned, between Great Britain, France, Germany and Italy, Russia would once more withdraw from active participation in Western European affairs, and afford no problem of any real gravity.

LONDON, March 13, 1940.

Mr. James Maxton, leader in the House of Commons of a group of four dissident members of the Labor Party, called upon me at 3 p. m. at the Embassy.

The opinion of his group, he said, was that the present war was a criminal blunder. The negotiation of peace should be undertaken without delay, and the bases for such a negotiation should comprise complete disarmament, the establishment of an international police force, the complete pooling of colonial territories to the benefit of all peoples, and the abolition of customs barriers. Upon such a basis he believed territorial or political questions could readily be solved.

He expressed the earnest hope that President Roosevelt would lead a movement for peace. He saw no other possibility of averting a disastrous and fatal war of complete devastation.

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LONDON, March 13, 1940.

At six o'clock I called again, with the Ambassador, at 10 Downing Street upon Mr. Chamberlain. Lord Halifax was with him.

Mr. Chamberlain handed me a personal letter which he had addressed to the President, and which he asked me to give him.<sup>71</sup>

Mr. Chamberlain said that he had been very much impressed by what I had said to him with regard to the ignorance of the German people of what was going on in the rest of the world, and of what the true peace objectives of the Allies really were; and of the apparent belief of Germany's rulers and of the probable feeling of the German people themselves that the life of the German Reich and of the German people themselves was at stake, and that the Germans were consequently fighting a war of self-preservation.

He said that he wished to make it definitely clear to me that he did not desire, as a war objective, either to destroy the German Reich or to subject [*subjugate?*] the German people. He had discussed this issue at length with Lord Halifax. He realized fully that if a war of terrorism were now launched a spirit of hate and of vengeance would

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<sup>71</sup> Mr. Chamberlain's letter, dated March 13, 1940 (file No. 811.001 Roosevelt, F. D./6648½), reads as follows:

"MY DEAR ROOSEVELT: Your very kind letter of the 14th ult. was duly handed to me by Sumner Welles, whom it was a great pleasure to me to meet. We have had two frank and intimate talks and he knows exactly how the situation appears to me.

"I sincerely hope that his mission may have fruitful results, if not immediately, yet in time to avert the worst catastrophe.

"Meanwhile may I say how deeply I admire the courage and humanity with which you are striving to grapple with this last and culminating effort to establish the rule of force.

"Yours sincerely,

NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN"

be engendered which would make it well-nigh impossible, when the Allies won, to lay the bases for a just and durable peace. He considered it in the highest degree important therefore that this policy of justice towards the German people should be laid down in such a manner that it could not be deviated from in the future. He and Lord Halifax felt that public speeches were not sufficient. They had reached the conclusion that there could be but one satisfactory solution, and that was for him as Prime Minister to make a public communication to the President of the United States pledging Great Britain as having no designs upon the safety or welfare of the German people, nor of having any intention of destroying the German Reich. A commitment of this character he said would involve no obligations nor responsibilities upon the United States; it would be merely a unilateral declaration of policy by Great Britain. But since it would be made officially by the British Prime Minister to the President of the United States it would unquestionably have so binding an effect upon governments in England which might succeed his, as to make it impossible for them to deviate from the course he so charted. He believed that this public declaration, made by the British Government to the President of the United States, could not but be known throughout Germany within a short time, and would be regarded by the German people as a guarantee which would have a binding character. He asked me what my own opinion might be.

I replied that I would immediately upon my return to Washington communicate his suggestion to the President for his decision, and that I assumed the latter would wish to see the text of any suggested declaration before reaching any final opinion.

Mr. Chamberlain then said that he had thought a great deal, and had spoken with a few of his colleagues, since our last conversation. He did not believe that a miracle would occur, and that Germany would enter into any arrangement which would offer any real guarantee of security to the Allies, so long as Hitler or his group remained in control of Germany. However, if such a miracle did occur, and there seemed any practicable plan of security offered, he would not discard such an opportunity of striving for a real and lasting peace merely because the present Nazi régime remained in power.

But Hitler must give an "earnest" of his sincerity. Such an "earnest" might well be the evacuation of German-occupied Poland, and of Bohemia and Moravia. Mr. Chamberlain would not be in any sense intransigent with regard to the ultimate frontiers of Poland, nor with regard to the boundaries of a new Czech state. Slovakia was now divorced from "Czechia", and he saw no reason to change that situation. He believed it would make for a lasting peace to arrange for the inclusion of Danzig and of the really German minorities of the old Poland within the new German Reich. With regard to Austria he was prepared to accept the principle of self-determination through a free and

impartial plebiscite. But the "earnest", in the form of military evacuation, pending final agreement, of German-occupied Poland and Bohemia-Moravia, he considered indispensable if any negotiations were to be undertaken with the Hitler régime. In no other way could he retain the support of British public opinion.

Under such conditions he saw no insuperable obstacle with regard to political and territorial problems as a basis for peace.

At this point Lord Halifax interjected to say that he thought a further indispensable basis for peace negotiations should be a prior agreement in principle upon "freedom of information", so that all peoples concerned would know from the moment peace talks were seriously commenced exactly what the true facts involved in the negotiations might be. To this Chamberlain agreed.

At the same time it should be understood that an agreement should be sought, Mr. Chamberlain went on, for an economic international adjustment to meet the objectives he had mentioned in a recent address, and which were more fully outlined in the memorandum I had handed the French Minister of Finance.

With regard to the Colonial problem the British Government had it in mind to propose the creation of a broad colonial belt through Africa running roughly from northern Tanganyika on the East to the British Gold Coast Colony on the West and as far south as Rhodesia and the Union of South Africa, to be open to the emigration, trade and investment of all nations on the most-favored-nation basis. In this manner Germany could obtain all the raw materials she desired and provide for all the emigration she wished. There could under such a system be no further basis for the German complaint of discrimination in the colonial field.

The chief problem remained the question of security and disarmament, as well as the question of any international police force of a regional character. Mr. Chamberlain believed these problems could be solved, but he had not discovered the solution. He wondered if I realized how intimately involved in the whole problem of armament was the question of the manufacture of machine tools. A nation that had an ample number of factories manufacturing machine tools could arm far more rapidly than a nation which did not possess such factories. He felt there was an infinity of such contingent problems which would have to be solved before any workable plan for the control of disarmament could be devised. The question of any effective control of an international aviation police force was likewise a very knotty problem to resolve.

He hoped that no public suggestion of any peace steps would be made until these difficulties had been fully threshed out. I said that I felt warranted in saying that no steps would be taken by my Government in any form unless the President believed that a practicable

basis for a real and lasting peace had been found. It did not seem to me possible that it could be thought that such a basis existed, unless the Governments most directly concerned agreed that such a basis existed.

Mr. Chamberlain then spoke of the Finnish situation and of his inability to find any way to persuade Sweden to permit the passage of British and French troops or supplies through Sweden. He feared Finland was doomed to at least a part of the fate suffered by Czechoslovakia.

He spoke with appreciation of the efforts of Mussolini to bring about a reasonable understanding at Munich, and with equal appreciation of the attempt of both Mussolini and Ciano to prevent Hitler from invading Poland last August. He was determined to do everything possible to prevent friction and misunderstanding between Italy and Great Britain, and it was for that reason that he had prevented a crisis from arising a few days before with regard to the stoppage by the British Blockade authorities of Italian colliers laden with coal from Germany destined for Italian consumption. He believed that England could arrange to let Italy have 4,000,000 tons of British coal yearly which Italy could arrange to pay for.

At this point the conference ended since it was half past seven and Mr. Chamberlain had invited me to dine with him at 8:30.

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LONDON, March 13, 1940.

I dined with Mr. Chamberlain at 10 Downing Street. The Ambassador and Pierrepont Moffat went with me. The other guests were Sir Samuel Hoare, Home Secretary, Mr. Winston Churchill, Lord Newell,<sup>72</sup> Major Clement Attlee, Sir Archibald Sinclair, and Mr. R. A. Butler, Parliamentary Undersecretary of the Foreign Office, understood to be Mr. Chamberlain's particular protégé.

I sat between Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Churchill. I spoke with the latter about the security zone about the American Republics,<sup>73</sup> and of my regret that the British Government had not adopted the wise course of agreeing to it in principle, with whatever reservations they considered indispensable, provided Germany likewise agreed to respect the Zone. Mr. Churchill said he agreed; that he had not known of his Government's reply, and that there were "too damned many lawyers in the Foreign Office". I said to Mr. Chamberlain and to Mr. Churchill that I believed they would find that the Ameri-

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<sup>72</sup> Presumably Sir Cyril Newall, Chief of the Air Staff of the Royal Air Force and Air Chief Marshal.

<sup>73</sup> For correspondence regarding concern of the Inter-American Neutrality Committee over the security zone, see vol. v, section under General entitled "The Inter-American Neutrality Committee"; see also *Foreign Relations*, 1939, vol. v, pp. 15 ff., for correspondence relating to the Declaration of Panama.

can Republics were becoming more and more determined that the Zone was here to stay, and I hoped that a way could be found to prevent any misunderstandings with regard thereto.

Mr. Chamberlain was a particularly agreeable host. We talked of his frequent visits to the Endicott family at Danvers, Massachusetts, whom I had also often visited; of his interest in forestry, and of his efforts to rejuvenate the official residence of the Prime Minister at Chequers. He was greatly pleased when I told him of my great admiration as a young man for his father. He spoke to me with deep emotion of the latter.

After dinner I talked, at Mr. Chamberlain's particular request, with Sir Samuel Hoare.

The latter gave me, in diluted form, the same views expressed to me that afternoon by the Prime Minister. He had nothing very significant, and nothing new, to say.

Before I left Mr. Chamberlain took me alone into the room where he keeps the souvenirs of his father. He wished me particularly to see an unfinished bust of Joseph Chamberlain which he told me was the only really good likeness ever done of him. As I was leaving he said, "I hope your mission will make it possible for the President to succeed in his desire to avert this calamity, and to help the world to save itself. Tell him he has all my admiration, and I shall hope to see you here again in happier days."

As I passed on my way downstairs through the drawing-rooms hung with the portraits of the famous Prime Ministers, from William Pitt and Walpole down to Lord Salisbury, I noticed that the only photograph in the rooms was a photograph of Mussolini.

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PARIS, March 14, 1940.

M. Paul Reynaud, the French Secretary of the Treasury, came to see me at my hotel, and spent an hour with me prior to my taking my train to Rome.

The Minister had come from the Senate, where the debate was in progress upon the failure of the French Government to render effective military aid to Finland. He said that he feared the French Parliament would not regard the Government's case as very strong. He said, however, that he and M. Daladier were working closely together.

He asked me what my impressions of the attitude of the British Government might be with regard to a peace possibility. I replied that I had found the British Government as moderate and as constructive in its point of view as I had found him in our talk five days before. It seemed clearer than ever to me, I added, that the great key problem today was security and disarmament.

If, I said, any Government now engaged in war refused to negotiate on that basis, there seemed to me to be no hope of there being any possibility of the establishment of any lasting peace.

The Minister said that he had thought much of this question since we had last spoken. Winston Churchill had paid him a midnight visit two nights before. Mr. Churchill's point of view was utterly intransigent. M. Reynaud felt that while Mr. Churchill was a brilliant and most entertaining man, with great capacity for organization, his mind had lost its elasticity. He felt that Mr. Churchill could conceive of no possibility other than war to the finish—whether that resulted in utter chaos and destruction or not. That he felt sure was not true statesmanship.

The Minister twice repeated his conviction that the possibility of negotiation on the basis of security and disarmament should not be discarded. But what is required above all else he said, is "Daring statesmanship".

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ROME, March 16, 1940.

The King received me this morning at nine o'clock. The Ambassador accompanied me, but, in view of the King's expressed desire to talk to me alone, the Ambassador joined us only just before my departure.

The King greeted me very cordially. I noticed that his right arm trembled a good deal, and that he seemed to be somewhat nervous. In the course of our conversation he reminded me of the forty years that he had spent on the throne, and that he was now seventy years of age. He seems younger, and his eyes are bright and very searching. The conversation commenced with the usual inquiries about my trip, and the usual remark about how difficult it must be, physically, to undertake a voyage and to have to talk with so many varying kinds of people.

The King asked me for my general impressions. I told him that perhaps the most outstanding impression I had received was the fact that in every country I had visited the word I had heard most often, and the word which I believed had been uttered to me with most emotion and most sincerity, had been the word "security." I said that it seemed to me that what governments and peoples were demanding beyond everything else was a guarantee of their own security, and the assurance that the present crisis which Europe and, for that matter, the rest of the world in great part was now undergoing, should not take place again. I said that I often wondered whether there was any other period of twenty years in the history of the modern world when peoples had been offered so many opportunities to obtain a real peace

and real security, and yet had so frequently thrown away the opportunities presented to gain their requirements.

The King said that of course the problem of security was the outstanding problem. If that problem could be solved, the world would be a very different place in which to live. Another great problem at the moment, he thought, was lack of comprehension, and misunderstanding on the part of the great powers, one of the other. He said that it seemed to him that the nations of Europe were starting to go down a great slide, and that every foot that they traversed would make their eventual fall more rapid.

At this juncture he spoke in the highest terms of President Roosevelt, of his vision, of his statesmanship, and of the efforts he had made to avert war. He said that, of course, his own position was a position without responsibility and without authority, but that he had done and would continue to do within those limitations what he could in conjunction with his own Government in order to further the reestablishment of peace.

He said that he knew that I had talked with Mussolini, of whom he spoke as a very great man. He said that, apart from Mussolini's remarkable memory, he had the great gift of grasping essentials and letting the non-essentials go by. He said that I [*he?*] was sure I had realized from my conversations with him, and from the conversations which I was still to have with him, that the desire of Mussolini was to do what was possible to bring about the reestablishment of a durable peace.

He then referred to the privileged position occupied by the United States, its freedom from the constant fear of neighbors, and said that the United States was in reality a completely secure continent and not a small part of a continent beset with jealousies and hatreds and rivalries, such as was Italy. The King spoke of the power of the United States to amalgamate the immigrants that came to its shores and that, consequently, it had never been and never would be the prey of the serious problems resulting in Europe from the rivalries of minorities under one jurisdiction. He said that the national homogeneity of the Italian people was, however, one blessing that Italy possessed, but that this was not a blessing possessed by many of the smaller powers in Europe.

I remarked to the King that when I left Rome I had been told that I would find great intransigence in London and Paris and less intransigence in Berlin. I said, however, that I had not found intransigence in France or England, but merely the determination, and a very cold determination, to fight to the finish until and unless those powers could obtain guarantees of security other than those merely written on paper, so that they would not again be confronted by a



situation similar to that which now existed. I said that in Berlin I had been very much impressed by the conviction expressed to me by every member of the Government that the immediate, as well as the ultimate, objective of England and France was to destroy the German Reich, and to destroy the German people. I said that I was confident that that was not the case; that what the Allies did demand was the positive and practical guarantee that they themselves were not to suffer at recurrent intervals the threat of their own destruction. The King smiled and said that he was well aware that the Allies did not have these objectives in mind, and said, "In the first place, how could any one seriously think of annihilating over eighty millions of people?" He continued "You can hardly conceive of cutting off the heads of that number of men and women."

The King said that in some ways he believed the world had got better during the past centuries, but that the great difficulty in Europe was the fact that certain peoples had lived on war, and had repeatedly made war for century after century. For three hundred years the Italian people had refrained from participation in European wars of their own making. The German people, he said, on the other hand, had dedicated themselves almost exclusively to war and that unfortunately was now one of the major problems again to the fore in the present unhappy situation.

The King then brought up the subject of Russia. He said that in the old days before 1914 he had frequently visited Russia, and had known the interior of the country from the Baltic to the Caucasus. He had considered the Russian people then a collection of down-trodden, barely human masses, interlarded with a collection of thieves. He wondered whether the situation, in so far as Russia was concerned, had improved very much during recent years. He mentioned that he was given to understand that the present government of Stalin was very strong. He asked whether I believed that Russia should seriously be regarded as a great military power. He said Russia had not, in his judgment, shown any signs of military strength in her recent attack upon Finland, and spoke with the deepest feeling of the fate of the Finnish people.

I replied to the King that in the judgment of the military authorities of my own government Russia would presumably be strong for defensive purposes, but that we had no evidence which would show that Russia would be strong in any offensive operation. He said that this coincided with his own views.

The King mentioned a conversation he had had some years ago with Mr. Motta, the then President of the Swiss Federal Council, in which Motta had expressed the belief that Communism was not a danger to the rest of Europe, since he regarded it as a tree which

would grow tall and strong, but of which eventually the branches would fall off by their own weight. The King smiled and said that if this simile was accurate, the branches, when they did fall, at least fell off on other peoples' heads. I remarked that another difficulty was the fact that the roots of the tree spread out beyond the confines of the garden where it was planted.

It was very obvious that the King was deeply concerned with the possibility of a spread of Communism in Europe as a result of the German-Russian Alliance. He asked me if I knew of Communist propaganda in Germany, and I said that I had received reports that such propaganda was increasing, but that I had no conclusive knowledge thereof.

The King then came back to the question of security in Europe. He said he was afraid it was almost an insoluble problem to persuade the great powers of Europe to destroy the armaments which they had built up. He wondered whether the first practical step might not be a binding agreement not to replace certain categories of offensive armaments when they became obsolete. I said I believed that the suggestion he made was one of very great practical importance, but that I wondered if it was possible to conceive a peaceful Europe, in which any real feeling of confidence existed, so long as existing armaments continued, and particularly the existing types of offensive bombing planes. I said I believed that it was aviation of the bombing type which was in great part responsible for the present situation on both sides of the Rhine.

The King then said that when he first came to the throne forty years ago he had possessed the belief that trained diplomats were a menace to the cause of peace, and that by undertaking international negotiations through other types of men, a more satisfactory result could be obtained. He said that he had reached the conclusion years ago that that early belief on his part was profoundly mistaken. He said that he had always felt that if President Wilson, Lloyd George and, for that matter, the Italian Government, had sent trained representatives, skilled in diplomatic negotiations, to the Conference at Paris, very much more satisfactory results would have been achieved. He spoke of the Italian problems arising out of the Versailles Treaty as being due entirely to the fact that the Chiefs of Government assembled in Paris had sent unqualified men to Italy, and to the lands bordering upon the Adriatic, in order to make authoritative surveys of the problems of the minorities in those regions and of the economic problems attendant thereon. He said: "How can you expect a professor who has never before visited Istria to render an intelligent report, after a survey of only two days, upon what the people in that region want, and upon how they can best take care of themselves?" He said that

even the most intelligent man would require two years before making sound conclusions on that problem.

The King made no reference whatever to relations between Italy and France. He made no direct reference to the conversation which he had had with Ribbentrop, but he let me gain the unmistakable impression that he was profoundly pessimistic as to the present policy of Germany, and as to the fact that the minds of the present German rulers were made up as to the pursuit of a military policy of conquest.

As I got up to leave, I told the King of the President's gratification by the reply he had received from the King to the message sent by the President last autumn when war had broken out.

I added that I had been deeply impressed on many occasions during my recent visit to Europe with the profound respect shown for the King, and with the confidence felt in His Majesty's desire to do what might be possible to bring about the reestablishment of peace in Europe. The King looked at me and said: "I am afraid they don't realize how little I can do."

I then said: "Another thing I am greatly impressed with, not only as a result of my present visit to Europe, but also because of many previous occasions when I had the privilege of being in Italy, is the devotion and admiration shown by the Italian people for Your Majesty." He shook his head, and smiled, and said, "My English is getting rusty and I don't know how to phrase exactly what I mean, but I am afraid the impression you have obtained is not true." The King then asked me to convey the assurance of his very warm regard to the President.

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ROME, March 16, 1940.

I visited Count Ciano with the Ambassador at ten o'clock. He received me with a very personally friendly greeting.

I said that one of the first things that I wanted to say to the Minister was that one of the outstanding impressions that I had gained on my trip was the confidence felt that the Minister and the Duce would do everything possible on behalf of Italy to further the reestablishment of peace. I said that I had been looking forward for many days to my return to Rome, and to the opportunity of having further conversations with him.

I reminded the Minister that when I had left Rome the Duce had said to me that I would find far greater intransigence in London and in Paris than I would in Berlin. I said, however, that, on the contrary, I found no intransigence in either London or Paris, although I had found a complete determination on the part of those two governments to continue the war to its bitter end, unless they could obtain practical and positive guarantees of security which would render them full assurance that they would not again be plunged into a war of this kind.

In Germany, I said to the Minister, I had been told by every member of the German Government that the war must be fought by Germany to victory because the definite objective of the Allied powers was to destroy the Reich, the present régime, and the German people. I said that I had not found in London or in Paris any indication from the men who were today governing those two countries of any desire to destroy the Reich nor the German people.

The Minister then broke in and said that he himself knew that that was the case and that the Allied powers had no such objectives in mind. He said that he would tell me immediately and very frankly, and of course solely for the information of the President, that Ribbentrop in his conversations in Rome, both with him and with the Duce, and he believed with the Vatican as well, had stated that Germany was determined to undertake a military offensive in the near future; that she was not considering any solution short of a military victory as a means of obtaining peace, and that after German victory peace would be laid down by German "Diktat". He said that Ribbentrop seemed to be convinced that the German Army could achieve such a military victory within five months, and that the German Government believed that France would crumble first and then England shortly after. He said that he had again attempted, as he had at Berchtesgaden, to persuade Ribbentrop that the reasonable objectives of Germany could be achieved by negotiation, and that in that connection he had mentioned my own mission to Europe. He said, however, that Ribbentrop had brushed to one side all references of this character, and that he had talked in very loud and violent terms of German power and of German military strength.

The Minister said that he himself was by no means convinced of Germany's ability to win such a victory. He said that it might well be that the present German régime was like a man suffering from tuberculosis who looked strong and healthy, but who had within him the germ of a fatal disease which might lay him low at the most unexpected moment. He said that he believed that if the Allied Powers maintained a defensive position, and prevented Germany from breaking through, that alone would result in Allied victory. Germany could only be victorious by breaking through, whereas the Allied Powers could be victorious by either preventing Germany from breaking through, or by breaking through themselves.

I said to the Minister that in my conversations in Berlin I had found the Fuehrer moderate in his manner of speech with me, and Field Marshal Goering moderate and somewhat more precise in what he said; but that even in the case of those two men I had found them laboring under the apparent conviction that military action by Germany was the only hope for Germany, since otherwise Germany

would be hopelessly crushed. Count Ciano said that in his own judgment Hitler today was completely under the influence of Ribbentrop, who, he said, had a fatally malignant influence. He said that the formerly close and pleasant relations which he himself had enjoyed with Goering no longer existed, presumably because Goering felt that he (Count Ciano) was responsible for the present non-belligerent policy of Italy. He said that when he went to Berlin last October Goering had not seen him, nor had Goering made any attempt to communicate with him.

Count Ciano said that he wanted to remind me that Mussolini was definitely "pro-German". He said that, notwithstanding this fact, Mussolini would never endanger the position of Italy, nor would he in any way change the present policy of Italy so as to add to the complexities of the present European situation. He wished to assure me that as a result of Ribbentrop's visit to Rome no new agreements of any kind had been entered into, nor would Italy deviate one inch from the course which she had set herself. He said that Ribbentrop had done his utmost to persuade him, and Mussolini personally, to undertake a *rapprochement* with Soviet Russia. He said that he himself would do everything possible to prevent such a *rapprochement*, which he believed would be fatal to the best interests of Italy. He said that he had no present intention of sending an Italian Ambassador back to Moscow.

With regard to the Balkans, Count Ciano said that he knew quite well that stories were current that Italy was stirring up trouble in Croatia. He said he wished to assure me that was not the case; that Italy and Germany had entered into an agreement to guard against any intervention by either one of them in Yugoslavia, and that the policy of Italy remained, as he had told me two weeks earlier, the maintenance of the *status quo* in the Balkans, and the maintenance of peace in that area. He said that three days from now would be the third anniversary of the treaty which he himself had signed in Yugoslavia<sup>75</sup> and that, in order to set at rest the rumors which had recently arisen, he was going to give a large dinner in Rome to the Minister of Yugoslavia. He emphasized the friendly relations which Italy desired to maintain with that country.

He then returned to the subject of security in Europe. He said he did not know any practical way in which that could be achieved except through the creation of a four-power pact between Great Britain, France, Italy and Germany, with a guarantee that, if any one of the four powers undertook to commit any new act of aggression, the other three powers would immediately combine to take action against the offending power.

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<sup>75</sup> *British and Foreign State Papers*, vol. cxli, p. 1119.

I said to the Minister that in the event that such negotiations were undertaken I wondered if he would not find that far more than that was required, and by that I said I meant an agreement upon measures of real disarmament, and a satisfactory measure of international control of offensive types of aviation, as well as the control and the destruction of certain categories of other offensive armaments. The Minister immediately said that he quite agreed that such a step could and should be taken.

I said that one of the great difficulties of the past twenty years had been that when attempts at disarmament had been made, they had been made at periods when nations were tired, when their moral muscles were flabby, and when they had permitted questions of alleged national honor, prestige, and the prejudices of military and naval authorities to rise as obstacles to the attainment of any real practical disarmament. Perhaps, I said, the brink of the precipice upon which they were now poised might prove to be an incentive to all peoples to strive towards a real and actual disarmament, and the means of practical security which that alone could afford.

The Minister told me that during his conversation with Ribbentrop in Rome, Ribbentrop had spoken of Stalin as of a second Christ; that Ribbentrop had said that his conversations with Stalin in Moscow had been the greatest experience of his life, and that he regarded Stalin as the greatest man outside of Germany. Ribbentrop had referred to him as the logical successor of Peter the Great and Alexander I, and had claimed that it was ridiculous for Ciano to think of Stalin as a Communist. Count Ciano laughed, and he reminded me of conversations which he had only a year ago with Ribbentrop, when Ribbentrop referred to Stalin as "that most perverted of all damned Communists." I remarked that I myself had been struck in my conversations with Ribbentrop in Berlin with the frequent references which he made to his "Soviet ally", and of the determination of Germany never to permit any European power except Soviet Russia, in conjunction with Germany, to decide questions affecting Eastern Europe.

Count Ciano told me that owing to his past experience with Ribbentrop, he realized that what the latter said one day might be completely reversed the next. He stated that Mussolini and he were now in contact with Berlin, although, in answer to an inquiry from the Ambassador, he refused to specify the nature of that contact. He asked me what day I intended to leave Rome, and when I told him that my plans were made to leave on March 18th, he suggested that I postpone my departure until the following morning. He said that word from Berlin would probably be received before noon on March 19th, and that he would meet me confidentially in some place other than the

Foreign Office to give me the last word that he had before I departed. I expressed my gratitude to the Minister for this suggestion, which I said I would abide by. I said that even after my departure, before I returned to Washington, I hoped he would communicate any information of real significance to Mr. Phillips so that the Ambassador could transmit it in as safe a way as possible to Washington, to await my arrival there.

The Minister spoke briefly of the Far Eastern situation and said that he wanted to make it clear to me that recognition by Italy of the Wang Ching-wei government in China would be undertaken by Italy solely because Italy believed that the Wang Ching-wei government would be strongly anti-Soviet, and would complicate relations between Japan and the Soviets still further. He realized, he said, that the United States had far greater interests in the Far East than had Italy, and he understood the complexities of our problems. I told the Minister that I appreciated his frankness in giving me this information, but that he would understand that the rights and interests of the United States in China were questions of very great importance to us, and that the United States had adopted a policy towards Japan which could by no means be termed hasty or impatient. With regard to the constitution of any Japanese-controlled régime in China, I said I felt sure that he would understand that the United States must pursue its own independent course, and that he knew well what that course was. I regretted that, from what he said, Italy seemed to be embarking on a different course, which, I feared, would not be conducive to the best interests of all the powers, including Italy, directly concerned in the Far East.

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ROME, March 16, 1940.

The Duce received me at the Palazzo Venezia at six o'clock this evening. Count Ciano again served as interpreter and the Ambassador was present at the interview.

I found Mussolini looking far better physically than when I had seen him two weeks before and I did not sense the same feeling of mental or nervous oppression under which I thought he was laboring in our conversation two weeks ago. He received me with the utmost cordiality and in a very friendly personal way.

At the outset of our conversation he said that he would be glad to answer any questions which I cared to put to him, as he said he would be glad to do when I last left Rome, but that he would appreciate it if I would give him my impressions of my recent visits to Berlin, Paris and London.

I replied by saying that, as the Duce knew, I had made a definite commitment wherever I had gone that the views expressed to me by heads of governments or by other prominent officials would be regarded as strictly confidential for the sole information of the President and the Secretary of State. I said that I had so regarded the earlier conversation which I had the privilege of having with him, and that I had only felt at liberty in my visits to the other European capitals to say that I had been encouraged by the impression I had obtained from Mussolini that he believed that the establishment of a just and durable peace was still possible. Mussolini interjected at this point to say that that was entirely correct.

I then said that I had been very much struck with one important point, and that was the confidence I had found on all sides in the sincere desire of the Duce and of Count Ciano to do everything possible to further the reestablishment of peace, and to prevent the spread of the present war. Mussolini again interjected to say that this again was entirely true. He said that he had done everything possible to avert the present war, and that if he had not in fact desired with all his heart to bring about the reestablishment of a "good" peace, two hundred millions of additional human beings in the Mediterranean and in Africa would now be engaged in the present hostilities.

I then said that to answer his inquiry as best I could within the limitations set forth, I had gained the conviction everywhere I had gone that the basic and fundamental demand was for security; not a fictitious and illusory security, but a security based upon real disarmament, upon the abolition of types of offensive armaments and, above all, upon the dispelling of that nightmare by which peoples were oppressed namely the ever present possibility of the bombardment from the air of civilian populations and the slaughter of defenceless women and children.

It was the kind of security which would make small nations free from the threat of aggression or of conquest; and all nations, large and small, able, because of their freedom from menace and through disarmament, to dedicate themselves to the sadly-needed task of economic and financial reconstruction.

I said that in our last conversation the Duce indicated to me his own belief that the territorial and political readjustments required in order to insure a durable peace in Europe were the reconstruction of a free and independent Poland with access to the sea; the restoration of their liberties to the Czech people, although with the proviso that the Czech State should not again become a militarized state, and the retention within the German Reich of Austria, with the added belief that any impartial plebiscite held in Austria would prove that an overwhelming majority of the Austrian people desired to remain within



the Reich. I said that the impression I had formed was that the solution of these problems was not an insoluble question, but that it was in every sense secondary and subordinate to the real and practical security of which I had spoken.

Mussolini told me that approximately twelve hours before my return to Rome he had received direct word from Berlin that Hitler wished to confer with him. He told me that the meeting had been arranged for ten A. M. on Monday, March 18th, at the Brenner Pass. He said that throughout the course of Ribbentrop's recent visit to Rome Ribbentrop had insisted that Germany would consider no solution other than a military victory and that any peace negotiations were impossible. He said that Ribbentrop had stated that Germany would undertake an immediate offensive, that she would conquer France with [*within?*] three or four months, and that thereafter Great Britain would rapidly crumble.

Mussolini said that he believed that the German military offensive was in fact very close, and that it would be undertaken within a number of hours rather than within a number of days. As he phrased it, "The minute hand is pointing to one minute before midnight".

He said that if he was to have any success at all in persuading Hitler to postpone the military offensive, he must have some hope to offer him that the Allied Governments would not prove completely *intransigent* if negotiations were undertaken with regard to German insistence upon "lebensraum". He wished to know whether I would authorize him to communicate to Hitler the impressions I had formed with regard to the possibility of a negotiated solution of territorial and political questions in Europe.

I replied that I was not empowered to give him such authorization, and that I would require a specific instruction from the President of the United States before I could make a reply. I said that I would be glad to telephone the President and communicate the President's decision to Mussolini through Count Ciano later in the evening.

The Duce said that he agreed with me that the question of security was paramount, but that he did not agree that it could be settled prior to an agreement upon political and territorial readjustments. He said that he felt that the two things must be handled simultaneously, and that if that were done, the economic problems should likewise be considered simultaneously. He said that with regard to the independence of the Polish people he believed it imperative that the new Poland should no longer contain within its boundaries peoples who were not Polish, and that in any determination of new boundaries for Poland the adjustments of populations as recently undertaken by the Germans must be taken as definitive. He said that for example one million Poles had been removed from former German Poland to Warsaw and

other purely Polish areas. It would be inconceivable as a basis for agreement that such adjustments should not be taken into account.

With regard to a new Czech state, he said he believed that not only must the new Czech state be neutralized, but that it also should have special economic relations with the German Reich.

He said that in a new general settlement the just claims of Hungary for fair treatment of her minorities and for the readjustment of her frontiers must be taken into account, and that the claims of Italy must be given a satisfactory solution.

He expressed the very positive belief that if a settlement could be found, the curse of the minority problem must be once and for all removed from the European scene. He said that steps which might appear cruel such as the steps which he himself had taken in the Upper Adige must be taken, because the ultimate good was far greater than the immediate hardships occasioned certain peoples.

He said that he did not believe that Europe could ever go back to the kind of illusory security which had been promised but never granted by the League of Nations. He envisioned a new kind of Europe resulting from a federation of greater powers, guaranteeing the integrity and independent life of those smaller powers which were in reality logically and justly entitled to independent existence as proven nationalities. He felt that only through the creation of such a system could real disarmament become effective, and the peoples of Europe be freed from the intolerable burden of armament and from the equally intolerable fear of constant aggression.

He said that Europe could not to-day stand the outbreak of a "real" war. Europe could not undergo recurrent great wars every twenty years.

He then brought back the conversation to the question of an immediate agreement upon territorial and political readjustments of the nature indicated and stated that he believed that in any agreement which might be reached, what he repeatedly termed a "just political peace" was the indispensable *first point*. I then asked him very frankly how he felt the Allied powers could conceivably undertake to reach such an agreement as a first step, and without prior guaranteed security, when during the course of the last four years every agreement with Germany which had been officially and solemnly entered into, had been in a few months openly violated by Germany. I said, "What assurance could the Allied governments obtain that an agreement of the kind you describe, which they might now enter into, would not be as quickly violated as the agreement reached at Munich, in which you yourself played so great a part?" To this inquiry he made no direct reply, but limited himself to saying that he felt that the problem of security could be dealt with simultaneously with the problem of political peace.

As I started to leave the Duce made one final remark to me which appeared to me of particular significance. He said: "You may wish to remember that, while the German-Italian Pact exists, I nevertheless retain complete liberty of action."

When I left he was again particularly cordial, and said in English: "I am most grateful to you for having come to see me", and said that he would communicate with me again on Tuesday, before I left Rome, in order that I might learn of his interview with Hitler.

As soon as I left the Duce, I spoke with the President on the long distance telephone and related to him the chief points of my interview. I expressed to the President my belief that he should authorize me to say to the Duce that the President did not feel that he possessed sufficient information with regard to the views which had been expressed to me in my visits to Berlin, Paris and London, to make it possible for him to agree to permit Mussolini to convey to Hitler any impressions which I myself had formed with regard to any possible territorial readjustments. I said to the President that I feared that if Mussolini communicated to Hitler any impressions of this character, the impression would inevitably be created that the President was participating in the determination of such bases for a political peace as might be offered by Hitler.

The President said to me that he agreed with this recommendation, and that I should further say that in the belief of the President the problem of security was the fundamental issue, since security involved real and actual disarmament of the kind which would make it possible for men and women to go back to constructive work, with a consequent increase in living standards, and with a consequent immediate opportunity for all of those economic readjustments which are indispensable to a durable peace.

The President further requested me to say that he was confident that neither the Governments of Great Britain nor of France possessed as an objective the desire to destroy Germany nor the German people, and that he believed that their chief desire was to assure themselves that not again would a situation arise where a major European war was forced upon them in every succeeding generation.

I dined informally with Count Ciano and I had the opportunity of talking privately with him immediately after dinner. I communicated to him the President's instructions to me.

Somewhat to my surprise Count Ciano expressed emphatic approval of the decision reached by the President, and said that he believed that it was far better that at this stage no impression be created that the Government of the United States had any apparent participation in the formulation of any terms of political adjustment which might be considered by Hitler. He said that he fully agreed also that the prob-

lem of security was the key problem, and that while he believed like Mussolini that no security could be achieved unless an agreement in principle were reached upon a "just political peace" he, nevertheless, strongly felt that the two problems could and should be treated simultaneously. He repeated his own belief that a four-power pact between Germany, Italy, France and Great Britain might prove the basis of a plan for real security, with the agreement that if any one of the four powers undertook an act of aggression, the other three powers would immediately join together in declaring war upon the aggressor. He said that he felt that upon this foundation an effective disarmament scheme could be worked out, which would result in the abolition of offensive types of airplanes and of other armaments, and in an international control (which might later be enlarged to include the smaller European states) to undertake the abolition of offensive types of armaments including the factories where they were manufactured.

Count Ciano expressed complete pessimism as to the results of the interview to be held at the Brenner Pass. He said that since Ribbentrop would be present at the interview with Hitler, Mussolini would not be afforded the opportunity of persuading Hitler to follow a more reasonable course. He himself, he said, had time and again had interviews with Hitler, had seen Hitler reach the point of reasonable understanding, only to have Ribbentrop interject and change Hitler's point of view. He said that he believed that an offensive was imminent, and that Germany would pursue exactly the same policy which she had pursued in Poland, namely the unrestricted bombardment of cities including the bombardment of London and Paris, and the creation of the same kind of a reign of terror which had lasted during the eighteen days of the Polish War. He said that he believed, however, that the Allies would win out. He said that the only way, in his own judgment, in which Germany could win would be by breaking through into France, whereas if the Allies successfully remained on the defensive they themselves would ultimately achieve victory.

He told me, particularly confidentially, that the reason why he believed the German offensive was imminent was because when Hitler had requested the interview with Mussolini, Mussolini had suggested March 19th as the date for the meeting, and Hitler had replied that he could not wait beyond March 18th. Hitler had also stated that he could not give more than an hour's time to the interview since he would have to be back in Germany urgently thereafter.

I asked Count Ciano what he himself believed was the real motive for Hitler's request for the interview. He said that he thought that probably it involved the desire on the part of Hitler personally to try to persuade Mussolini to enter into some close working arrangement with Russia. He said that Ribbentrop throughout his visit to Rome

had made every effort to win Mussolini and Ciano over to his point of view but without success. He said that Ribbentrop had spoken of Stalin in terms of unbridled admiration, and that he believed that he had convinced Hitler that Mussolini would accept the German point of view on the Russian alliance with Germany.

Count Ciano said that he would meet me without any publicity at noon on Tuesday, March 19th, and would give me in fullest detail an account of the forthcoming interview with Hitler. He spoke in very generous terms of the effect of my own visit to Rome, and expressed the hope that from now on relations between Italy and the United States would be devoid of misunderstanding and friction. He said he believed that even if there is no hope for peace at the present time, close, friendly, and continuing relation[s] between Italy and the United States would prove of inestimable value when the time came for laying the foundations of a decent and enduring peace.

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ROME, March 18, 1940.

The Pope received me at ten o'clock this morning. I was presented to him by Myron Taylor, who was present at the interview. The Pope had before him a typewritten memorandum in English, to which he referred throughout the conversation. His English is not fluent, and, except when he was reading English, which he did with facility, I gained the impression that at several points in the conversation he did not understand clearly some of the things that were said to him by Mr. Taylor.

The Pope commenced the conversation by referring to his belief, which he had previously expressed to Mr. Taylor, that any peace negotiations at this time would prove impracticable. He asked me what my own views might be.

I said that it seemed to me that a very great obstacle at this time was the apparently sincere belief on the part of the highest German authorities that the Allied governments were determined to destroy the German Reich and to destroy the German people. I said that I had not found any such objectives when I visited London or Paris, nor had I found any spirit of complete intransigence such as I had been told I would find when I visited those capitals. I said that it seemed to me that the fundamental problem at the moment was whether human ingenuity could devise some form of physical security, including disarmament and the abolition of certain categories of offensive armaments, which would relieve peoples of their ever increasing apprehension, and which would assure the governments and peoples of all nations, both small and large, that they would be free from the ever present threat of aggression. I said that I believed this to be the chief

issue, and that unless this problem were solved there seemed to be very little likelihood that any real or durable peace could be achieved.

The Pope then stated that he did not believe that the Germans would immediately undertake a military offensive on the Western front. He said that he had been informed that "technical" obstacles existed which would render the undertaking of any such offensive unlikely for at least a month, and that he was further informed that the members of the German General Staff were definitely opposed to any land offensive by Germany on the Western line. The Pope said that he believed that intensified air or maritime activity might be undertaken by Germany, but nothing more.

The Pope then said that he believed the President would perform a service of the highest value in the interest of peace by exerting his influence with Mussolini so that Italy would remain a non-belligerent. He said, furthermore, that he believed closer and more friendly relations between the Italian Government and the Government of the United States would be very valuable, not only for the reason indicated, but also because of the fact that if and when the time for peace arrived the two governments could usefully cooperate. He stated that he would inform the President in the fullest detail through Myron Taylor of any views which he might form as to the time and manner of undertaking any movement for peace, and believed that it might well be that the Vatican and the two governments mentioned could cooperate at some future time in this sense, or at least act by common accord on parallel lines.

I inquired of the Pope with regard to his interview with Herr von Ribbentrop. He said very definitely that Herr von Ribbentrop had been exceedingly quiet and moderate in his manner, notwithstanding current rumors to the contrary. He said, however, that Ribbentrop had manifested only one point of view, namely that Germany was determined to proceed with the war until she had achieved a military victory, and that German military strength was such that a complete victory would be assured Germany within a short time. The Pope said that Ribbentrop had displayed no hesitation whatever in his insistence on this point.

The Pope said that with regard to the treatment of Catholics in Germany—who, the Pope declared, were being increasingly deprived (as were the Protestants) of their right of freedom of worship, and of their freedom to maintain their religious belief—Ribbentrop had given him no satisfactory assurances whatever. On the contrary, Ribbentrop had asserted that German Catholics possessed complete liberty to practice their faith, and to undertake their religious activities, provided they did not engage in politics as Catholics. The Pope stated that this was, of course, not the fact. He said that he had asked

Ribbentrop whether he believed in God, and Ribbentrop had replied, "Ich glaube an Gott, aber ich bin unkirklich." (I believe in God but I am not addicted to any Church.) The Pope repeated this phrase in German sarcastically two or three times, and with a smile said that was Ribbentrop's statement, but he could not help wondering about its truth. He said that he had spoken to Ribbentrop with regard to the distressing situation of the Catholics in Poland, and had asked whether the German Government would not agree to the appointment of a Papal delegate to proceed to German occupied Poland in order to investigate what the conditions there might in fact be. He said that he had been unable to obtain any assurance from Ribbentrop on this point, and that the latter had merely said, when pressed, that he would take the matter under consideration.

At one point in the conversation Myron Taylor broke in and inquired of the Pope whether there would be revolution in Italy if Mussolini brought Italy into the war on the side of Germany. His Holiness looked exceedingly surprised, and hesitated a considerable time in framing his reply. Finally he expressed the belief that while public opinion in Italy was definitely opposed to Italian participation in the war, he doubted exceedingly that there would be any open rebellion against Mussolini's authority—for at least some time—if Italy entered the war on the side of Germany.

The Pope emphasized his gratification at the designation by the President of his personal representative to the Vatican, and repeated to me what he had already said to Mr. Taylor, namely, that Mr. Taylor could have access to him at any time that he desired. He asked me to convey an affectionate message of greeting to the President, and said that he would always recall with the deepest pleasure the conversation he had with the President at Hyde Park.

The conversation lasted about fifty minutes but contained no points of significance other than those related and was in part a repetition by the Pope of statements previously made to Mr. Taylor and already reported by him to the Department of State.

The Pope was exceedingly cordial, both in his reception of me, as well as in all his references to the United States and to the President. . . .

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ROME, March 18, 1940.

After leaving the Pope, I was received by Cardinal Maglione, the Cardinal Secretary of State. Cardinal Maglione spoke French with complete command of the language, and we consequently spoke in that language rather than through an interpreter.

Cardinal Maglione stated first of all that he was sure the Pope had said to me that he believed the President could perform a service of

great value in the interest of peace by using his influence with Mussolini to dissuade the latter from bringing Italy into the war. He said that he had been very much gratified by the friendly way in which I personally had been received by Mussolini and by Count Ciano, and that he hoped that cordial relations between the two governments would now be maintained, since he believed that such relations would be of great value in persuading Mussolini to maintain a position of Italian non-belligerency. He said, furthermore, that it was only through the maintenance of a close and friendly contact between Washington and Rome that, should it later seem possible to make some move for peace, the two governments might then be enabled to act in harmony and not in discord.

He said that he knew that the Pope had undoubtedly also said to me that the Holy See would cooperate towards that objective in every possible way and that all the information that the Vatican possessed would be placed at the disposal of the President.

He himself did not believe that the moment was now ripe for the discussion of the bases of any real, just and lasting peace. He said that Herr von Ribbentrop had been utterly intransigent in his point of view, insisting that Germany was determined to carry the war through to a victorious conclusion and that the German Government would consider no other alternative. The Cardinal did not himself believe that Germany would undertake any military offensive now on the Western front. He said that he knew there was widespread opposition to such an undertaking on the part of the General Staff, and that he was by no means sure that there was not a movement on foot within the General Staff to bring about a change in régime. He asked me if I had any information to that effect. I said that, of course, I had had many reports to that effect, but that I had no information which I could regard as conclusive.

I asked Cardinal Maglione what he believed were the real motives which had induced Hitler to request the interview today with Mussolini at the Brenner Pass. The Cardinal said that he believed there were two possibilities: first, that Germany was in reality determined to undertake an immediate offensive, and that Hitler desired to use this opportunity to bring pressure to bear upon Mussolini to enter the war immediately on Germany's side; second, that Hitler was considering peace terms which he would discuss with Mussolini for the purpose of having such terms presented to the Allies through Mussolini. I asked the Cardinal whether he thought that another possibility might not be the desire of Hitler to bring about some form of closer accord between Mussolini and the Soviet Government. The Cardinal said that this, of course, was a possibility, but that he did not think it possible that Mussolini would agree. He said that Italy had everything to



lose by such an arrangement and nothing to gain. He said that Italy's vital interest lay in keeping the Balkans and the Near East free from Russian expansion, and that he could not imagine that Italy would agree to any tripartite arrangement which would result in German and Russian domination of portions of the Balkan countries.

He stated with great emphasis that Germany had lost out on every front in her diplomatic dealings with Russia. He said that in the North the peace imposed by Russia upon Finland, and the Russian domination of the Baltic states previously agreed to by Germany, had turned the Baltic into a Russian lake rather than a German lake, and that as a result Russia had offset every German gain which Hitler had obtained in Northern Europe since 1933. In so far as Central and Southeastern Europe were concerned, the Cardinal believed that Germany's apparent gains were in reality illusory. He felt convinced that in those regions Russia had been the real gainer and that sooner or later Germany would find the preponderant position which she had ceded to Russia of grave detriment to her own vital interests.

The Cardinal spoke with much affection of the French people and of M. Daladier. He spoke with ill-concealed aversion for the German Government and with great apprehension of the increase of Russian influence in Central Europe. He told me that he believed that Communism was rapidly increasing in Germany, and that if the war continued for any appreciable length of time, Communism would be a dominating factor within Germany itself.

The Cardinal impressed me as an extremely intelligent man with a very keen insight into present European affairs. I told him that they had told me in Paris that when I met him I would meet the "greatest diplomat in Modern Europe". He was obviously delighted, although he replied deprecatingly, "On vous a trompé à Paris."

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ROME, March 19, 1940.

According to the agreement that we had made before Count Ciano left Rome to accompany Mussolini to meet Hitler and Ribbentrop at the Brenner Pass, I lunched with Count Ciano privately at the Golf Club today so as to avoid any undue publicity with regard to our meeting.

Count Ciano talked to me alone for about five minutes before lunch with the Ambassador present, and for about half an hour after lunch with just the two of us taking part in the conversation.

Count Ciano said that he would tell me with complete frankness everything that had transpired at the meeting except that portion of the conversation at the Brenner Pass which had to do with purely internal questions affecting the Axis relationship, and while he did not specify the nature of these "internal questions", he gave me to

understand very clearly that they were primarily economic in character since he mentioned coal as one of the subjects that came up for conversation.

Count Ciano said that, notwithstanding what the official German statement had contained, the Brenner meeting had not been arranged at the time Ribbentrop was in Rome last week, but had been arranged, as he had previously told me, two days ago by telephone from Berlin upon the initiative of Hitler some twelve hours before my arrival in Rome.

He said that the exact time and place had not been decided upon until after my first conversation with him in the Foreign Office on March 16th. He said that one of the reasons mentioned by Hitler for requesting the meeting was that he and Mussolini had not personally met since the meeting in Munich eighteen months ago, and that in view of the developments of the past six months a personal interview was required. Ciano added somewhat acidly that he believed Ribbentrop's inability to make any progress when he had visited Rome last week and Hitler's knowledge that he (Ciano) was determined to do everything within his power to keep Italy from getting into the war, was the more important reason for the request for the meeting.

Count Ciano said that Hitler seemed in far better physical and mental condition than when he had seen him last summer and last October. He said that Hitler did practically all of the talking and that Mussolini did very little.

He said that he was very much impressed with the fact that Hitler was far less intransigent in his point of view with regard to the possibility of a negotiated peace than had been Ribbentrop when the latter had visited Rome, although he emphasized that every time that Hitler adopted a reasonable attitude with regard to any problem, Ribbentrop would invariably interrupt and try to persuade Hitler to take a more rigid attitude.

Count Ciano said that he believed the most important thing for me to learn was that there would be absolutely no change in Italy's non-belligerent attitude as a result of the meeting. He said that Hitler had hardly mentioned Russia, and had made no effort to support the requests made by Ribbentrop last week that Italy enter into any closer relations or into any specific agreements with Russia. Count Ciano said that he wanted me to know privately that he had gained a very clear impression that Hitler had no such delusion with regard to the German-Soviet Alliance as had Ribbentrop. He told me that he had gained the positive belief that Hitler was using the Russian arrangement to his own interest, with the expectation that the time would come when he (Hitler) could turn against Russia,

and secure back from Russia the positions Germany had given away in the Baltic States and through the cession of Finnish territory to the Soviets.

He said that no peace proposals had been made by Germany, and that Germany had not requested Mussolini to present any suggestions for peace proposals to the Allied governments.

He said, however, very emphatically that he believed that the time might come in the not distant future when Hitler would be receptive to the consideration of a negotiated peace, and he assured me that he would in such event get in touch immediately with the Government of the United States through Ambassador Phillips in order that we might know what his own feeling at such time might be. He stated that if such an opportunity arose he believed that the initiative should be taken by the President of the United States, using Italy as its "point of support" in Europe. He said that for that reason he trusted that we would continue the very friendly and frank relationship which had been created as a result of my visit to Rome, since he believed that a closer friendly understanding between Italy and the United States was not only to the advantage of Europe in the event that any opportunity for peace arose. I told Ciano that I warmly reciprocated the opinions he had expressed, and that I felt sure that he would realize from the personal letter which the President had addressed to Mussolini that the President cordially concurred in this belief.

I inquired of the Minister with regard to the Balkan situation. He stated that a cardinal point in Italy's foreign policy was the maintenance of the *status quo* in the Balkans. He said that it had been made clear to Germany that Italy would not agree to any German penetration of Yugoslavia, and that Italy intended to do all that is possible towards the maintenance of the present Balkan situation, leaving the question of territorial revision in abeyance until the time came when a general peace settlement could be undertaken.

The Minister said that he had agreed to confer with Count Teleki <sup>76</sup> here in Italy three days from now. He said that he considered the Hungarian situation the most critical in Europe at this time, but that he believed that difficulties of a "serious character" could be avoided through continued cooperation between Italy and Hungary.

He represented to me that the reports that Italy was stirring up trouble in Croatia were unfounded and said again that on March 25th, the third anniversary of his signing the Treaty of Non-Aggression with Yugoslavia, he intended to give a public banquet in honor of the Minister of Yugoslavia as a gesture to try and quiet rumors of increasing friction between Italy and Yugoslavia.

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<sup>76</sup> Count Paul Teleki, Hungarian Prime Minister and Minister of Commerce.

The Minister said that notwithstanding Ribbentrop's assurance that a military offensive by Germany was imminent—which assertions had been accepted at face value by Mussolini and himself—Hitler made it clear that no military offensive on the Western front was to be undertaken in the immediate future. He had however indicated immediate aviation activity, including the bombing of British ports, and of inland cities, particularly London. Count Ciano said that when asked [the reason?] for this apparent change in tactics with regard to the Western front, Hitler referred to the weather conditions and certain "momentary" obstacles. Count Ciano did not specify to me if he knew what the actual reasons for this change of plans might be. He said that some of the Italian military officers who had accompanied Mussolini had talked with General Bodenschatz of the German General Staff, and had gained the definite impression that the German General Staff itself was resolutely opposed to any military offensive by Germany along her Western frontiers. When I said good bye to him, Count Ciano said :

"Please give this message to President Roosevelt. Tell him that I personally have the utmost admiration for him and great confidence in what he himself can do to be of service to the cause of civilization in Europe. Tell him, further, that so long as I remain Foreign Minister, Italy will not enter the war on the side of Germany, and that I will do everything within my power to influence Mussolini in that same sense. Tell him, finally, that nothing will be more grateful to me than the opportunity to cooperate in the name of Italy with the United States in the cause of the reestablishment of that kind of just and durable peace in which the President believes. You may add that I believe that Alliances at times are necessary in Europe, and that I do not believe that under present conditions peace can be established or maintained in Europe without an equilibrium of force and a balance of power, but I am sure that the President and you will realize that while the safety of Italy itself depends on the maintenance of such equilibrium, Italy also requires the safety and security of the smaller neutral powers, as well as rapid disarmament, and the security which the elimination of many types of offensive armaments would bring."

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#### ITALY AND PEACE IN EUROPE

My belief as to the present policy of the Italian Government, and as to the present situation in Italy, may be set down in a few words—

Italy will, I think, unquestionably still move as Mussolini alone determines. Mussolini is a man of genius, but it must never be forgotten that Mussolini remains at heart and in instinct an Italian peasant. He is vindictive, and will never forget either an injury or a blow to his personal or national prestige. He admires force and power. His own obsession is the recreation of the Roman Empire.

His conscience will never trouble him as to the way or the means, provided the method of accomplishment in his judgment serves to gain the desired end.

He will never forget nor forgive the sanctions episode of 1935 and the policy pursued by Great Britain towards Italy at that time. Up to that moment strongly anti-German, he then determined to seek an understanding with Hitler as a balance to prevent Italian isolation. He believes that he has found a successful answer to that problem, and that it will serve his purpose of securing, either at an eventual peace conference, or by throwing his weight if necessary with the winning side in the present war, the additional territorial and political advantages which he seeks. He could at any moment during the past two years have had the concessions he seeks from France, short of the cession of political jurisdiction in Tunisia. He has deliberately refused these concessions because of his knowledge that if he now reached an agreement with France, he could not readily obtain the additional concessions he desires from Great Britain, namely: the demilitarization of Gibraltar and Malta, the neutralization of the Mediterranean, and (as a minimum) British Somaliland. He desires to retain his strong nuisance value until he can get at the same time what he wants from both Allies.

A highly intelligent Italian high up in the Government said to me "It was a great tragedy for Italy when Mussolini visited Berlin two years ago." What he means was that Mussolini was there enormously impressed with German military strength, and with the ruthless efficiency of German organization. He came back believing, and I think believes today, that Germany's power cannot be defeated. It is highly probable that he fears for his own new northern frontiers, as the new Italian fortifications along the Austrian boundary show, but I cannot help but feel that his hatred for Great Britain and France is so powerful, and his faith in German military supremacy so strong, that he will not modify his axis policy until and unless an Allied victory is indisputably evident.

If, on the other hand, Germany obtains some rapid apparent victories, such as the occupation of Holland and Belgium, I fear very much that Mussolini would then force Italy in on the German side—and I use the word "force" advisedly.

No one in the Italian Government wants Italy to get into the war. Count Ciano is violently against it, and no one else in the Government at this moment is more than a figurehead. The General Staff is strongly against it, and I am told that feeling in the army against Italian participation is formidable and vocal. The newer, and increasingly strong, element in the Fascios led by Ciano, Grandi,<sup>77</sup> Balbo<sup>78</sup>

<sup>77</sup> Dino Grandi, Italian Minister of Justice.

<sup>78</sup> Italo Balbo, Italian Air Marshal.

and Muti <sup>79</sup> is strongly opposed. So is the Royal Family. The entire Church is openly against it; so are the financial and commercial interests, and every ordinary man and woman with whom one can talk. Popular feeling is not pro-Ally, but it is anti-German.

The economic situation is constantly deteriorating. The price of living is rapidly rising; salaries are not. Taxes are sky-rocketing, and public complaint is by no means stifled. Everywhere one hears "Italy cannot stand a new war".

And yet there is no doubt in any one's mind that if Mussolini gives the word, the Italian Army will enter the war on the German side. I am told that if this takes place, and if Germany is not victorious quickly, mutinies will occur in the Army, and uprisings among the civilian population, with an eventual breaking down of the present structure of Government.

I am told also, that with this in view, the more liberal Fascists are rapidly working out a program of cooperation with those institutions in Italy (which Mussolini has so largely disregarded) such as the Church, the Royal Family, the Financial and Commercial Corporations (in the Fascist framework), and the local municipal authorities, to serve as a leverage against any war policy by Mussolini.

But I believe that the decision will be made by Mussolini alone. He lives very largely nowadays in retreat. He sees no personal friends and no foreigners other than an occasional German. No one except Ciano appears to have any influence with him, and the latter very little.

For these reasons I believe the United States can make a very real and a very practical contribution towards the cause of peace by improving relations between the two countries. For various reasons my visit to Rome improved the atmosphere. The President's personal letter to Mussolini was a powerful factor. If members of the administration in Washington would refrain from using the word "Fascism" in attacking totalitarian forms of Government, the injured sensibility of Mussolini would be somewhat assuaged. If the United States appropriates a reasonable sum for participation in the Rome 1942 Exposition, and if some practical way can be found for enhancing commercial relations between Italy and the United States, American influence in Italy would sharply increase.

The chief request made of me by the Pope, by his Secretary of State, and by Count Ciano, was for me to urge the President to utilize his influence with Mussolini to keep Italy out of the war. The President cannot effectively exercise any such influence unless relations between the two Governments become decidedly more friendly and closer. The practical steps I have indicated would contribute greatly towards that end.

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<sup>79</sup> Ettore Muti, Secretary General of the Fascist Party.

In my considered judgment a close relationship with Italy today is feasible, and the recognition of the Ethiopian conquest is not immediately necessary in order to bring it about. Should such a relationship be established it would do much to prevent any possible entry of Italy into the war, and should a negotiated peace in Europe prove practicable, the ability of the United States through the President to maintain a friendly and confidential contact with Mussolini might in many contingencies prove of exceptional value.

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#### CONCLUSION

Of all the many statements made to me in the conversations I had, the statement which I have most often recalled is the phrase used by Paul Reynaud in my final talk with him, when he said, "If the catastrophe is to be averted, daring statesmanship is required." That, I believe, is unquestionably true. If the present situation continues to drift, no matter whether a war of devastation breaks out in the immediate future or not, I doubt whether the present generation will again see a world in which there exists any real security, national, physical, or economic.

What is imperatively required is statesmanship of the highest character, marked by vision, courage and daring.

I saw no signs of statesmanship of that kind in any of the countries I visited, nor do I know of any of that character in any other European country.

I do not believe there is the slightest chance of any successful negotiation at this time for a durable peace if the basis for such negotiation is made the problem of political and territorial readjustment—the "just political peace" insisted upon by Mussolini—, or the problem of economic readjustment. Those two problems must be solved before any lasting peace can be found, but to my mind they are complementary, and subordinate.

The basic problem I feel is the problem of security, inseparably linked to the problem of disarmament.

I believe there is a slight chance for the negotiation of a lasting peace if the attack for peace is made upon the issue of security.

If the great powers of Europe—even exclusive of Russia—could be shown a practical means of obtaining security and disarmament, neither the political peace required, nor the essential economic basis for a real peace, would, in my judgment, offer any insuperable obstacles.

I do not underestimate the magnitude of the task of finding any hope of a real peace so long as Hitler and his régime remain in control in Germany.

The German people are living a life which seems the existence of people on another planet. To them lies have become truth; evil, good; and aggression, self-defense. But yet, back of all that, their real demand is security, the chance to live reasonably happy lives, and peace. I agree fully with Mussolini that no people at this time wants war. If the German people today are united behind Hitler in the war—as I feel the majority are—I believe it to be solely because they sincerely fear that their own safety is at stake.

The one slight hope of peace, before Europe plunges into a war of devastation, or drags through a long-drawn-out war of attrition, so long as the National Socialist régime remains in power in Germany, is the agreement by the great powers of Europe upon some practicable plan of security and of disarmament. This would be the “miracle” spoken of by Mr. Chamberlain which would persuade Great Britain and France once more to negotiate with Hitler.

The initiative, in any such attempt, could not come from Europe. The Pope, I fear, is discouraged and, in a sense, confused. The mind of the Vatican is concentrating upon political and territorial questions. Very little importance is being attributed to the question of security and disarmament, or to the economic aspects of the problem.

Mussolini is too closely associated with Hitler.

There remains only the United States, supported by other neutral states, particularly those of the New World.

If the moment arrived when the Government of the United States felt it possible to move, I am confident that both the Vatican and Mussolini would support such an initiative.

## II. APPROACH OF THE UNITED STATES TO NEUTRAL COUNTRIES REGARDING EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON POSTWAR PROBLEMS <sup>80</sup>

500.A21/65a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Brazil (Caffery)* <sup>81</sup>

WASHINGTON, February 8, 1940—11 a. m.

26. Please inform the Minister for Foreign Affairs confidentially that the President is considering an exchange of views between the Government of the United States and other neutral powers covering two basic problems connected with the future maintenance of a lasting world peace, namely, limitation and reduction of armaments, and the

<sup>80</sup> The replies of the neutral governments to this project are not printed as they contain little of historical significance, and action by the Government of the United States was discontinued due to war conditions. An account of this proposal is given in Department of State, *Postwar Foreign Policy Preparation, 1939-1945* (Washington, 1949), pp. 23-26.

<sup>81</sup> The same, *mutatis mutandis*, February 8, 11 a. m., to the Chargé in Argentina as No. 27.



establishment of a sound international economic system. You should make it clear that the exchange of views proposed does not involve any present problems arising from the existing war situation, but rather problems relating to the future maintenance of peace after the termination of existing hostilities. You should state that this Government would greatly appreciate having the views of the Brazilian Government with regard to the most feasible way of undertaking the exchange of views involved, as well as with regard to the most practical approach to the problems mentioned.

HULL

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500.A21/30 : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, February 10, 1940—3 p. m.

18. At the Secretary's press conference this morning in response to inquiries regarding the approach to neutrals on the subject of conditions after the termination of hostilities,<sup>82</sup> the Secretary said he might be able to give the correspondents a better perspective by speaking along the following lines. He said that for some time we had been seeking to keep alive basic ideas, formulas and programs relating to a sound and stable international relationship after the war. This had included the problem of a progressive reduction in military armaments and the adoption of a sound and liberal commercial policy as the only means of avoiding autarchy and economic totalitarianism and of moving toward the opposite direction of sanity and economic recovery. The Secretary said that we had been preaching these things, and striving to keep them alive, and that we hoped to see every nation in the world gradually subscribe to the same views, so that when a peace conference came there would be a definite understanding and commitments as far as possible to these basic principles. He said that the Department had been doing some work along these lines through the committees that had been established.

A correspondent asked whether after preliminary discussions of economic matters and disarmament had been held these conversations would proceed to other questions. In reply, the Secretary said that there were no plans for discussing anything that did not relate solely to the post-war period, and no plans for the discussion of anything except the two questions he had cited. A correspondent remarked that

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<sup>82</sup> For public announcement, on February 9, 1940, of the diplomatic conversations with all neutral countries, see Department of State *Bulletin*, February 10, 1940, p. 153.

it had been stated yesterday that the conversations were being carried out through diplomatic channels and he inquired whether any possibility was foreseen that a conference might be held of leading neutrals. The Secretary answered that he had nothing in mind to that effect.

A correspondent asked whether it could be assumed that what this Government was attempting to do was to organize a sort of world-wide neutrality bloc which, by reason of its adherence to common ideals, would be able to speak with an authoritative voice at a peace conference. The Secretary reiterated that neutrality was a matter which pertained to war situations, and that this Government did not have in mind the discussion of anything except the two problems which he had described.

Repeat foregoing to the following missions :

Brussels  
Copenhagen  
Oslo  
Stockholm  
Helsinki  
Moscow  
Ankara  
Belgrade  
Bucharest

Add following paragraph in telegrams to Moscow and Helsinki :

For your personal information conversations are not being initiated with the Governments of countries engaged in hostilities.

HULL

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500.A21/1a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to American Diplomatic Missions in  
All Neutral Countries*<sup>83</sup>

WASHINGTON, February 10, 1940—4 p. m.

[Here follows, *mutatis mutandis*, the text of telegram No. 26, February 8, 11 a. m., to the Ambassador in Brazil, printed on page 117.]

HULL

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<sup>83</sup> This telegram was sent to the following countries: Belgium, with instructions also to convey to Luxemburg Government; Bolivia; Bulgaria; Chile; Colombia; Costa Rica; Cuba; Denmark; Dominican Republic; Ecuador; Egypt, with instructions also to convey to Saudi Arabian Government; El Salvador; Estonia; Greece; Guatemala; Haiti; Honduras; Hungary; Iran, with instructions also to convey to Afghan Government; Iraq; Ireland; Italy; Latvia; Liberia; Lithuania; Mexico; Netherlands; Nicaragua; Norway; Panama; Paraguay; Peru; Portugal; Rumania; Spain; Sweden; Switzerland; Thailand; Turkey; Uruguay; Venezuela; and Yugoslavia.

500.A21/124: Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Argentina (Armour)*

WASHINGTON, March 9, 1940—2 p. m.

42. Your 68, March 6, 3 p. m.<sup>84</sup> Please take occasion to express to Cantilo<sup>85</sup> the appreciation of this Government for his prompt reply to our suggestion.

You may add that we recognize that no ultimate tangible results can be achieved without the cooperation of the Governments at present belligerent, but that we feel that a common purpose coordinated among the neutrals may well have a beneficial influence on the character of economic reconstruction after the war and on the attitude in this respect on the part of the belligerents in considering terms of peace. On the other hand, if the neutrals are incoherent and passive and fail to formulate any policy or desiderata, not only will their direct interests be likely to be disregarded at the time of peace negotiations, but the entire process of post-war reconstruction may again, as it did after the last war, assume a character prejudicial and dangerous to economic progress everywhere.

HULL

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500.A21/156: Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Chile (Bowers)*

WASHINGTON, March 23, 1940—2 p. m.

53. Your strictly confidential despatch 371, March 13.<sup>86</sup> The Department is contemplating the issue to the parties to the consultation of a comprehensive communication regarding its own position.

In the meantime and unless you perceive objection thereto, you might discuss his memorandum of March 2 [12] informally with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, along the following lines:

In initiating consultations with all states with which we maintain diplomatic relations and which were not at that time engaged in hostilities, the American Government felt the neutrals the world over had a certain common interest in expressing their views as to what sort of a world should emerge from this war. This was a common interest which was of greater scope than that of the Americas alone, and the views of the American states are generally fairly well known from our previous collaboration.

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<sup>84</sup> Not printed; it transmitted a memorandum from the Argentine Foreign Office which said that Argentina would give its full cooperation to the project but was of the opinion that no useful and efficient work could be accomplished as long as participation of the great countries at war could not be counted on.

<sup>85</sup> José María Cantilo, Argentine Minister for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>86</sup> Not printed.

We recognize that nothing effective in economic organization can be accomplished without the eventual collaboration of the great belligerent powers, nevertheless if fighting stops and the desires of the neutral world are chaotic and inarticulate, they are likely to be disregarded at a peace settlement, while on the contrary, a unified aspiration clearly expressed should influence an eventual peace. We cannot be sure, of course, that such influence will prevail but the neutrals have direct interest in the economic consequences of a peace and so a right to express their views.

Obviously, the study of limitation of armament must be theoretical until the collaboration of the belligerents is practicable but a unified point of view on certain methods might be worked out.

Reference point 8 of Chilean memorandum. We are of opinion after careful consideration that the inclusion in the discussion of immediate war-time questions would render it exceedingly difficult for those states to participate which are in the vicinity of the conflict and thus under immediate threat.

HULL

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500.A21/177 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Minister in Switzerland (Harrison)*

WASHINGTON, March 30, 1940—4 p. m.

32. Unless you perceive objection thereto please take occasion to discuss informally with Mr. Pilet-Golaz<sup>87</sup> the note of the Swiss Federal Council reported in your 19, March 28, 6 p. m.<sup>88</sup>

This note has been read with the deepest interest and we fully realize that the attainment of practical results will depend upon many factors including those cited by the Federal Council and that the hope of bringing about the kind of world we desire to live in will depend largely on the type of peace, the length of the struggle, and other analogous factors.

Nevertheless, we feel that if peace discussions start and the neutral countries have in the meantime made no effort to clarify and harmonize their views, then in all probability the expression of those views will be so discordant that negotiators at a peace conference would presumably give them no consideration. It is clear that the countries not engaged in hostilities will have a profound interest in the type of peace which is made, certainly in so far as it concerns economic arrangements and limitation of armament. The Government of the United States feels, therefore, that there can be no ques-

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<sup>87</sup> President of the Swiss Federal Council.

<sup>88</sup> Not printed.

tion as to the right of the states not engaged in hostilities to enter upon discussion of these problems and to make the endeavor to bring about certain generally accepted views on them. If such concord can be reached its influence upon the belligerents when they come to discuss peace terms could not fail to be powerful.

This Government recognizes the peculiar position of the Federal Council in respect to traditional Swiss neutrality and has in mind no action which would jeopardize such position. This Government earnestly hopes, therefore, that it can count upon the counsel of the Swiss Government in a discussion of these problems.

We are obviously in accord with the point made by the Federal Council to the effect that each government in anticipation of peace negotiations should study the experiences and discussions of the past including those cited in the Swiss note.

Referring to your 20, March 29, noon.<sup>90</sup>

In the conversation sketched above, you may inform Mr. Pilet-Golaz that naturally the Department defers to his judgment as to apprising the small neutral states confidentially of his views.

HULL

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500.A21/189 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Minister in Switzerland (Harrison)*

WASHINGTON, April 4, 1940—7 p. m.

33. Your 23, April 3, 3 p. m.<sup>90</sup> Please express to Mr. Pilet-Golaz the appreciation of this Government for the information given you in respect to Switzerland's attitude.

Your point 2. In response to a number of requests from countries consulted, the Department is preparing a comprehensive statement to be issued to the states in consultation.<sup>91</sup>

Your points 4 and 5. This Government has made the suggestion to all states with which the United States has diplomatic relations except those engaged in hostilities at the time the approach was made. The suggestion was submitted to the Italian Government.

HULL

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<sup>90</sup> Not printed.

<sup>91</sup> In his memoirs, Mr. Hull states with reference to the preparation of the comprehensive memorandum: "But when Hitler invaded Scandinavia in April and the Low Countries and France in May, further action along these lines became impracticable"; *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull*, vol. II (The Macmillan Co., New York, 1948), p. 1628.

### III. APPOINTMENT BY PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT OF MYRON C. TAYLOR AS THE PRESIDENT'S PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE TO POPE PIUS XII<sup>92</sup>

811.001 Roosevelt, F. D./1-1940

#### *Pope Pius XII to President Roosevelt*<sup>93</sup>

**MOST EXCELLENT SIR:** Health and Prosperity.

The memorable message that Your Excellency was pleased to have forwarded to Us on the eve of the Holy Feast of Christmas<sup>94</sup> has brightened with a ray of consolation, of hope and confidence, the suffering, the heart-rending fear and the bitterness of the peoples caught up in the vortex of war. For this all right-minded men have paid you the spontaneous tribute of their sincere gratitude.

We have been deeply moved by the noble thought contained in your note, in which the spirit of Christmas and the desire to see it applied to the great human problems have found such eloquent expression; and fully persuaded of its extraordinary importance We lost no time in communicating it to the distinguished gathering present that very morning in the Consistorial Hall of this Apostolic Vatican Palace, solemnly expressing before the world, Catholic and non-Catholic alike, Our appreciation of this courageous document, inspired by a far-seeing statesmanship and a profound human sympathy.

We have been particularly impressed by one characteristic feature of Your Excellency's message: the vital, spiritual contact with the thoughts and feelings, the hopes and the aspirations of the masses of the people, of those classes, namely, on whom more than others, and in a measure never felt before, weighs the burden of sorrow and sacrifice imposed by the present restless and tempestuous hour. Also for this reason, none perhaps better than We can understand the meaning, the revealing power and the warmth of feeling manifest in this act of Your Excellency. In fact Our own daily experience tells Us of the deep-seated yearning for peace that fills the hearts of the common people. In the measure that the war with its direct and indirect repercussions spreads; and the more economic, social and family life is forcibly wrenched from its normal bases by the continuation of the war, and is forced along the way of sacrifice and every kind of privation, the bitter need of which is not always plain to all; so much the more intense is the longing for peace that pervades the hearts of men and their determination to find and to apply the means that lead to peace.

<sup>92</sup> Continued from *Foreign Relations*, 1939, vol. II, pp. 869-874.

<sup>93</sup> This was mailed from Vatican City January 9, 1940, addressed to Monsignor Amleto Cicognani, the Apostolic delegate in Washington. It was received January 19 and released by the White House to the press on January 20, 1940.

<sup>94</sup> Message dated December 23, 1939, *Foreign Relations*, 1939, vol. II, p. 871.

When that day dawns—and We would like to hope that it is not too far distant—on which the roar of battle will lapse into silence and there will arise the possibility of establishing a true and sound peace dictated by the principles of justice and equity, only he will be able to discern the path that should be followed who unites with high political power a clear understanding of the voice of humanity along with a sincere reverence for the divine precepts of life as found in the Gospel of Christ. Only men of such moral stature will be able to create the peace, that will compensate for the incalculable sacrifices of this war and clear the way for a comity of nations, fair to all, efficacious and sustained by mutual confidence.

We are fully aware of how stubborn the obstacles are that stand in the way of attaining this goal, and how they become daily more difficult to surmount. And if the friends of peace do not wish their labors to be in vain, they should visualize distinctly the seriousness of these obstacles, and the consequently slight probability of immediate success so long as the present state of the opposing forces remains essentially unchanged.

As Vicar on earth of the Prince of Peace, from the first days of Our Pontificate We have dedicated Our efforts and Our solicitude to the purpose of maintaining peace, and afterwards of reestablishing it. Heedless of momentary lack of success and of the difficulties involved, We are continuing to follow along the path marked out for Us by Our Apostolic mission. As We walk this path, often rough and thorny, the echo which reaches Us from countless souls, both within and outside the Church, together with the consciousness of duty done, is for Us abundant and consoling reward.

And now that in this hour of world-wide pain and misgiving the Chief Magistrate of the great North American Federation, under the spell of the Holy Night of Christmas, should have taken such a prominent place in the vanguard of those who would promote peace and generously succor the victims of the war, bespeaks a providential help, which We acknowledge with grateful joy and increased confidence. It is an exemplary act of fraternal and hearty solidarity between the New and the Old World in defence against the chilling breath of aggressive and deadly godless and anti-Christian tendencies, that threaten to dry up the fountainhead, whence civilization has come and drawn its strength.

In such circumstances We shall find a special satisfaction, as We have already informed Your Excellency, in receiving with all the honor due to his well-known qualifications and to the dignity of his important mission, the representative who is to be sent to Us as the faithful interpreter of your mind regarding the procuring of peace and the alleviation of sufferings consequent upon the war.

Recalling with keen joy the pleasant memories left Us after Our unforgettable visit to your great nation, and living over again the sincere pleasure that personal acquaintance with Your Excellency brought Us, We express in turn Our hearty good wishes, with a most fervent prayer for the prosperity of Your Excellency and of all the people of the United States.

Given at Rome, at St. Peter's, the 7th day of January 1940, the first Year of Our Pontificate.

PIUS PP. XII

121.866A/2

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*President Roosevelt to Pope Pius XII*<sup>95</sup>

WASHINGTON, February 14, 1940.

YOUR HOLINESS: In my letter of December 23, 1939 I had the honor to suggest that it would give me great satisfaction to send to You my own representative in order that our parallel endeavors for peace and the alleviation of suffering might be assisted. Your Holiness was good enough to reply that the choice of Mr. Myron C. Taylor as my representative was acceptable and that You would receive him.

I am entrusting this special mission to Mr. Taylor who is a very old friend of mine, and in whom I repose the utmost confidence.

His humanitarian efforts in behalf of those whom political disruption has rendered homeless are well known to Your Holiness. I shall be happy to feel that he may be the channel of communication for any views You and I may wish to exchange in the interest of concord among the peoples of the world.

I am asking Mr. Taylor to convey my cordial greetings to You, my old and good friend, and my sincere hope that the common ideals of religion and of humanity itself can have united expression for the reestablishment of a more permanent peace on the foundations of freedom and on assurances of life and integrity of all nations under God.

Cordially your friend,

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

121.866A/25 : Telegram

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

ROME, February 16, 1940—noon.

[Received February 16—8:33 a. m.]

109. I am asked to inquire the nature of the credentials which Mr. Taylor will present to the Pope during his audience, that is whether

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<sup>95</sup> File copy is in President Roosevelt's handwriting. Presumably a copy was made and conveyed to the Vatican by Mr. Taylor, as indicated in letter printed on p. 127.



they are in the form of a personal letter from the President or in the full and formal sense letters credential. In the event of the more formal letters credential there would follow in the ordinary course an exchange of addresses. In this case the Holy Father may desire to have more time to prepare his reply than would be available between Mr. Taylor's presentation of copies to the Vatican Secretary of State on the 26th and the audience on the 27th. Perhaps you could cable me the substance at least of Mr. Taylor's address if he is to make one, in which case there should be ample time for the preparation of the Pope's reply. It is customary to publish the exchange of addresses in the *Osservatore Romano* following the audience.

PHILLIPS

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121.866A/25 : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, February 16, 1940—6 p. m.

39. Your 109, February 16, Noon. Mr. Taylor's credentials are in the form of a personal letter from the President. He will not make a formal address.

HULL

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121.866A/31 : Telegram

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

ROME, February 28, 1940—2 p. m.

[Received February 28—1:14 p. m.]

130. For the President from Mr. Taylor.

"Presentation ceremonials concluded yesterday with highest spiritual dignity and human understanding following which I was accorded an entirely private audience with His Holiness lasting upwards of three-quarters of an hour. The principal points in the order of their discussion in the conversation briefly stated are as follows:

1. That the French and British require continuing security not possible with the present German régime in whose good faith they have no confidence.

2. That the German people are in fact dissatisfied but so controlled by Gestapo and SS<sup>65a</sup> and political groups that being unarmed, unorganized, and under constant surveillance, are for the moment powerless.

3. That the army officers in general in Germany do not favor war but are not now prepared to oppose the political head of the state. If ordered to march would at the moment obey.

4. That Germany has not sufficient resources to carry on a long war but can do so for a year or more.

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<sup>65a</sup> Schutzstaffel.

5. That His Holiness is not in contact with Mussolini but his information is that Ciano <sup>96</sup> is opposed to war as are the Italian people of all classes and that Mussolini is wavering and undecided. (My own opinion is that Mussolini's attitude is at least in part that of a trader depending on events to land ultimately on the right side with the greatest concessions to and benefits for his country. There is no doubt that his demands will be substantial in any event.) [""]

PHILLIPS

121.866A/47

*Pope Pius XII to President Roosevelt* <sup>97</sup>

**MOST EXCELLENT SIR: Health and Prosperity.**

The pleasure which was Ours on the twenty seventh day of February as We received in Solemn Audience the Representative of Your Excellency was enhanced by the autograph letter <sup>98</sup> which he bore from you and placed into Our hands. We are sincerely grateful for this further evidence of your solicitude for the restoration of peace among nations now estranged as well as for the expressions of cordial greeting which you have been pleased to use in Our regard.

We confess to have been sensibly affected as We beheld before Us your own Representative come upon a noble mission of peace and healing, to seek with Us ways and means of giving back to a warring world its rightful heritage of concord and the freedom to pursue in justice and tranquillity its temporal and eternal happiness. In a moment of universal travail, when hope contends with fear in the souls of so many millions of men, We have been greatly encouraged by the vision of new possibilities of beneficent action opened up to us through the presence near Us of your distinguished Representative. Since the obligations of Christian charity towards the needy and the dispossessed have ever constituted a prior claim upon Our affections and resources as they have upon those of Our Predecessors, it is with particular satisfaction that We welcome Your Excellency's endeavors for the alleviation of suffering. Our contemporaries follow with their heartfelt prayers, and posterity will hold in honored memory, all those who, undeterred by immense difficulties, dedicate themselves to the sacred task of staunching the flow of youthful blood upon the fields of battle, and to the comforting of civilian victims despoiled and afflicted by the cruel conditions of our day. Blessed, indeed, are the peace-makers.

<sup>96</sup> Count Galeazzo Ciano di Cortellazzo, Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>97</sup> Photostatic copy obtained from the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, N. Y.

<sup>98</sup> Letter of February 14, p. 125.

And although one who with discerning eye surveys the present international scene can have no illusions as to the magnitude of the role which has been undertaken, We are convinced that it is in the interest of all that We should go forward with Our labors to the end that the days of grievous trial be shortened, preparing and straightening the way, levelling the mountains of anger which bar the road of understanding and filling up the valleys of distrust and suspicion which divide man from man and nation from nation. Thus may We hope that the natural law, graven by the Creator on the hearts of men, may soon, as it must ultimately, prevail as the universal rule of human conduct over arbitrary whim and sordid interest which here and there have usurped its place, and that in consequence the rising generation may be saved from the moral illiteracy with which they are threatened. And thus, when all shall have come finally to realize that violence is futile and that hatred is a sterile force, a wearied world may rejoice in a peace builded upon the solid foundation of justice and firmly held together by the bonds of fraternal charity.

We renew to Your Excellency the expression of Our gratitude for your greeting while, in the light of happy remembrance, We pray for your continued well-being and for that of the American people.

Given at Rome, from St. Peter's, the 16th day of March, 1940, the second Year of Our Pontificate.

PIUS PP. XII

121.866A/47½

*Pope Pius XII to President Roosevelt*<sup>99</sup>

MOST EXCELLENT SIR: Health and Prosperity.

The return to the United States of Your Excellency's Personal Representative to Us, for the purpose of recruiting in the homeland the forces so generously spent in the fulfilment of his noble mission, affords Us a welcome opportunity of sending you Our cordial greetings, and of reiterating Our appreciation for the presence of your Envoy near Us. In the light of experience, We now have further and ampler proof of the wisdom which inspired Your Excellency to despatch your Representative to Us, as We also have cause to rejoice at the felicity of choice which led you to entrust this important post to the Honorable Myron C. Taylor.

These first months of the mission have occasioned Us great satisfaction and, in spite of the dark forebodings of the hour, We express Our hope in a future which shall see the reestablishment of a general and enduring peace. Although the horrors of the war increase and

<sup>99</sup> Photostatic copy obtained from the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, N. Y.

Our sorrow deepens with every passing day, We are redoubling Our prayers and Our endeavors to find a practicable way to such a peace as will bear within it the promise of permanency, and free men from the heavy incubus of insecurity and of perpetual alarms. In Our unceasing search for that peace which will be no longer, as so often in the past, a parenthesis of exhaustion between two phases of conflict, but rather, by the grace of God, a golden era of Christian concord dedicated to the spiritual and material improvement of humanity, We feel a distinct sense of comfort in the thought that We shall not be without the powerful support of the President of the United States.

It is therefore with heartfelt good will that We again assure Your Excellency of Our prayers for your continued health and happiness and for the prosperity and progress of the American people.

Given at Rome, from St. Peter's, the 22nd day of August, 1940, the second Year of Our Pontificate.

PIUS PP. XII

#### IV. PROPOSAL BY PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT TO SEND SPECIAL ENVOYS TO TURKEY TO CONFER WITH LEADERS OF THE GREEK ORTHODOX AND MOHAMMEDAN FAITHS IN THE CAUSE OF WORLD PEACE

*Memorandum by the Assistant Secretary of State (Berle)  
to President Roosevelt<sup>1</sup>*

[WASHINGTON,] March 18, 1940.

Your memorandum of March 15th<sup>2</sup> regarding someone in the Mohammedan church with whom you could establish contact in the cause of peace.

There is no perfect choice. The best bet appears to be His Majesty Ibn Saud, King of Saudi Arabia.

The reasons for his choice are these:

He is keeper of the holy places (Mecca, Medina) and is in contact with the Mohammedan world through the constant stream of pilgrimages. He is a Sunnite; this sect comprises the overwhelming majority of the Moslem world. He is outside any belligerent territory, and therefore would not be controlled by some foreign power. He has, however, been on friendly terms with Great Britain.

The only danger lies in possible political repercussions in Turkey: I should like authority to discuss the question confidentially with the Turkish Ambassador, who is a devout Moslem. It might be well to

<sup>1</sup> Photostatic copy obtained from the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, N. Y.

<sup>2</sup> Not found in Department files.

accredit your representative to Ibn Saud but with authority to make contact with certain other figures in the Moslem world; for instance, Sheikh El-Maraghy, Rector of the Al-Azhar University in Cairo, the principal Mohammedan theological leader. The Sheikh would not do as the representative, however. He would be too completely controlled by the Egyptians.

ADOLF BERLE

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*Memorandum by the Assistant Secretary of State (Berle)  
to President Roosevelt*<sup>3</sup>

[WASHINGTON,] March 26, 1940.

There has been referred to us a letter from the Hellenic Youth Association to you<sup>4</sup> asking that you appoint a representative to confer with the Greek Orthodox Church in the matter of peace. The letter is unimportant, as the Greek Orthodox groups here have little influence.

But the letter suggests a line which might be worth considering. The Greek Orthodox Church has a good deal of influence in the Near East, the Balkans and the Eastern Mediterranean; and some faint residue of influence in southern Russia. There is no recognized head, Patriarchs having separate jurisdiction in various regions [i. e. Istanbul, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem];<sup>5</sup> but the acknowledged senior is the Patriarch at Istanbul. He could probably convene or consult with the other Patriarchs.

This might be a line worth following. Certainly the contact with the Vatican, plus the contact with the King of Italy, has materially altered the whole diplomatic situation in Italy. Conceivably, the combination of contact with Turkey, with Ibn-Saud and the Mohammedans, and with the Greek Orthodox Church, might materially influence the Near East. As far as I can see, that situation rests now entirely on the attitude of Turkey; it is, in fact, the only solid obstacle which prevents the caving in of the eastern Mediterranean structure. Today's despatches indicate that the Russians have not abandoned their desires to move southward toward the Dardanelles.

Like the move toward the Mohammedans, this ought to be prepared a little in advance by consultation with the Turkish Ambassador here.

A[DOLF] A. B[ERLE]

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<sup>3</sup> Photostatic copy obtained from the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, N. Y.

<sup>4</sup> Not printed.

<sup>5</sup> Portion enclosed by brackets was handwritten on margin of original document.

740.00119 European War 1939/285

*Memorandum by President Roosevelt to the Assistant Secretary of State (Berle)*

WASHINGTON, March 27, 1940.

I have your memorandum in regard to informal discussions with the Greek Orthodox Church <sup>6</sup> and I wish you would talk the matter over with the Secretary, bearing in mind the following thoughts: Unlike the Roman Catholic Church, the Greek Orthodox Church is not wholly centralized under a single head, even though the Patriarch at Istanbul is recognized as the Senior. As I understand it, the other Patriarchs are, in effect, in control within their own jurisdictions.

I wish you would, therefore, consider the following possibility: To appoint Lincoln MacVeagh <sup>7</sup> on a special mission to visit the Patriarch at Istanbul and possibly also the other three Patriarchs, in order to confer with them on the general subject of peace, much as Myron Taylor <sup>8</sup> has been conferring in Rome.

At the same time we might send another Envoy to accomplish the same purpose in the Mohammedan world, conferring (with the full approval of the President of Turkey, of course) with the Mohammedan leader in Turkey proper and the leaders possibly in Saudi-Arabia. After a survey of these it might be advisable to extend such a visit to Egypt and Iraq and Iran—all of them independent countries.

F[RANKLIN] D. R[OOSEVELT]

740.00119 European War 1939/285

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Secretary of State (Berle)*

[WASHINGTON,] April 5, 1940.

In accordance with the suggestion made in the discussion with the Secretary, Mr. Murray <sup>9</sup> and I requested the Turkish Ambassador <sup>10</sup> to call.

I said that we availed ourselves of his kindness to ask his personal advice on a wholly confidential basis. We were exploring an idea and sought the benefit of his views.

I said that the President had announced the policy of an active search for peace. Real peace, in his view, involved the creation of a

<sup>6</sup> *Supra.*<sup>7</sup> Minister in Greece.<sup>8</sup> Personal representative of the President on special mission at the Vatican. For correspondence on the mission, see pp. 123 ff.<sup>9</sup> Wallace Murray, Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs.<sup>10</sup> Mehmet Münir Ertegün.

public sentiment and a moral situation in the world in which the people really desired peace, and wished to abide by it; the President felt that this was in fact the desire of most people, but that it found little or no means of expression. With the object of maintaining contact with spiritual and essentially peaceful forces, the President had sent a representative to the Vatican to establish contact with the Catholic world. We were now exploring the idea of sending a like representative to someone in the Mohammedan world; and possibly also to some head of the Greek Orthodox Church.

Mr. Ertegin said that he would be glad to treat the inquiry in a wholly confidential manner. He said that it raised for the Turkish government a point of extreme delicacy. They had endeavored to play down the political functions of the Mohammedan church; as in many revolutions, the pendulum had probably gone too far in the anti-religious direction. They had also entertained the fear that any political importance given to the Mohammedan church might be used by other powers, as, for instance, Italy. In consequence, the suggestion made would involve a radical reversal of the policy of the Turkish government.

Nevertheless, he said, the Turkish government sympathized so thoroughly with the objectives of the President that the present suggestion would undoubtedly receive serious consideration in Ankara. He suggested that inquiry might be discreetly made in Ankara either through him, or through Mr. MacMurray.<sup>11</sup>

In the event that the move proved possible, he thought that probably the best way of doing it would be to arrange to have the spiritual head of the Mohammedan church, who is under the general supervision of the Turkish Ministry of Education, put into contact with our representative. In such case, when times become propitious, a circular missive might be sent to the various heads of Mohammedan communities. In some cases there would be difficulty: for instance, the British might object to the sending of such missives from Turkey to the Moslem communities in India. All these questions would have to be worked out.

The possible sending of a representative to the heads of the Greek Orthodox church was touched on, but only briefly. The Turkish government plainly would take much the same attitude towards that representation as it did towards a move to establish contact with the Mohammedan church. The Turkish Ambassador felt that nothing

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<sup>11</sup> John V. A. MacMurray, American Ambassador in Turkey.

could come of any contact with Mohammedans in Persia. They were of a different sect, and the Persian government was in very definite and complete opposition to the clergy.

The Turkish Ambassador said he thoroughly understood the confidential nature of the inquiry, and appreciated our kindness in talking it over with him. He would keep it confidential, making inquiry from his government, if we requested it.

*Note*.—My conclusion from this is that it would probably be best to suggest to the President that he write a personal letter to President İnönü. This would be in line with the President's policy. It also would be a delicate way of putting the question to the Turkish government. I accordingly suggest that we send to the President a memorandum along the line of that attached.<sup>12</sup>

A. A. BERLE, JR.

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740.00110 European War 1939/285

*Memorandum by the Assistant Secretary of State (Berle) to  
President Roosevelt*

[WASHINGTON,] April 6, 1940.

Subject: Sending a representative to the Mohammedan and Greek Orthodox Churches.

SUMMARY

This matter was discussed with the Turkish Ambassador. He pointed out the extreme delicacy of the question in Turkey, owing to the Turkish policy of reducing the political importance of the Mohammedan church.

He thought, however, that his government would consider the matter sympathetically, in view of the objective; and suggested that we make inquiry through Ankara.

Recommended: That the inquiry be made by personal letter from the President to President İnönü; we will try our hands at drafting such a letter, if the President authorizes it.<sup>13</sup>

Attached: memorandum to the President;<sup>14</sup> also, memorandum of conversation with the Turkish Ambassador.<sup>15</sup>

A. A. B[ERLE], JR.

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<sup>12</sup> *Infra*.

<sup>13</sup> Marginal note reads: "O.K. F.D.R."

<sup>14</sup> Not printed, but this memorandum is a summary of it.

<sup>15</sup> *Supra*.



740.00119 European War 1939/285

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs (Murray)*

[WASHINGTON,] April 24, 1940.

During a call from the Turkish Ambassador this morning I discussed with him further, in confidence, the suggestion that an emissary might be sent to confer with Mohammedan leaders in Turkey and in other Islamic countries in the cause of world peace.

The Ambassador referred to the discussion which had taken place on this subject on April 5 in Mr. Berle's office, and said that he had given considerable thought to the matter since that time. He said he trusted that he had made himself clear on the above-mentioned occasion that, in view of the entire absence of any clergy in Islam, there is in fact no spiritual head of the Mohammedan religion in Turkey. He referred again to the Turkish official attached to the Prime Ministry and bearing the title of Director of the Bureau of Religious Affairs, and left with me informally the attached statement<sup>16</sup> regarding the functions of this official, but he emphasized at the same time that this official did not and could not exercise any religious leadership. From what the Ambassador had to say in this connection it would seem that the Director of the Bureau of Religious Affairs performs to some degree the functions of the former Sheikh Ul Islam, who was, of course, always a member of the Cabinet and played a considerable political role in the old Ottoman Empire. The Bureau of Religious Affairs, on the other hand, appears to have been set up for the purpose of eliminating religion altogether from politics in Turkey and in order to exercise a very careful censorship and control over any sermons or statements that might be made in the mosques. The Ambassador made it clear that the Director of this Bureau would not be in a position to deal independently with any foreign representative.

Turning then to the larger question at issue, the Ambassador said he felt certain that, while President İnönü, who had great admiration and high regard for President Roosevelt, would of course be disposed to give sympathetic consideration to any suggestion that the President might make, the Ambassador nevertheless felt certain that President İnönü would feel embarrassed if the present suggestion was put to him personally by President Roosevelt. In this connection the Ambassador told me in strict confidence that a leading peace organization in the United States had recently made an almost identical proposal in a letter addressed personally to President İnönü, who, in view of the delicacy of the matter, had decided that it would be inadvisable to make any reply whatever, even an acknowledgment.

<sup>16</sup> Not printed.

The Ambassador then pointed out that in view of the fact that most of the Mohammedan world was pro-Ally in its sentiments and felt that its best interests would be served by an Allied victory, it might be a delicate matter, particularly in Turkey, to endeavor to bring about a discussion in religious circles of ways and means to accomplish world peace. In the first place religious circles in Turkey would consider that any such discussion could only be carried on by the Government itself, and the Government, on the other hand, having carefully excluded religious leaders from any participation in political affairs, would be most reluctant to permit any exception in the present instance. The Ambassador mentioned also a further point which he thought important, namely, that since Turkey might be drawn into the war despite all efforts to remain at peace, the Government would probably not welcome any undue emphasis on the desirability of peace in times like these.

In conclusion the Ambassador stated that in view of the confidential character of this whole matter he was refraining from reporting it to his Government pending further possible developments.

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740.00119 European War 1939/323

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Chief of the Division  
of Near Eastern Affairs (Murray)*

[WASHINGTON,] May 4, 1940.

During a call from the Turkish Ambassador this morning he again inquired as to what, if any, developments had occurred in the proposed sending of a representative from this Government to confer with certain notables of the Islamic world. I told the Ambassador that nothing had happened since our last conversation.

The Ambassador said that he desired again to make it clear, and trusted that he had sufficiently emphasized during previous conversations, that in case such a proposal came to fruition Turkey would find herself in an embarrassing position, either if she were approached or if she were ignored. He did, however, make the suggestion today that if the Turkish President were directly approached in the matter he might find it possible to influence, through the Director of the Bureau of Religious Affairs, the prayers given in the mosques of the country so that the idea of world peace might be duly emphasized.

WALLACE MURRAY

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[The plan for consultation with leaders of the Eastern Orthodox and Mohammedan faiths was abandoned.]

## EXTENSION OF THE EUROPEAN WAR

### I. INVASION OF NORWAY AND DENMARK BY GERMANY<sup>1</sup>

740.00112 European War 1939/1371

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Secretary  
of State (Berle)*

[WASHINGTON,] March 28, 1940.

The Norwegian Minister<sup>2</sup> came in today, at his request.

His government had directed him to acquaint us with the fact that the British government had recently declared its intention of taking over control of the territorial waters of Norway, on the ground that Norway was unable to maintain their neutrality. French public opinion and the French press were supporting this move. The Norwegian Minister indicated that his government was very much concerned.

He stated that on March 23 the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Oslo had telegraphed to London protesting against the fact that British destroyers and warships had now entered Norwegian waters and were actively controlling commerce. He left with me a copy of this telegram and likewise of a similar telegram, dated March 25th,<sup>3</sup> directing a protest occasioned by the fact that a British warship had fired on a German freighter within the three mile limit and the shell had fallen on Norwegian territory. He intimated that the incidents protested against formed merely a part of the British plan to take over and control Norwegian waters.

In his judgment, the situation stemmed from a British note to Norway, dated January 2, 1940, which closed with an assertion of the right of the British government to take over the patrol [of?] these waters, in view of Norway's inability to maintain her own neutrality. He did not have a copy of this note, but left with me a confidential memorandum<sup>4</sup> summarizing the points which the Norwegian government had made in reply. The assertion was made by the British that

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<sup>1</sup> See also correspondence regarding a suggested protest by the American Republics against the invasion of Norway and Denmark, pp. 724 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Wilhelm Munthe de Morgenstjerne.

<sup>3</sup> Neither printed.

<sup>4</sup> Not printed.

German submarines had torpedoed two British vessels and a Greek vessel in Norwegian waters, and that the Norwegian government was unable to prevent this. The Norwegian Minister stated that his government had been unable to find any evidence whatever that the torpedoing had taken place within Norwegian territorial waters or that there had been violation of Norwegian neutrality.

A further incident raising the question was that of the *Altmark*,<sup>5</sup> with which, the Minister stated, this Department was no doubt familiar.

Finally, the statement was being freely made in the press both in Britain and France that Norwegian waters were being used as an avenue by which Swedish ore shipped through Narvik might go to Germany. The fact was, according to the Minister, that only one-fourth of the normal amount of ore shipments to Germany was now going forward; in other words, that there is far less use of the sea lane for these shipments today than there is in peace time.

The Minister concluded by saying that his government had directed him to inquire whether this government would not take note of the desire of the Norwegian government to maintain strict neutrality, and to support the Norwegian protest against British seizure and jurisdiction over her waters. Though the French government had not touched the matter officially, it is plain from the French press and French public opinion that France was associating herself with the policy. Accordingly, it was hoped that we might in some proper way make representations both to France and to Great Britain. The Minister noted that extension of British armed forces into this region might very well lead to an extension of the area of war itself. Norway had endeavored, irrespective of her sympathies, to maintain strict neutrality within the rules of international law as the only way of keeping peace, and wished support in that position.

I stated that we had every sympathy with the desire of Norway to maintain her neutrality, and that we were appreciative of the fact that she had endeavored to do so in connection with the case of the *City of Flint*.<sup>6</sup> I would, I said, take up with the Department the question of whether in the present situation we felt called upon to take any action of the kind suggested [*suggested?*]. I pointed out that we had been cautious about involving this government in overseas disputes, as the Minister knew.

I then inquired whether the government of Norway had discussed this matter with the government of Germany. The Minister hesitated

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<sup>5</sup> The German ship *Altmark* when in Norwegian waters with some captive British officers and seamen on board, was boarded on February 16, 1940, by the crew of the British destroyer *Cossack* who released the prisoners and took them back to England.

<sup>6</sup> See *Foreign Relations, The Soviet Union, 1933-1939*, pp. 984 ff.

and said that he did not know whether any such discussion had been had. I said that it was common knowledge that the German government had urged all neutral nations to assert full neutral rights, and that in the German propaganda press there had at one time appeared suggestions that neutral nations should endeavor to associate themselves for the purpose of opposing British infringement on neutral rights. For that reason, I wondered whether the German government might not have intimated to the Norwegian government that it make the *démarche* they requested.

The Norwegian Minister said he could not tell, though he was familiar with the German position. Further, he said that they were very much worried about the German insistence on what was called "active neutrality", which apparently meant that in the event of any invasion of neutral rights, the neutral was supposed to use force and shoot it out. Under this conception, he said, Norway might rapidly find herself at war with either party, or both parties, which of course was precisely what they were trying to avoid.

I said that I would discuss the matter further after we had studied the problem.

A. A. BERLE, JR.

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740.00112 European War 1939/1371

*Memorandum by the Assistant Secretary of State (Berle)*

[WASHINGTON,] March 28, 1940.

Particular note might be taken of the request of the Norwegian government that we support her protest against British invasions of her neutrality.

I personally do not see that we can be of assistance. In my judgment there is no real doubt that her neutrality is being violated, pretty systematically, by both parties. Yet I am clear that Norway is at the moment under more pressure from Germany and Russia than from Great Britain, and I think it at least possible that the Norwegian request for our assistance may have been suggested by Berlin.

Were any assistance to be considered, I think all we could hope to do would be to call attention to our settled stand in favor of principles of international law. Privately, I have not the slightest doubt that the British propose to control the Norwegian waters as completely as necessary and as long as necessary; for that matter, so do the Germans, in geographical areas within their cognizance.

A. A. BERLE, JR.

740.0011 European War 1939/2115

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Secretary  
of State (Berle)*

[WASHINGTON,] April 6, 1940.

The Norwegian Minister came in today, unexpectedly. He was obviously worried.

He referred to his telephone inquiry of yesterday and said he hoped that we might be able to make some representations in support of Norwegian neutrality. He thought perhaps we could do it on the often expressed American statement that the war should not be allowed to spread.

Although, he said, it was unbelievable that Britain should lower her moral level and violate the Norwegian neutrality, the situation was, in his view, menacing. In response to my question, he thought matters might move very rapidly. He knew that the German government concentrated troops at Stettin; he thought that if the British went forward with their plan the result would be to make southern Scandinavia a battleground and "wipe out northern civilization, which we have worked for so hard and for so many years."

I could give him very little encouragement, save to say that we would continue to study it with all sympathy; but that there were obvious difficulties in the way of asserting neutral rights, which in practice might easily have actual importance in war operations. The Minister agreed that this was so; but he pointed out that neutral rights always had this effect, to some extent.

He then told me, in confidence, that the day before yesterday the Russian Ambassador, whom he had not seen for months, called upon him. The purpose of Oumansky's call was to inform the Norwegian Minister—obviously with intent that it should be reported—that Russia considered the Finnish adventure liquidated;<sup>7</sup> that she had absolutely no further demands on Finland; that the talk of her desiring ice-free ports and the like was merely anti-Soviet propaganda; that Russia's only desire was to be a good neighbor to Scandinavia and that they might be at rest so far as Russian designs were concerned.

I said I was glad to hear this. Confidentially, we had received reports at an earlier stage of the Finnish matter indicating that wider designs might be under consideration. I was glad, I said, to learn of the present Russian assurance.

The Minister then reported that although his government had been negotiating in London for free passage of the Norwegian Line boats

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<sup>7</sup> For correspondence regarding the Soviet-Finnish war, see pp. 269 ff.

carrying American mail, they had got nowhere, and no further purpose would be served by continuing the discussions. Accordingly, we were back where we started. He hoped that we would not be hard on the Norwegian Line, which thus found itself, through no fault of its own, in an extremely difficult position, since its boats would be carried into a British control station if they did carry mail—which they were proposing to avoid.

I told the Minister, confidentially, that I understood the British were proposing to establish a control station in Nova Scotia; and that if the matter could be kept open for a short time it was reasonably probable that the question would solve itself.

The Minister, in leaving, emphasized the need for speed if anything were to be done in connection with the matter of Norwegian neutrality. He stressed his feeling that the very life of Scandinavia might be at stake.

A. A. BERLE, JR.

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740.00112 European War 1939/1903

*The British Ambassador (Lothian) to the Secretary of State*

WASHINGTON, April 6, 1940.

DEAR MR. SECRETARY: I received instructions last night from Lord Halifax<sup>s</sup> to communicate the enclosed message to you for your personal information.

LOTHIAN

[Enclosure]

As a result of a review by the Supreme War Council of the situation created by the German methods of warfare at sea and by German intervention in Scandinavia during the Soviet-Finnish war, notes were communicated on April 5th by His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom and the French Government to the Swedish and Norwegian Governments drawing attention to the fact that the latter have been deprived of liberty of action in foreign affairs through German pressure and that the Allies can no longer afford to acquiesce in Germany obtaining vital war resources and facilities from Sweden and Norway, and notifying them frankly of certain vital interests and requirements which the Allies must assert and defend by any means necessary.

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<sup>s</sup> British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

Actions contrary to these vital interests would be :

(a) Any refusal to facilitate Allied assistance to Finland against further attack by either the Soviet Union or Germany, and still more any attempt to prevent it.

(b) Any exclusive political agreement with Germany or any Scandinavian alliance providing for acceptance of German help, even if designed ostensibly for the defense of Finland.

(c) Any Soviet attempt to obtain from Norway a footing on the Atlantic seaboard.

(d) Any refusal, withdrawal or curtailment of essential facilities in matters of commerce and shipping, which it is not unreasonable for a neutral government to concede to the Allies.

In addition :

(e) The Allies, who are waging a war for aims as much in the interests of the smaller States as in their own, cannot allow the course of the war to be influenced against them by advantages derived by Germany from Sweden or Norway, and reserve the right to take measures to prevent Germany from obtaining these.

The notes point out that Germany already violates Sweden and Norwegian rights, destroying shipping in disregard of international law and of the loss of life involved, while the Swedish and Norwegian Governments cannot secure redress. The Allies will never follow this example, and if and when they have to take special measures, it will be to establish principles which the Scandinavians would themselves wish to see prevail, and upon which the very existence of the smaller States of Europe ultimately depend. These objectives can only be obtained by the victory of the Allied cause.

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740.0011 European War 1939/1973 : Telegram

*The Minister in Denmark (Atherton) to the Secretary of State*

COPENHAGEN, April 6, 1940—2 a. m.

[Received April 5—11 : 21 p. m.]

55. From a usually reliable source I am informed that in the face of opposition from the German General Staff and other advisers, Hitler gave his personal orders yesterday for embarkation of one division at Baltic port probably Stettin on 10 steamers. His plan is that these ships proceed by night through Danish waters and thereafter as secretly as possible up the Norwegian coast to Narvik disembarking troops there Tuesday. If this occupation of Narvik takes place as planned, Jutland is to be occupied by German troops immediately thereafter. There is to be, however, no violation of Sweden's neutrality.

My informant pointed out that it is possible even after the troops are embarked, Hitler may be prevailed upon by his advisers to cancel orders for steamers sailing from Stettin.



I have not heard of any extended concentration of German troops on Danish frontier but my British colleague advises me in discussing the Italian situation that rumors have reached them of German loquacity pointing towards early occupation of Jutland.

ATHERTON

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740.00112 European War 1939/1904

*The British Ambassador (Lothian) to the Secretary of State*<sup>9</sup>

WASHINGTON, April 7, 1940.

DEAR MR. SECRETARY: With reference to my letter of yesterday informing you that a communication had been made by the Allied Governments to the Swedish and Norwegian Governments, I enclose herein the text of a message which I have been instructed to convey to the President for his personal and secret information.

Yours sincerely,

LOTHIAN

[Enclosure]

MESSAGE FOR THE PRESIDENT

In addition to addressing these notes to the Swedish and Norwegian Governments the Allied Governments have now decided to take certain appropriate action in view of the situation described therein.

They have reached the conclusion that they can no longer acquiesce in the present position in regard to the use of Norwegian territorial waters by Germany. As matters now stand Norwegian ships engaged in commerce with Great Britain are being continually and mercilessly sunk in defiance of the laws of war, the Norwegian Government being unable to take any measures to protect them. Meanwhile German vessels are not only permitted to make use of the whole length of Norwegian waters as a shield against the Allied forces, but are actually being accorded special protection in those waters by the Norwegian Navy.

Though they realise that the Norwegian attitude is solely dictated by German threats and pressure the Allied Governments are bound to consider that these facts result in serious discrimination against their interests and they accordingly intend to mine certain stretches of Norwegian territorial waters in order to prevent their use by German vessels. This operation will probably take place early on Monday, April 8th, and the Allied Governments will simultaneously issue a joint declaration of their reasons for undertaking it.

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<sup>9</sup> Notation on margin of document, by the Adviser on Political Relations: "This note was handed to me by the First Secretary of the British Embassy at my house April 7, 1940 at 7 p. m. J. C. Dunn."

It is possible that weather conditions may necessitate a short postponement of the operations and this emphasises the necessity for absolute secrecy until the public declaration is issued.

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740.00112 European War 1939/1299

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Secretary of State (Berle)*

[WASHINGTON,] April 8, 1940.

The Norwegian Minister came in today, at his request. He is increasingly disturbed over the situation in Norway. Following the laying of the British mine fields, he considered it certain that there would be repercussions. His government had rumors of German warships sailing into Norwegian waters; and even German troops proceeding to make a landing. The insistence that the Norwegians fire on British vessels violating their neutrality was, of course, a plain invitation to start the war at once. He repeated his request to know whether we could do anything.

I could only say that the difficulties continued to be obvious; that we were closely watching the situation; but that it seemed to me that the situation turned now apparently on strictly realist considerations.

I added that we were in process of reconsidering our "combat areas", naturally in the hope that there could be continued commerce with Norway.

The Minister left with me the formal statement issued by his government, which is attached.<sup>10</sup>

A. A. BERLE, JR.

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740.00112 European War 1939/1305

*The British Ambassador (Lothian) to the Secretary of State*

WASHINGTON, April 8, 1940.

SIR: Under instructions from His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs I have the honour to communicate to you the enclosed text of a joint public declaration which has been made by His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom and the French Government, regarding the territorial waters of Norway.<sup>11</sup>

I have [etc.]

LOTHIAN

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<sup>10</sup> For text of statement, see the *London Times*, April 9, 1940, p. 8.

<sup>11</sup> For text of declaration, see *ibid.*, p. 7.

740.0011 European War 1939/1992 : Telegram

*The Minister in Norway (Harriman) to the Secretary of State*

OSLO, undated.

[Received April 9, 1940—12: 04 a. m.]

51. Foreign Minister<sup>12</sup> informs me the Norwegians have fired on four German warships coming up Oslofjord, and that Norway is at war with Germany! Five warships are also en route Bergen.

British Minister requests us to take over his Legation in case he is obliged to evacuate. Cannot reach you by telephone.

HARRIMAN

740.0011 European War 1939/1994 : Telegram

*The Minister in Denmark (Atherton) to the Secretary of State*

COPENHAGEN, April 9, 1940.

[Received April 9—7 a. m.]

59. German leaflets distributed Denmark state occupation protecting Denmark's neutrality. Negotiations proceeding between Danish and German Government for preservation of Kingdom, civil and military authority.

ATHERTON

740.0011 European War 1939/1997 : Telegram

*The Minister in Norway (Harriman) to the Secretary of State*

OSLO, April 9, 1940—7 a. m.

[Received 8 a. m.]

Norwegian Government left for Hamar 3 hours inland from Oslo at 7 a. m. I am proceeding there by motor with other heads of missions. All Foreign Service Officers remaining in Oslo. At request of British and French Ministers this Legation has taken over British and French interests. Oslo is quiet, as public has not yet realized situation. Foreign Office states that Norwegian forces are resisting the German advance.

HARRIMAN

740.0011 European War 1939/2002 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, April 9, 1940—11 a. m.

[Received April 9—10: 50 a. m.]

871. My 866, April 9, 10 a. m.<sup>13</sup> A special announcement has just been made over the German radio at 10: 50 which after referring to

<sup>12</sup> Halvdan Koht.<sup>13</sup> Not printed.

earlier British violations of Norwegian neutrality, to the inability of Norway to defend its neutrality, and to the lame protest made by Norway in the matter of the British laying of mines in its waters, stated that Germany has decided to remove this northern area from the field of British aggression. A special communiqué of the German Army high command was then read which stated that the German Army since early this morning had taken over the protection of Denmark and Norway, that all branches of the German armed forces were being employed, that landings had been made and extensive mine barrages laid.

Embassy unable to communicate with Legation at Copenhagen.

KIRK

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740.0011 European War 1939/1999 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, April 9, 1940—noon.

[Received April 9—9:54 a. m.]

872. My 871, April 9, 11 a. m. I am informed that this morning at 10 o'clock a special messenger from Ribbentrop<sup>14</sup> called at the Norwegian Legation to request the Minister to call at the Foreign Office at 11:30 a. m. At the same time the messenger handed the Norwegian Minister an 11-page note<sup>15</sup> from the Foreign Office announcing that German troops had been landed at several points in Norway. The note asserted that these landings of troops denoted no aggressive designs against Norway but were occasioned by certain information that British and French Governments were on the eve of dispatching troops and extending the way [*war*] to Norway. The German troops would occupy only a limited number of strategic points as garrisons whose mission was to forestall and to protect Norway against allied aggression. The note asked that no resistance be made against these troops who were to be considered as "friends" of Norway. The note is said to indicate that German troops had occupied Denmark and that a similar note was being handed here and at Copenhagen to the Danish Government. It was understood from the note that military operations would not be extended to Sweden at this time. Up to this hour the Norwegian Legation is without instructions from its Government.

At 10:30 this morning the Danish Legation was without information other than the reports current yesterday as to the German transport movements proceeding north. The Legation was informed

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<sup>14</sup> Joachim von Ribbentrop, Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>15</sup> See memorandum of April 9, 1940, Department of State, *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, series D, vol. ix, p. 88.

that Danish and Norwegian press correspondents had been placed in seclusion in the Hotel Kaiserhof in Berlin.

KIRK

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740.0011 European War 1939/2114

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

[WASHINGTON], April 9, 1940.

At about half-past eleven, the Norwegian Minister called. He confirmed that the Germans had taken Bergen and other Atlantic ports, though how they were able to do so in the face of the British blockade and the presence of British warships he was unable to understand. He pointed out that Norway could at best put up merely a *pro forma* resistance. In the first place, the German troops were admirably prepared and equipped, and were not "inefficient" like the Russians. In the second place, the Norwegian Army was small and incapable of a prolonged effort. He then said that as the Allies had "brought on this war", it was up to them to come and save Norway. If they failed to do so, he felt that Allied prestige throughout all the neutral world would sink to an all-time low and bring about consequences that were difficult to foresee. He, the Minister, would await better days, but these days would have to come from without.

P[IERREPONT] M[OFFAT]

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740.0011 European War 1939/1993: Telegram

*The First Secretary of Legation in Norway (Cox)  
to the Secretary of State*

OSLO, April 9, 1940—noon.

[Received April 9—8 a. m.]

53. Legation's 52.<sup>16</sup> Senior Foreign Office official has just told me that German Minister saw Koht at 5 a. m. and handed him note stating under instructions of his Government that only possible solution for Norway was to accept military occupation and that Germans would fight Norwegian resistance. Koht replied that Norway must resist and that there was no justification for German force on Norway. His latest information was that Bergen was occupied and Kristiansand and Trondheim are believed taken. German warships have not got beyond Drobak in Oslofjord. Personal belief is that Oslo cannot

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<sup>16</sup> Dated April 9, 11 a. m., not printed.

be defended if Germans force their way to within range of city. Royal family is believed to have accompanied Government. British, French and Danish Ministers were requested to follow Government to Hamar. Swedes representing Norwegian interests in Berlin. Oslo continues quiet, streets filled with people leaving city. German planes not presently over city.

Cox

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740.0011 European War 1939/2000: Telegram

*The Chargé in France (Murphy) to the Secretary of State*

PARIS, April 9, 1940—1 p. m.

[Received April 9—9: 42 a. m.]

441. The French Government has just issued the following statement:

“Monsieur Paul Reynaud, President of the Council, Minister of Foreign Affairs, received Monsieur Bachke, the Norwegian Minister this morning at 11 o'clock and made the following statement to him:

(1) The Government of the Reich has just published a declaration according to which the Reich has decided to undertake the protection of Norway and Denmark. This action is presented as a reply to the laying of mine fields in Norwegian territorial waters by the French and British navies yesterday.

(2) The French Government has been informed that the German Minister at Oslo in a *démarche* made at 5 o'clock this morning asked the Oslo Government to abandon Norwegian territory to German military administration. The representatives of the Reich added that in case of refusal all resistance would be overcome. This demand was immediately rejected by the Norwegian Government. Subsequent information shows that German troops have already occupied Norwegian territory.

(3) The German declaration, which presents the action of the Reich as a reply to the measures taken by the British and French Governments, will not deceive anyone, in [*as?*] operation involving the simultaneous debarkation of troops escorted by naval forces at numerous Norwegian ports could have been prepared only over a long period. The French Government is pleased that Norway had decided to resist the German aggression by force.

(4) Monsieur Paul Reynaud made known to the Norwegian Minister that in view of the invasion of his country by Germany the French Government has decided to give immediate and complete aid to Norway and that it will carry forward the war in full association with his country.

(5) The necessary military and naval measures have in consequence been taken in cooperation with the English.”

MURPHY

740.0011 European War 1939/2017 : Telegram

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

THE HAGUE, April 9, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received April 9—2 p. m.]

103. The Secretary General has just told me that the Foreign Office last week had information to the effect that Germany would invade Denmark and Norway—and that this information was specific to the point of setting the invasion for this week—the same source of information adding that these two operations would be followed by a large scale offensive on the western front “possibly through Belgium and Holland”.

GORDON

740.0011 European War 1939/2019 : Telegram

*The Minister in Sweden (Sterling) to the Secretary of State*

STOCKHOLM, April 9, 1940—5 p. m.

[Received April 9—2:20 p. m.]

179. It is impossible for the Foreign Minister to see me today but an officer of the Legation has had a short and because of pressure not entirely satisfactory interview with the Chief of the Political Division of the Foreign Office who said that Germany had informed Sweden, presumably last night, of her plans in Denmark and Norway. He added that Germany had made no request for the passage of troops through Sweden or brought pressure to bear on Sweden other than to express the desire and expectation that Sweden would remain neutral. He considers the situation very critical for Sweden.

From an unimpeachable source it is learned that no general mobilization will be announced today as was generally expected but that one or two additional classes will be called to the colors immediately. My informant expects further classes to be called up as developments warrant which eventually would amount to general mobilization but the latter will not be announced because of the possibility of offending Germany and also so as not to create a panicky situation in Sweden.

The Swedish Government assumes that the statement from Berlin that Germany has laid mines outside Goteborg is correct.

Our Consul at Oslo reports by telephone that the Department's telegram of last night addressed to the Legation there was received.

STERLING

740.0011 European War 1939/2035: Telegram

*The Minister in Sweden (Sterling) to the Secretary of State*

STOCKHOLM, April 9, 1940—11 p. m.

[Received April 9—9 p. m.]

182 [*bis*]. Department's No. 55, April 9, 10 a. m.<sup>17</sup> Impossible to reach either Legation at Oslo or Mrs. Harriman at Hamar this evening as all telephone communication with Norway is cut off at least temporarily.

At my request Consul General Johnson succeeded in seeing Prime Minister tonight who made the following remarks:

"A state of war exists between Germany and Norway just as a state of war existed between Russia and Finland. This is all I can say as to the exact juridical status since Germany has not declared war on Norway and as far as I know Norway has not declared war on Germany. I do not believe the fighting can last long in Norway.

Germany has exerted no pressure upon Sweden but has asked Sweden whether it intends to remain neutral as between Germany and Norway. The Swedish Government has replied that it intends to pursue the same policy of strict neutrality which has been followed since the beginning of the Great War.

As regards the passage of troops through Sweden my attitude remains the same as that outlined in my speech in the Rigsdag in [on] January 17 when I said that no foreign troops would be allowed to pass through Sweden.

Regarding the freedom of movement of Swedish shipping and the possible dependency of Sweden for supplies on Germany I am unable to say anything pending further developments."

The above is undoubtedly the Government's attitude today but it is very possible that it may change at any moment depending on developments, such as the success of the British movements in Norway and German pressure on Sweden. Despite Swedish assertions of her intention to defend her neutrality at all costs it must be realized that Sweden is now cut off from essential necessities on the west such as oil and coal and she may, as has apparently Norway, put up only a nominal resistance to German aggression. STERLING

740.0011 European War 1939/2210: Telegram

*The Minister in Norway (Harriman) to the Secretary of State*

OSLO VIA BERLIN, April 10, 1940—12 noon.

[Received April 15—9:23 a.m.]

60. From Cox. After calm night, air raid warning signals were sounded at 12 o'clock. German Legation denies report that it ordered evacuation of City by 12 o'clock. No Foreign Office officials at present

<sup>17</sup> Not printed.



in Oslo Foreign Office. The Quisling Government has sent out proclamation published in morning press that after Great Britain had violated Norwegian neutrality by mining Norwegian territorial waters meeting no opposition other than empty protest from Nygaardsvold Government the German Government has offered the Norwegian Government its peaceful help but Nygaardsvold Government ordered general mobilization and has itself fled. Proclamation continues that it was the duty and right of National Union Party to take over government power and has done so in a government with the following representatives: Vidkun Quisling, head of Government and Foreign Minister; Berger Meidell, Minister of Church and Education; Gulbrand Lunde, Minister of Social Affairs; Albert V. Hagelin, Minister of Trade and Supplies; Tormod Hustad, Minister of Agriculture; R. Skancke, Minister of Labor; Frederik Prytz, Minister of Finance, and Major R. Hvoslef, Minister of Defense.

Proclamation requests Norwegians remain calm in saving Norway through crisis.

Situation is very confused as many people evacuating Oslo fearing hostilities will take place. Rumors are rife of approaching military action. [Cox.]

HARRIMAN

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740.0011 European War 1939/2039 : Telegram

*The Minister in Sweden (Sterling) to the Secretary of State*

STOCKHOLM, April 10, 1940.

[Received April 10—9:30 a. m.]

187. The Swedish Prime Minister<sup>18</sup> stated in a communiqué late last night that the German Government had made representations to the Swedish Government expressing its expectation that Sweden would observe strict neutrality. The Swedish Government had replied that it would adhere to the policy of neutrality which on several occasions during the present war had been declared and that it reserved full freedom to take all measures which are deemed necessary for the maintenance and defense of this neutrality.

STERLING

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740.0011 European War 1939/2048 : Telegram

*The Minister in Sweden (Sterling) to the Secretary of State*

STOCKHOLM, April 10, 1940—2 p. m.

[Received April 10—10:45 a. m.]

190. The Minister for Foreign Affairs,<sup>19</sup> commenting this morning on Sweden's position, told me that to the Swedish Government's reply

<sup>18</sup> Per Albin Hansson.

<sup>19</sup> Christian E. Günther.

to the German representations (reference the Legation's telegram No. 187) was an added sentence not published in the communiqué which was to the effect that Sweden would use every effort to continue neutral attitude in her relations with Germany. This seems to be a slight knuckling under. I asked him bluntly what would Sweden do if Germany exerted pressure to allow transit of troops through Sweden to relieve German forces in Norway. He replied that he would prefer not to answer that question; that events could only determine Swedish policy as the situation developed; but, he added "Sweden is in a very weak position".

STERLING

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740.0011 European War 1939/2072: Telegram

*The Minister in Sweden (Sterling) to the Secretary of State*

STOCKHOLM, April 10, 1940—5 p. m.

[Received April 10—3:21 p. m.]

194. The public is calm but the situation is realized to be very serious. Troop movements to the south are reported. A state of partial air defense preparedness for all Sweden was declared today. Evacuation in large numbers from Norway to Sweden has begun.

It is generally believed the German troops now in Norway were shipped in cargo vessels some time before British mine laying of Norwegian waters. Gunther tells me he has no doubt that this is true so far as Trondhjem and Narvik are concerned.

One newspaper carries an eyewitness story that a German factory whaling vessel docked last Monday evening at Narvik when two Norwegian customs officers who came on board to inspect were kidnapped and held until after German troops concealed in the hold were landed at daylight the next morning.

The press unites in condemning German aggression in Denmark and Norway.

STERLING

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740.0011 European War 1939/2059: Telegram

*The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State*

HELSINKI, April 10, 1940—5 p. m.

[Received April 10—2 p. m.]

187. Leading liberal newspaper in editorial today entitled "Scandinavia in the vortex of the great war" says that events of the last 2 days prove that policy of neutrality could not prevent involvement of the

north in the war, adding that recent notes of the Allied Governments to Sweden and Norway evidence the impression of German influence over Scandinavia created in France and Great Britain during the Finnish-Soviet war. Paper adds that Scandinavian attitude towards the Finnish struggle against Russian aggression provided psychological basis for present Allied policy and led to mining of Norwegian coastal waters by the Allies with ensuing lightning German reaction though there was no excuse for occupation of Denmark in view of its nonaggression pact with Germany on which the ink was hardly dry.

I am given to understand by members of the Finnish Government that above view is substantially that of the Government as to the direct relation between policy of the Scandinavian countries during Finnish war with Russia and the present position of Norway, Denmark, and Sweden and it is believed here that plans for German intervention crystallized only during the last stage of Finnish and Soviet hostilities. The inference drawn from present situation by the Finnish Government and informed opinion is that Finnish policy must be one of even more extreme caution than previously to avoid friction either with Germany or with Russia and it is my opinion that this policy will continue pending radical change in the military position of the great powers.

SCHOENFELD

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740.0011 European War 1939/2116

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State*

[WASHINGTON,] April 10, 1940.

The Minister of Norway called at his request. After some preliminary exchange of sympathetic interest regarding the calamity which has befallen his country by reason of foreign invasion, the Minister said that he expected to give out a statement about the way Norway had been treated, et cetera, and requested me to read it. This I declined most respectfully to do and proceeded carefully and fully to explain to the Minister that it would not be best either for his country or mine for me to pursue steps of this nature; that it would create misunderstanding, criticism and attempts to develop disturbances; that, therefore, it was my practice here in the State Department not to read statements of foreign diplomats in Washington intended for publication. The Minister said that he understood fully my viewpoint and he seemed to acquiesce cheerfully in the position I expressed. I did not, therefore, read the paper he had with him or receive any synopsis of it.

The Minister, as I understood him, exhibited much bitterness against Germany. If he included Great Britain and France, it was in such a veiled manner that I did not follow him in this respect.

I requested the Minister's opinion as to when the German expeditionary force must have sailed in order to reach the northern ports of Norway before the British and the French sowed the mines along the North Coast on Monday morning last. He replied promptly that, in any event, the Germans would have been obliged to organize their expeditionary force, get it to the point of departure, and sail at least twelve hours in advance of British and French action. In other words, he was convinced that the Germans initiated and launched their invasion well in advance of the mine-sowing by the British and the French.

The Minister stated that he had not heard from his Government since early yesterday; that none of his cables had been answered, and he interpreted this to mean that the Germans were in rigid control and not permitting communication between him and his Government. He said that he could not tell thus far exactly what kind of military control the Germans were imposing on his country; that when the German officials first reached Oslo, they called on the proper officials of the Government of Norway to turn over the entire country to the military control of Germany; that the Cabinet and other authorized officials convened at once and conveyed a negative reply to this demand; that thereupon the German officials made it clear that they would crush any resistance.

C[ORDELL] H[ULL]

124.576/34 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, April 11, 1940—noon.

[Received April 11—12:13 p. m.]

919. My 909, April 10, 7 p. m.<sup>20</sup> An officer of the Embassy just spoke by telephone with Cox of the Legation at Oslo. Cox stated that the Legation was unable to make any telephone calls outside of the city. He had been filing telegrams with the local post office which was in German control and had been assured that they were going forward. His last telegram to the Department was number 66, April 10, 9 p. m. The last telegram he had received from the Department was a message received Tuesday authorizing the Legation to take over all French and British interests. He asked for advice as to whether to

<sup>20</sup> Not printed.

continue to file telegrams direct to the Department or whether he should send them via Berlin. It was suggested that until the situation was clarified it might be well to file them both ways.

He stated that Oslo was now quiet. There had been a considerable panic yesterday as a result of the unconfirmed report that British naval forces were in the Oslo Fjord and many people had stormed transportation facilities in an effort to leave town. This panic had now entirely subsided. He had not heard of any instance in which any American had suffered as a result of recent hostilities.

Mrs. Harriman was remaining near the Norwegian Government. She was accompanied only by her maid and by one clerk, Miss Lindgren. He, Cox, had been able to communicate with her by telephone yesterday afternoon and she was quite well. The wives of the other Americans in the official establishment at Oslo were in the country.

The Legation had taken charge of French and British interests, had sealed the official premises in Oslo both consular and diplomatic of those Governments, and had despatched last night by train to Stockholm 18 members of the British Legation and Consulate staffs and one member of the French Legation. They had advanced funds on receipt to cover this transportation and had also received inquiries from British citizens in Norway concerning financial assistance in connection with evacuation for [*from?*] the country. They request funds be allotted to them for this purpose. I should like to suggest that the American Legation at Stockholm be authorized to take up this question with the British Legation there.

Cox also stated that similar inquiries with regard to funds for support and evacuation had been received from American citizens in Norway and asked for instructions on this point. He further requested information with regard to the payment of per diem to the dependents of members of the staffs at Oslo who have been evacuated from the city.

With respect to the evacuees from Berlin who are now residing at a hotel in the suburbs of Oslo he stated that they are all well and were engaged in making arrangements to leave for Berlin via Sweden at 8:10 this evening.

The Embassy has undertaken to telephone Oslo again this afternoon.

I submit for the Department's consideration the advisability of concentrating if practicable in the American Legation at Stockholm the direction by the Department of all matters affecting the Legation at Oslo.

Repeated to Stockholm.

KIRK

740.0011 European War 1939/2100 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, April 11, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received 6:37 p. m.]

924. There is at present no uniformity in the reports of the reaction in Germany to the recent occupation by Germany of Norway and Denmark. Even accounts of opinion in official circles vary and although the version offered is that the German action was necessary owing to the plans of the Allies and that military preparations by Germany had recently been proceeding with only such plans in view, there is disagreement in the accounts as to the extent of the alleged counteraction as envisaged by the Germans as well as regarding the actual part played by the laying of the British mines in territorial waters in precipitating German action. Important officials of the Foreign Office are quoted as saying without regard to the time and distance elements involved that action against Norway as finally taken was determined upon only a day or two before the British operations were carried out, that it was regarded as a great risk on the part of Germany, that the occupation of Denmark was a military necessity to protect the lines of communication with Norway and that an indication of the suddenness of the decision may be found in the fact that the highest German military authorities were ignorant of the actual move until the last moment.

All officials are reflecting complete confidence in the success of the German arms especially now that they claim immunity from interference in the north and although they are noncommittal on the question of an attack in the west or of an extension of activity in the southeast they profess absolute assurance that the war will shortly be terminated and that peace will come before the end of the year. It is on the basis of that assurance that the tendency is noted to discount, even, the factor of the part which the United States might be expected eventually to take in a war.

Public reaction in Germany is equally confused. There is noticeable an element of pride in the achievement as portrayed in the press and satisfaction over the blow to the Allies which this latest German move is characterized as having inflicted. From the scanty reports received from outlying districts especially in northern Germany the emphasis in the minds of the people is placed on the increase of food supplies and iron ore for Germany which this latest development is believed to secure with the corresponding disadvantage in the decrease of the same supplies to England and on the added advantage that Germany will now be in a position to insist on receiving those supplies from the north with the minimum export of German coal which has hitherto been used as payment. Although similar reactions are detected in

Berlin also there are indications that these last events even in the favorable aspect in which they are presented to the public have caused a certain anxiety as to consequences both military and political as well as economic which they may portend and this anxiety is said to be especially noticeable among industrialists and bankers.

KIRK

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740.0011 European War 1939/2150: Telegram

*The Minister in Sweden (Sterling) to the Secretary of State*

STOCKHOLM, April 12, 1940.

[Received April 12—10 p. m.]

233. The Prime Minister this evening made an unexpected announcement over the Swedish broadcasting system.

After the obvious remarks about the hour [of?] trial, sympathy for brother Scandinavian peoples, and the shock caused by the approach of war to the Swedish frontier he said, "We must conserve our peace, liberty, and honor. Sweden has done everything which could have been asked of her to maintain the neutrality proclaimed from the beginning. Sweden is firmly resolved to continue to follow the line of strict neutrality. It would not be compatible with strict neutrality to permit a belligerent state to use Swedish territory for its purposes. No demands fortunately have been addressed to us in this sense. If one should be made it would be refused." He then referred to the necessary disruption in normal life required to reinforce the defensive organization, the uncertainty and insecurity and trial of nerves and closed with the expression of the conviction that the necessary sacrifices would be made by the people to defend liberty and independence.

STERLING

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857.01/6

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State*

[WASHINGTON,] April 12, 1940.

The Minister of Norway called at his request. He said that a puppet government had been formed at Oslo and he had been notified to take orders from it alone, or he would be held accountable. He stated that, instead of doing so, he would be entirely loyal to his regular government and that he would be glad to stay on here, if we had no objection. I assured him that he would be welcome here so long as he was the representative of his regularly constituted government, as at present.

The Minister then urged that this Government do not declare a state of war between Norway and Germany. I said to him that, natu-

rally, this Government was loath to do this. I then added that, unfortunately, his own Foreign Minister, in reply to a specific inquiry on this point by Minister Harriman, had stated that "while Norway had not declared war on Germany, at the same time as Norway had been attacked, she considered herself at war". I further added that this Government was placed in a difficult situation with respect to this matter. The Minister said there must be some misunderstanding and that he would beg of me to give him time to communicate with his Foreign Minister through his own Legation at Stockholm before taking affirmative action here. I said that I would do the best possible in this respect but that I could not promise unqualifiedly, since I could not know how much time he might need in which to get a reply from his Government nor how much pressure might arise on this Government for action.

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740.0011 European War 1939/2173 : Telegram

*The Chargé in Estonia (Leonard) to the Secretary of State*

TALLINN, April 13, 1940—6 p. m.

[Received April 13—3 : 15 p. m.]

49. In informal conversations today at the Foreign Office high officials have expressed to me the opinion that the Soviet Government's policy toward the Baltic States and Finland will not change as a result of the German invasion of Denmark and Norway and that the Soviets will not interfere in any way unless possibly if Sweden becomes involved.

The neutrality law of Estonia applies to the present situation in Norway and Denmark and no special proclamation of neutrality is required.

The Danish Chargé d'Affaires has informed me that in his opinion and that of the Estonian Minister for Foreign Affairs his Legation's status locally has not changed.

LEONARD

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740.0011 European War 1939/2225a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Minister in Denmark (Atherton)*<sup>21</sup>

WASHINGTON, April 14, 1940—2 p. m.

53. The President has issued the following statement :

"Force and military aggression are once more on the march against small nations, in this instance through the invasion of Denmark and Norway. These two nations have won and maintained during a

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<sup>21</sup> The same, *mutatis mutandis*, April 14, to the Ministers in Norway (No. 83) and in Sweden (No. 82).



period of many generations the respect and regard not only of the American people, but of all peoples, because of their observance of the highest standards of national and international conduct.

The Government of the United States has on the occasion of recent invasions strongly expressed its disapprobation of such unlawful exercise of force. It here reiterates, with undiminished emphasis, its point of view as expressed on those occasions. If civilization is to survive, the rights of the smaller nations to independence, to their territorial integrity, and to the unimpeded opportunity for self-government must be respected by their more powerful neighbors."

HULL

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740.0011 European War 1939/2249 : Telegram

*The Minister in Sweden (Sterling) to the Secretary of State*

STOCKHOLM, April 16, 1940—1 p. m.

[Received April 16—10 : 10 a. m.]

282. Following telephoned by Mrs. Harriman at noon.

All members of the Norwegian Foreign Office have left for Stockholm. Marshal of the Court has arrived at Salen where the Crown Princess with her children are staying. He states that all the members of the Royal Family are well and may go to Stockholm.

She now knows whereabouts of Norwegian Government across Swedish border. The roads are open and when Losey<sup>22</sup> returns to her at Salen she will proceed with him to Government.

STERLING

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740.0011 European War 1939/2391

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

[WASHINGTON,] April 16, 1940.

The Norwegian Minister called this morning. He said he had little news. He had had one or two messages from his Government via Stockholm, but there were many more requests he had sent to which he had not yet received a reply.

He said he was still dreading the possibility that the United States might issue a neutrality proclamation naming Norway as a belligerent. He pointed out that Germany did not consider herself at war with Norway, and he had asked Koht to give him a message that Norway did not consider herself in a state of war. I asked if Norway considered herself an ally of the Allies. He said he hoped that they considered themselves an associated power.

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<sup>22</sup> Capt. Robert M. Losey, Assistant Military Attaché in Norway and Sweden.

He concluded by asking that, if in any way possible, we delay issuing a neutrality proclamation at least until he had had an answer from his Foreign Minister (Koht).

PIERREPONT MOFFAT

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740.0011 European War 1939/2286 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, April 17, 1940—noon.

[Received 6:05 p. m.]

1017. For the Secretary and Under Secretary. Within the last few days I have spoken with the representatives in Berlin of practically every neutral country in the immediate or relative proximity of Germany, Italy and Russia. There is not one, who in view of the latest developments, does not fear for his country an attack against its territory or a violation of its sovereignty and the only questions in their minds are the points where the attacks will be made, the time they will be launched, and the extent of the destruction involved.

Up to now every possible appeal has been made first to prevent this war and then to limit its scope until some just and reasonable basis for a durable peace could be found. All these efforts have failed and the immediate prospect of [*is?*] a war, which although an outcome compatible with the maintenance of the principles of our civilization may be eventually assured, will inevitably entail the destruction of values both social and material in Europe and ultimately elsewhere from which there may be no recovery.

The acts which have punctuated the stages of this war have been frequently connected [*condemned?*] in words and messages but those words and messages have been unaccompanied by any overt act expressive of that condemnation and have not [*now?*] lost all effect except as utensil of diverse propaganda. In the peoples of Europe if not in their leaders there is some innate sense of the practical advantage of right as against wrong and a strong inclination in them to recognize that right if challenged by an impressive manifestation thereof.

That challenge has not yet been made and until it is made no person or group of persons can be justifiably convinced that the destruction which is facing the world at the moment is inevitable. The United States is regarded as the greatest power in the world today and only its acts can produce immediate and far-reaching effect. I urge, therefore, that the President take steps at once to notify the belligerent governments and their associates both through their representatives in Washington and in the respective capitals that whichever of the belligerent countries commits an act of aggression against the territory of a neutral country, or violates intentionally and substantially its

territorial sovereignty, will be immediately confronted with a severance of diplomatic relations by the United States. This message should be immediate. It should be confidential without any publicity and it would gain reinforcement if the Latin American Governments would subsequently adhere.

It is impossible not to realize the practical objections to such a step and the difficulties and complications which it would entail. Furthermore, it can be said that this notification might not constitute a deterrent and might even serve to precipitate action in certain quarters. In view of past experiences, however, and of the menace of the moment, it would seem that those considerations should not prevail. It is justifiable to reason that the present situation is desperate, that a general war is inevitable, and that further effort to prevent it would be futile or even inadvisable. It is inconceivable, however, that the execution of a realistic act of disassociation on the part of the United States from the exponents of methods which are subversive of the fundamental principles of our life would not cause the most profound impression throughout the world and that if it did not prevent the extension of the war it might curtail that war by reinforcing those individuals or groups of individuals within certain countries who are in disagreement with the forces of destruction now at work and who are striving to divert those forces from that course of destruction to the creation of a just and stable nation.

KIRK

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740.0011 European War 1939/2286 : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, April 18, 1940—5 p. m.

976. Your 1017, April 17, noon. We are giving very careful study to the suggestion you made and to the strong supporting arguments you advanced.

If we have not come to a decision by the time you reach Washington,—and we hope you will be starting on leave in the near future,—it will be extremely helpful to discuss with you further the pros and cons of action along the lines you suggest.

HULL

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740.0011 European War 1939/2375 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, April 20, 1940—6 p. m.

[Received 7:48 p. m.]

1071. For the Secretary and Under Secretary. Your 976, April 18, 5 p. m. I value your consideration of my suggestoins and your

wish that I join in your deliberations of a possible course of action along the lines which I have outlined. I would fail in frankness however if I did not stress the possibility that the time element involved—a few days it is said or perhaps a fortnight—militates against even a meager delay in any factual and convincing demonstration of American policy which the Department may envisage.

In view of the prevailing impression which is being continually reinforced that some further development is imminent I have not felt justified in planning to proceed to Washington before the middle of May and accordingly I have engaged passage on the *Conte di Savoia* sailing from Genoa on May 15.

The uncertainty of the present situation gives no assurance that even an earlier departure would enable me to reach the Department before a discussion of the suggestion which I have made would no longer be timely.

I can therefore only repeat and in all sincerity the observations and recommendations contained in my previous message and urge again that in view of the imminent threat of further deliberate acts of violation of the integrity of neutral nations the American Government manifest its intent to proclaim through an unmistakable gesture its condemnation of such acts and its unwillingness eventually to condone a procedure which violates every principle of our democracy.

KIRK

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740.0011 European War 1939/2375 : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, April 22, 1940—6 p. m.

1022. Your 1071, April 20, 6 p. m. The Department fully understands the situation indicated in your telegram under acknowledgment and will continue to give every consideration to the suggestions you have made. As you will understand, there are many important aspects of the problem to be determined.

HULL

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740.0011 European War 1939/2463

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State*

[WASHINGTON,] April 23, 1940.

The Minister of Norway called at his request and said that he had not been able to hear anything from his Government, but that he desired to hand me a copy of his King's proclamation of April 14, 1940,

which he had taken from the *New York Times* (copy of proclamation attached <sup>23</sup>).

He then requested me to see if our Government could not offer some further public condemnation of bombing non-combatants from the air, such as the King insists the Germans are doing. I thanked him and said that I would give the matter attention.

I inquired as to how long the Germans must have been engaged in preparations for the invasion of Norway, to which he replied that they must have been engaged for months and months; that their invasion must have commenced at least forty-eight hours before the British and French sowed mines on the northern and northwest coasts of Norway.

C[ORDELL] H[ULL]

857.01/19 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, April 27, 1940—8 p. m.

[Received April 27—6:45 p. m.]

1159. My 1104, April 25, 10 a. m.<sup>24</sup> The special news service of DNB<sup>25</sup> has just released the text of an edict signed by Hitler and dated April 24 establishing the administrative structure for the German-occupied areas in Norway. The preamble thereof reads as follows:

“The Nygaardsvold Government by its proclamations and conduct and by the military fighting actions which are taking place according to its will has created a state of war between Norway and the German Reich. In order to insure public order and public life in the Norwegian territories which are under the protection of the German troops I order the following”

The eight articles which follow place the occupied Norwegian areas under the Reich Commissar Terboven, with his headquarters at Oslo, who is to protect the Reich interests and to exercise the supreme governmental authority in the civil sphere and who may utilize the existing Norwegian administration to carry out his measures. The basic law hitherto enforced in Norway remains valid so far as consistent with the occupation but the Commissar may modify it by decree. All military measures are to be taken by the commander of the German troops in cooperation with the Reich Commissar and German police are placed at the disposal of both civil and military administrations.

KIRK

<sup>23</sup> Not reprinted.

<sup>24</sup> Not printed.

<sup>25</sup> Deutsches Nachrichten Büro.

857.01/23 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, May 4, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received 5 : 45 p. m.]

1201. I was asked to call at the Foreign Office today and was given an oral statement by the Chief of Protocol regarding the functions of foreign representatives in Norwegian occupied territory under the provisions of the edict of April 24 relating to the civil and military administration of that territory (see my 1159, April 27, 8 p. m. and despatch No. 2440 of April 29<sup>26</sup>).

According to this statement, all political matters and questions of general importance relating to German-occupied Norwegian territory should be taken up by this Embassy with the German Foreign Office. All matters of local importance such as questions in the nature of consular activities may be discussed by the foreign legations in Oslo with the representative of the Foreign Office attached to the Reich Commissar established in Oslo.

I am withholding communication of the foregoing to the Legation at Oslo pending the receipt of information from the Department as to whether it wishes me to add any observations in regard thereto for the guidance of the Legation. The Embassy has lately been experiencing difficulties in communicating with the Legation at Oslo in cipher, and I have not yet obtained a definite statement on this matter from the German authorities.

KIRK

740.0011 European War 1939/3046 : Telegram

*The Minister in Sweden (Sterling) to the Secretary of State*

STOCKHOLM, May 15, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received 5 : 45 p. m.]

512. Following received from Cox by courier :

May 12, 10 a. m. Continuing my April 23, 5 p. m.,<sup>27</sup> German control over occupied territory in Norway has been and continues to be effectively strengthened by the continuous arrival of transport and supply ships during the past 2 weeks. The arrival of Reichs Commissioner Terboven reported in my 249, April 28<sup>27</sup> has been followed by that of many German officials to assume posts in the German civil administration as well as officials and members of German safety and secret police under whom the Norwegian police authorities now function.

<sup>26</sup> Latter not printed.<sup>27</sup> Not printed.

The Storthing Building is now the Commissioner's headquarters and the Foreign Office has been taken over as the German police headquarters. Germans occupy advisory positions in Government Ministries such as Finance and Supplies, the Bank of Norway, and other key offices. Press and telecommunications are under absolute German control and censorship. Strict control is exercised over finance, prices, firearms, movements of individuals, et cetera. The German Legation is nonexistent. Its senior officers are now attached as "representatives of the Foreign Office" to the Commissioner's staff. There is still considerable confusion as between civil and military authorities in the exercise of duties. The above, however, indicates the general lines of the present setup.

The Commissioner's first proclamation indicates that while the Norwegian Administrative Council appointed April 15 continues its functions under him, it is entirely subordinated to German decisions on all important questions. Terboven proclaimed that among his principal duties were the maintenance of safety and order and the utilization of all the occupied area's "potentialities", the supply [of] military necessities. So far, only strict rationing of food, fuel, and lubricants has been enforced and to some extent grain reserves are being utilized for the German troops. Some apprehension exists that if transport facilities break down, or for other reasons, the Germans may requisition reserve stocks of foodstuffs and raw materials required by military forces or for shipment to Germany.

The Norwegian reaction in Oslo area to the withdrawal of British forces from southern Norway has been one of complete disillusionment. This, coupled with the strong undercurrent of defeatism evident here since the beginning of the occupation, indicates that except possibly for isolated localities Norwegian resistance in southern Norway will terminate shortly.

I am confidentially informed that important groups of Norwegian industrialists and some members of Storthing are endeavoring to reach [the] King, said to be at Tromso, and persuade him that his continued refusal to accept the fact of German control may force his abdication. Many who know the English sympathies of both King and Crown Prince believe that both will refuse possibly in favor of a regency for Crown Princess. [Cox.]

STERLING

124.57/37 : Telegram

*The Minister in Sweden (Sterling) to the Secretary of State*

STOCKHOLM, May 23, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received May 23—2: 53 p. m.]

546. From Harriman. After talking with the Norwegian Legation here it seems that it would be impracticable to attempt joining the Norwegian Government at once in extreme northern Norway and it is best to await clearing up of the situation in Narvik area. If and when that area comes under Norwegian and Allied control Norwegian Legation suggests my leaving by rail for Narvik whence I may reach seat of Government by Norwegian vessel. Meanwhile I can be of use here in reporting to the Department from information concerning Norway gathered from Norwegian officials and others now in Stockholm.

I could of course return to Oslo but in view of Berlin's 1298, May 11, 2 p. m. to you <sup>28</sup> it would seem that if I should do so such action might be construed by the Germans as a recognition that Oslo is the seat of the Norwegian Government and thus make capital out of it. Please give me your views. [Harriman.]

STERLING

740.0011 European War 1939/3667

*The Minister in Denmark (Atherton) to the Secretary of State*

No. 134

COPENHAGEN, May 24, 1940.

[Received June 15.]

SIR: I have the honor to refer to my despatch No. 128 of April 24, 1940, entitled "Occupation of Denmark by the German Army" <sup>28</sup> and to make the following observations concerning the attitude of the Danish people toward the sudden irruption of the German army into their country.

There can be little doubt that the German seizure of Denmark on the morning of April 9th came as a stunning surprise to all but a very few of the people of Denmark. The droning of swarms of German fighters flying low over all parts of Copenhagen and its suburbs conveyed the news to one million people that their capital, and presumably their entire country, was being occupied by German arms.

This was the more surprising since the official policy of Denmark since the World War had been one of extreme friendliness toward Germany. Definitely marking this friendly attitude, Denmark had, in May 1939, responded to Germany's invitation to sign a Pact of

<sup>28</sup> Not printed.



Non-Aggression,<sup>30</sup> an invitation which none of the other Nordic states had accepted. Although the Danes did not place over much reliance in the Pact itself, it did, nevertheless, appear as if Germany, on her part, appreciated the confidence which was implied by Denmark's acceding to the German request.

Although the actual occupation came as a complete surprise to the majority of the Danish people, there was much concrete evidence for some days that some important German move was in progress. It is fair to believe, however, that the Danish authorities were generally under the impression that the preparatory measures in the waters about Denmark were destined elsewhere. However that may be, no steps were taken to mobilize either the military, naval, or air forces at the disposal of the Government, even at the very height of the crisis in the Scandinavian area.

To some extent Danish opinion has been influenced by the laying of mines in Norwegian territorial waters by the British Navy. Press criticism indicated that this action exposed and endangered the position of the Nordic countries. However well or ill founded this criticism may be, this view was held and expressed on April 10th by Dr. Munch<sup>31</sup> himself in informal conversation with members of the Diplomatic Corps.

Since the occupation, it is interesting to note the attitude of the people at large toward the German troops. It is one of correctness, but aloofness. The German soldiery in the streets are well behaved and give evidence of being under iron discipline. Nevertheless, the Danish people, with few exceptions, appear determined to avoid all possible personal relations and pass them by without a glance. It is reported that one German soldier remarked that the resistance of the Norwegians was easier to endure than the contempt of the Danes. In Esbjerg, a notice was placed in the press by the German military that it would be appreciated if German officers might be invited to Danish homes. It appears that the German soldiers were given to understand that they would be welcomed in Denmark as protectors of the nation and that they are nonplussed at the coldness of their reception. They go about their duties in a quiet, business-like manner, but they have no air of buoyancy or enthusiasm, or of being engaged upon a mission into which they have put their heart and soul. The German flags which were at first placed upon the buildings occupied as barracks were shortly afterward removed; and they have remained only upon the hotels occupied as military headquarters.

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<sup>30</sup> Treaty of Non-Aggression between Germany and Denmark, signed May 31, 1939. For text, see Germany, Foreign Office, *Documents on the Events Preceding the Outbreak of the War*, p. 365.

<sup>31</sup> Peter Munch, Danish Minister for Foreign Affairs.

In Copenhagen every attempt is made to carry on with the appearance of things being "as usual." King Christian soon resumed his morning horseback rides and goes about as before wholly unattended. The use of private motor cars has again been discontinued; and it is not expected that the reserves of gasoline can last more than a very few months if further imports are not forthcoming. The regular police officers on patrol have been reinforced, presumably by recruits from the Danish army, which was dismissed and sent home shortly after the occupation. Possibly upon German initiative, certain one-way streets have been opened in the congested area, a reform long needed in Copenhagen. Otherwise, the city retains its normal appearance. With the exception of a few restricted areas, such as the local airport, travel is free and unrestrained; and motor cars may proceed at will throughout this island without being subject to interference or questioning. The Germans have, however, taken over direction of such places and activities as are necessary to maintain an effective control; the frontiers, including the ingress and egress of all persons; communications, including telegraphs and telephones; and a censorship which embraces the press, mails at the frontiers, and a representative in the Press department of the Foreign Office. In spite of these measures, it may be stated that superficially the life of the country does not appear to have greatly changed and the people are beginning to accustom and readjust themselves to the new conditions. Apart from the intelligent few, there is perhaps an insufficient realization of the fundamental change that has taken place in Denmark; and only the passage of time will bring home to the Danish people the true nature of the fundamental change that has come over their country.

Respectfully yours,

RAY ATHERTON

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124.57/37: Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Minister in Sweden (Sterling)*

WASHINGTON, May 26, 1940—4 p. m.

172. Your 546, May 23, 4 p. m. For Harriman. We quite agree that it would be inadvisable for you at this time to return to Oslo or to attempt to join the Norwegian Government. The information you are able to send us from Stockholm supplements in a most useful way the information coming to us from other sources, and we suggest therefore that you remain in Stockholm for the time being. If the situation changes at any time we would welcome your recommendations regarding the best course of action for you to take.

HULL

740.0011 European War 1939/3627: Telegram

*The Minister in Sweden (Sterling) to the Secretary of State*

STOCKHOLM, June 9, 1940—11 p. m.

[Received June 9—8:15 p. m.]

607. From Harriman. Swedish Foreign Minister just informs me as Allies have withdrawn their help Norwegian Army has ceased to fight. King and Government are en route to England. Please treat as confidential until carried in newspapers. [Harriman.]

STERLING

857.0011/40 : Telegram

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

LONDON, June 12, 1940—6 p. m.

[Received 6:05 p. m.]

1615. For the President. The Norwegian Minister has just called to see me at the request of the King and the Crown Prince who say that due to the speed necessary for the movement of the British troops and the King out of Norway it was impossible to take time to get the Crown Princess and the three children who are at present in Stockholm. The Crown Prince said that the President was kind enough to write some months ago offering to be of what service he could to the Crown Prince and Princess if occasion arose. The King and the Crown Prince are naturally afraid that the Germans will somehow or other get the Crown Princess and the little Prince and are wondering if it would be possible for them to be taken out on an American ship from Gothenburg or some other port. The other alternative would be of course to go overland to Vladivostok and sail from there; but in that event they are uncertain what the Russians might do to them. The Norwegian Minister quite appreciates what a terrific problem this is but it is naturally of great concern he says to both the King and the Crown Prince, and he asks if the President has any suggestions that he could make which would help them.

KENNEDY

857.0011/40 : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, June 13, 1940—7 p. m.

1186. Your 1615, June 12, 6 p. m. The President asked me to request you to tell the Norwegian Minister that the President of course

will give every possible consideration to the request made concerning the Crown Princess and her children. It would be impossible for the President to send an American ship to Göteborg or any other Swedish port on account of the existing danger involved. He has, however, communicated with the German Government to ascertain whether it would be feasible and safe to send an American vessel to the port of Petsamo to take on board the Princess and her family, as well as American refugees in northern Europe. In the event that the German Government refuses to give the necessary assurances, the President will then inquire of the Soviet Government whether it will guarantee a safe voyage for the Crown Princess and her family to Vladivostok. If the Soviet Government gives the necessary assurances the President will arrange to have a ship meet the Crown Princess and her children at Vladivostok and transport them to the United States.

I shall advise you subsequently of the results of these negotiations.

HULL

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740.0011 European War 1939/3842: Telegram

*The Minister in Sweden (Sterling) to the Secretary of State*

STOCKHOLM, June 15, 1940—11 a. m.

[Received 11:10 a. m.]

628. Following has been received from Oslo by courier:

394, June 12, noon. With the Allied withdrawal from Narvik, the departure of the King and the Government for England and the surrender of remnant of the Norwegian Army in the north, Norwegian attitude here is one of waiting with resignation for whatever decision the Germans may make with regard to the future administration of the country. The Germans have not disclosed their intentions but leading Norwegians in Oslo have indicated to me their apprehension lest the occupying authorities now supersede the Norwegian Administrative Council with a Government subservient to themselves. They fear a return of Quisling to power which they say would result in Norwegian passive resistance. Quisling is loathed here by all but a small group of his adherents. It is conceivable that the Germans are now merely using him as a convenient threat to ensure quick Norwegian compliance with their demands. Some difference of opinion is discernible between the German civil and military authorities, the latter being opposed to too much interference in Norwegian internal matters which might disturb their military preparations.

STERLING

857.01/45

*The Norwegian Minister (Morgenstierne) to the Secretary of State*

WASHINGTON, June 17, 1940.

SIR: I have the honor to inform you that owing to circumstances beyond their control His Majesty King Haakon VII of Norway and the Norwegian Government have been forced temporarily to take up residence in London, from where they are carrying on their functions in accordance with the constitution of my country.

In a broadcast from London to the Norwegian people yesterday the King, as reported by the Associated Press, stated that he would have preferred to remain in Norway while his people were "writhing under the oppressor's heel", but that it was necessary to go to London to "continue the work of liberating our country".

I shall hope, Mr. Secretary of State, to be in a position at an early date to transmit to you a message from my Government confirming the present preliminary communication.

Accept [etc.]

W. MORGENSTIERNE

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740.0011 European War 1939/3879: Telegram

*The Minister in Sweden (Sterling) to the Secretary of State*

STOCKHOLM, June 17, 1940—6 p. m.

[Received June 17—4: 22 p. m.]

637. From Harriman. The Germans have given an ultimatum to the Norwegian Civil Administration that they must, in collaboration with one of the Presidents of the Storting, Magnus Neilsen, who happens to be still in Norway, and his colleagues, leaders of all the political parties, and with 20 prominent citizens accept the following points:

- (1) To relieve the King, Crown Prince and Prince Harald of their rights and duties.
- (2) To relieve the Government of its rights and duties.
- (3) To relieve the members of the Storting who are outside of Norway of their rights and duties.

If these points are accepted the Norwegian Civil Administration Committee shall call the remaining members of the Storting to meet at Eidsval as soon as possible for a 1-day session. This Storting is to elect a new government and this government shall remain in power until 3 months after the war has ceased. After the 3 months the Kingdom of Norway shall hold new elections and the Storting on the strength of these elections will choose a new government. This government which the Germans desire would have dictatorial power and the Germans would only leave one envoy in Oslo. The above points will probably be rejected as it would be considered disloyal to

the King and it would line up Norway as an enemy of England which would mean the confiscation by England of the Norwegian fleet.

The consequences of the refusal are that the property of the Royal Family, of the Government members and of the Storting members residing outside of Norway will be confiscated. Then a German protectorate will be set up. An answer has to be given tonight Monday at 8 o'clock.

A final decision of the Committee had not been reached up to Saturday night but the individual opinions of the members were that the terms would be rejected. [Harriman.]

STERLING

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857.01/47 : Telegram

*The Minister in Sweden (Sterling) to the Secretary of State*

STOCKHOLM, June 18, 1940—3 p. m.

[Received 5:31 p. m.]

641. Following telegram has been received from Oslo by Swedish courier:

402, June 15, 11 p. m. Reference my May 12, 10 a. m., Stockholm's No. 512. Since my 394, June 12, noon, the question of the future administration of Norway under its constitution has taken a serious turn. According to a source I consider reliable and in this particular very well-informed, the German Reichs Commissioner has made the following demands on the Administrative Council to which the latter's reply must be given him by the evening of June 17: The Council to declare itself as the government to [*in?*] Norway; the Storting to be assembled to confirm the Council's declaration and to pass legislation deposing the King and removing the Crown Prince as his successor, giving the new government full powers with proviso for new Storting election to be held not later than 3 months after peace with Germany has been declared, striking from the roll of the Storting all of its members now abroad, and providing that any person taking issue with these legislative acts forfeits his position.

If the Council accepts the German demands the office of Reichs Commissioner will be changed to that of a plenipotentiary (*voll-machtig*) the present incumbent presumably to remain in this new capacity and a symbolic ceremony will be held before the Storting during which the German flag will be lowered and replaced by the Norwegian flag to signify to the country its recovery of "independence".

If the demands are refused, my informant states that the Council was told that the German alternative for Norway is a protectorate

or its incorporation in some form within the Reich. It is not believed that the Germans have mentioned Quisling in this connection although that possibility must still be kept in mind.

Although stunned by these precipitant demands the Council is endeavoring to negotiate with the Reichs Commissioner through a committee composed of Berg, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Bishop Berggrav, and representatives of the Ministry of Justice. I understand it is putting forward a compromise whereby the Storting, not touching the matter of the Royal House, should declare the Nygaardsvold Government as no longer functioning and whereby a governmental commission should be formed consisting of the Administrative Council suitably enlarged to assume full powers of a government. There is reason to believe that the Council recognizing the gravity of the situation will go as far as it can to meet the Germans. My informant states that it is inconceivable, however, that the Council would agree or that the Storting could be prevailed upon to depose the Royal family for the reason that there is apparently no constitutional provision for such a radical step.

There is little doubt but that popular feeling is one of respect for the King and Crown Prince but the responsible element here feels that they have put themselves in a most difficult position by fleeing the country with the now discredited Nygaardsvold Government. If the Germans insist on the deposition of the Royal House there is likely to be an impasse with unpredictable results. Yet as the Germans apparently wish to establish an outwardly independent Government, one removed from British influence, and as the Norwegians are making every reasonable effort under compulsion to comply there is still some possibility that a solution may be found.

I am reporting further developments through Stockholm by available couriers.

STERLING

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857.0011/39 : Telegram

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

LONDON, June 22, 1940—9 p. m.  
[Received June 22—3:49 p. m.]

1790. For the President. Crown Prince of Norway has gotten in touch with me. He is very much upset for the safety of the Crown Princess and whole Swedish situation. Please refer to Captain Kirk's<sup>32</sup> cable to the Navy Department this afternoon. The Crown

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<sup>32</sup> Capt. Alan G. Kirk, Naval Attaché and Naval Attaché for Air at the American Embassy in the United Kingdom.

Prince begs to know if there is anything you can do in a hurry to get the Crown Princess out.

KENNEDY

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857.0011/39 : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, June 24, 1940—noon.

1349. From the Under Secretary. Your 1790, June 22, 9 p. m. On June 13 the American Chargé d'Affaires in Berlin communicated to the German Foreign Office the desire of the President to send a vessel to Petsamo to evacuate American citizens in northern Europe and to bring likewise to the United States the Norwegian Crown Princess and her family and to receive assurances from the German Government that such vessel would not be interfered with. On June 21 the American Chargé d'Affaires again brought the matter to the attention of a high official of the Foreign Office, who apologized for the delay and stated that he thought a decision from the German naval authorities would shortly be forthcoming. As soon as a reply is received, you will be immediately informed accordingly.

I am sure you will understand that under present conditions Petsamo would seem to be the only port in the north of Europe to which an American vessel could proceed with reasonable safety. Please inform the Crown Prince of these circumstances and say that everything will be done to expedite a solution. [Welles.]

HULL

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857.01/52

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Secretary of State  
(Berle)*

[WASHINGTON,] June 25, 1940.

The Norwegian Minister came in to see me today, at his request. He said that he had previously advised the President, personally, that the royal Norwegian Government had moved to London. He handed me a note, dated June 25th,<sup>33</sup> confirming that message.

He added that the government in England was acting under full constitutional powers, and, under constitutional procedure of the Norwegian Storting, which had authorized the King to remain more than six months out of the country.

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<sup>33</sup> Not printed.



He said, further, that he had seen reports indicating that the "enemy" (i. e., the German authorities) were endeavoring to set up a pretended government in Norway, and that he had no doubt they would endeavor to create the appearance that it was supported by the Norwegian people. He wished to state that his government did not consider that any government could be set up by the Norwegian people under the existing circumstances, and that he hoped that we would continue to recognize the government in London as the Government of Norway.

I said that I had likewise heard these reports; that naturally we could not express a decision in advance of the facts. We had, however, in other cases, taken into consideration the fact of duress occasioned by military invasion and I had no doubt that due weight would be given to that fact in any decision which was finally made.

A. A. BERLE, JR.

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124.57/40 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, July 1, 1940—10 a. m.

[Received 12:55 p. m.]

2223. My 2221, June 30, 6 p. m.<sup>34</sup> The following note was received this morning from the Foreign Office.

"The Foreign Office has the honor to inform the Embassy of the United States of America of the following:

"After the occupation by German troops of the entire territory of Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg the authority of law (*Gesetz Maessige Gewalt*) in those countries came into German hands. Moreover, the former Governments of those countries fled abroad so that they no longer exercise the legal functions of government. Under these circumstances the basis is removed for the activities of the diplomatic missions which were accredited to the former governments of those countries. If the Government of the United States of America wishes to discuss matters of a political nature affecting these countries this would have to be done by its diplomatic mission in Berlin at the Foreign Office.

"The Foreign Office accordingly requests the Embassy of the United States of America to be so good as to cause its Government to withdraw its diplomatic missions from Oslo, the Hague, Brussels and Luxembourg and to complete this not later than July 15, 1940. Until further notice the Reich Government consents to the continuation of the consular offices in the countries and territories indicated and further exercise *de facto* of the functions there."

HEATH

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<sup>34</sup> Not printed.

857.01/53 : Telegram

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

LONDON, July 1, 1940—12 p. m.

[Received July 1—10:10 p. m.]

1921. Dr. Koht, the Norwegian Minister for Foreign Affairs came to see me this afternoon and told me that the King of Norway had received a note from the Bureau of Congress in Norway to the effect that since the King was out of the country the Congress would be called, declaring him out of the picture from now on, and would go ahead and set themselves up as the legally constituted government. Dr. Koht said that since the constitution provides that the King cannot possibly be relieved of any of his duties until he has been out of the country six months, it is a completely unconstitutional act. Dr. Koht also said this same Congress, which will now act under duress of the Germans, had voted supreme powers to the Government now operating here in London and they have no legal right to deprive them and the King of that authority.

What the Minister for Foreign Affairs wants to know is whether the United States will recognize the government now being set up, as he said, by the Germans. The King is writing a letter within the next 48 hours declining to have anything to do with the demands of the Bureau of Congress and setting forth that all the demands are quite unconstitutional.

KENNEDY

124.55/81 : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, July 4, 1940—noon.

1856. Your 2223, July 1, 10 a. m. Please deliver the following messages to the offices indicated and appropriately inform the German authorities of the nature of the arrangements being made at each city for the custody of the diplomatic properties :

*Brussels :*

German Foreign Office has requested withdrawal not later than July 15th of diplomatic mission to Belgium. You should give notice immediately for termination lease Embassy and report best terms you are able arrange. Consul Broy is placed in custody of building, property and archives pending final disposition. Department would be glad to receive your recommendations concerning disposal office furniture. Effective upon closing Embassy all diplomatic clerks and miscellaneous employees are transferred for duty in Consulate. Please

report personnel available for transfer or recommended for release in view of this change. Instructions concerning Wilson, Willis and Bonbright will follow shortly.

*Oslo:*

German Foreign Office has requested withdrawal not later than July 15th of diplomatic mission to Norway. Please arrange for removal consular office to Government-owned property at earliest date consular lease can be terminated. In due course when removal Minister Harriman's effects can be arranged Government-owned residence will be available for use principal consular officer and his personal rent allowance discontinued. Effective upon closing Legation all diplomatic clerks and miscellaneous employees are transferred for duty in Consulate General. Please report personnel available for transfer or release when removal to Government-owned quarters is completed.

*The Hague:*

Referring your message transmitted through Embassy Berlin July 1,<sup>34a</sup> regret impracticable delay withdrawal beyond July 15th. You should give notice immediately for termination leases and report best terms you are able arrange. An American clerk may be left as custodian temporarily and Consul General Lee is authorized supervise Government and personal property pending final disposition. Department would be glad to receive your recommendations concerning disposal office and household furniture. Instructions concerning personnel will follow shortly.

*Luxemburg:*

German Foreign Office has requested withdrawal not later than July 15th of diplomatic mission to Luxemburg. You will cease all diplomatic functions and act only in your consular capacity beginning July 16th, discontinuing use diplomatic stationery and removing Legation coat of arms.

HULL

857.01/55

*The British Ambassador (Lothian) to the Secretary of State*

WASHINGTON, July 5, 1940.

DEAR MR. SECRETARY: AS I told you this morning, I have had a telegram from the Foreign Office referring to the possibility that the German Government may succeed in establishing a German puppet government in Oslo with some plausible appearance of constitutional form, including the deposition of King Haakon. His Majesty's Gov-

<sup>34a</sup> Telegram No. 2224, not printed.

ernment trust that they may assume that such a government would not receive any recognition from the Government of the United States.

Apart from general questions my Government attach particular importance to the matter in view of the part now being played in the Allied war effort by the Norwegian mercantile marine which is managed from London by a Norwegian Shipping Mission acting under the authority of King Haakon's Government in England. His Majesty's Government are therefore most anxious to be sure that the United States Courts would not countenance any attempt by a German controlled government to requisition or otherwise interfere with Norwegian ships in United States ports.

I have been instructed to bring the matter informally to your attention and to enquire whether His Majesty's Government can be confidentially reassured on the point.

Believe me [etc.]

LOTHIAN

857.01/55

*The Secretary of State to the British Ambassador (Lothian)*

WASHINGTON, July 9, 1940.

DEAR MR. AMBASSADOR: I have received your personal and confidential letter of July 5, 1940 in which you set forth the views of your Government in respect to the possibility that the German Government may succeed in establishing a new regime in Oslo.

I am glad to have the views of your Government on this subject. Should the question of the recognition by the Government of the United States of any such regime arise, the views of your Government will receive appropriate consideration.

I am [etc.]

CORDELL HULL

857.0011/45 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Minister in Sweden (Sterling)*

WASHINGTON, July 12, 1940—1 p. m.

233. The President has now determined to send a transport to Petsamo for the purpose of evacuating stranded American citizens in northern Europe and for the purpose of bringing the Crown Princess of Norway and her family to the United States. Assurances have now been received from the German and British Governments that they will see that the vessel is safeguarded during its projected voyage.

Please obtain an interview with the Crown Princess as soon as possible and telegraph the Department whether she desires to come to the United States with her family on the transport. Telegraph the

Department at the same time whether any transportation difficulty would be involved in evacuating the Norwegian Royal Family and American citizens by way of Petsamo.

Please telegraph the Department likewise your estimate as to the approximate number of American citizens in the Scandinavian area who would desire to be evacuated in this way.

HULL

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124.57/59

*The Chargé in Norway (Cox) to the Secretary of State*

No. 709

OSLO, July 15, 1940.

[Received August 19.]

SIR: Referring to the Department's telegrams to the American Embassy at Berlin, No. 1856, July 4 noon, and 1907, July 10, as well as to my No. 437, July 15,<sup>35</sup> concerning the closing of this Mission, I have the honor to enclose the German text with English translation of a communication dated July 15, 1940,<sup>36</sup> from the office of the German Reichs Commissioner for Occupied Norwegian Territories, which was transmitted to me with a covering note from the Chief of Protocol of the former Norwegian Foreign Office. As will be noted from this somewhat peremptory German communication all members of the diplomatic missions still in Oslo together with their families are to leave Oslo by July 18. In consequence thereof Commercial Attaché Klath and I are leaving Oslo on the morning of July 18.

In the course of the telephone conversation on July 12 with the American Embassy in Berlin I pointed out that it was imperative that Mr. E. Allan Lightner, temporarily attached as Secretary of Legation, be permitted to remain to continue his duties with respect to foreign interests work.

The American Embassy at Berlin at that time stated pending the receipt of orders to the contrary Mr. Lightner should continue his foreign interests work as attached to the American Consulate General, Oslo. No further communication having been received from the American Embassy in Berlin in the matter, Mr. Lightner has been instructed by me to act in accordance with the suggestion above noted.

Respectfully yours,

RAYMOND E. COX

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<sup>35</sup> Telegrams No. 1907 and No. 437 not printed.

<sup>36</sup> Not printed.

857.01/60 : Telegram

*The Minister in Sweden (Sterling) to the Secretary of State*

STOCKHOLM, July 18, 1940.

[Received July 18—9:02 a. m.]

741. Press reports from Oslo King Haakon's refusal abdicate has rendered agreement between Administrative Council and German authorities highly difficult and negotiations are in progress concerning Norway's future status with object finding solution present difficulties. Plans for appointing National Council after King's abdication has advanced quite far as it seemed foregone conclusion King would comply with unanimous request of Presidency of Storting. Present difficulties appear to be Administrative Council does not wish to bear full consequences of King's refusal by dethroning him as strong public opinion would react unfavorably. Now hoped possible German authorities will accept interim arrangement which would restore normal conditions and secure Norwegian self-government promised. Solution would be not propose dethronement of King at present but appoint a National Council conduct State affairs while King residing abroad. When he has been away 6 months without returning question of dethronement could be considered on constitutional basis and it is hoped that political situation at that time might facilitate definite decision. King may before that time realize futility continuing war for Norway from a country with which Germany is at war and abdicate for sake of his people. Storting expected summoned early in August.

STERLING

124.57/54a : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, July 19, 1940—5 p. m.

1909. In view of the withdrawal of the personnel of our Legation from Oslo, the Department proposes to designate Rudolf E. Schoenfeld to perform the duties of Chargé d'Affaires ad interim near the Government of Norway now established in London.<sup>37</sup> Schoenfeld will continue to be First Secretary of your Embassy and it is not anticipated that his new designation will interfere with his present duties. Please ascertain informally and telegraph whether the British Government has any objection to Schoenfeld's designation and whether it is agreeable to the Government of Norway.

WELLES

<sup>37</sup> Mrs. Harriman was in Stockholm at this time. She was recalled to the Department for consultation, and submitted her resignation as Minister to Norway on November 29, 1940.

857.0011/51 : Telegram

*The Minister in Sweden (Sterling) to the Secretary of State*

STOCKHOLM, July 20, 1940—1 p. m.

[Received July 20—12 : 40 p. m.]

746. From Harriman. The Norwegian Crown Princess asked me to see her yesterday and said that she accepts the President's suggestion sent in the Department's 233, July 12, 1 p. m., to the Stockholm Legation.

Crown Princess told me that Minister Morgenstierne<sup>38</sup> telephoned her at 10 o'clock Thursday night telling her as best she could understand that a warship was being sent for her and family and that she might have to be ready in 4 days' time to sail. As we have heard nothing of this the situation seems rather confusing to her and to us.

She added that she hoped she could arrive as quietly as possible in America and would not be required to meet reporters or a reception committee other than absolutely necessary. I hope it will be possible to keep the date of her arrival confidential. [Harriman.]

STERLING

857.0011/51 : Telegram

*The Acting Secretary of State to the Minister in Sweden (Sterling)*

WASHINGTON, July 22, 1940—6 p. m.

239. For Mrs. Harriman. Your 746, July 20, 1 p. m. Please inform the Norwegian Crown Princess that the President has directed that the United States Army transport *American Legion* leave New York immediately to proceed to Petsamo to take on board the Crown Princess and her party and bring them to the United States. The *American Legion* will arrive at Petsamo on or about August 5 but you will be later advised of the exact date of her arrival.

You may say to the Crown Princess that while everything will be done upon her arrival in the United States to meet her wishes, there is no possible way in which her arrival can be kept confidential.

The President desired me to let you know that he believes that you should return on the *American Legion* to the United States in accordance with the instructions already sent to you.

The transport will likewise bring back to this country such American citizens in Scandinavian countries as can be accommodated and as may not be able to return safely in any other way.

WELLES

<sup>38</sup> Wilhelm Munthe de Morgenstierne, Norwegian Minister in the United States.

124.57/56 : Telegram

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

LONDON, July 26, 1940—4 p. m.  
[Received July 26—11 : 30 a. m.]

2410. Your 1909, July 19, 5 p. m. British Government has no objection and Government of Norway is agreeable to Schoenfeld's designation as Chargé a. i. near the Government of Norway.

KENNEDY

124.57/56a : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, July 29, 1940—7 p. m.

2081. Your 2410, July 26, 4 p. m. Please inform Schoenfeld that he is hereby designated to perform the duties of Chargé d'Affaires ad interim near the Government of Norway now established in London.

The Department desires to designate Schoenfeld in a similar capacity near the Netherlands Government. Please ascertain informally and telegraph whether the British Government has any objection and whether the designation would be agreeable to the Netherlands Government.

WELLES

124.57/57 : Telegram

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

LONDON, August 2, 1940—7 p. m.  
[Received August 2—2 : 39 p. m.]

2534. From Schoenfeld. Your 2081, July 29, 7 p. m. The Norwegian Foreign Minister received me this afternoon.

Professor Koht, obviously having in mind his inquiry of Ambassador Kennedy on July 1st (reference telegram No. 1921, July 1, midnight, final paragraph), expressed appreciation of the designation of a representative near the Government of Norway now established in England. [Schoenfeld.]

KENNEDY



857.0011/85 : Telegram

*The Chargé in Sweden (Greene) to the Secretary of State*

STOCKHOLM, August 13, 1940—9 a. m.

[Received August 13—7:10 a. m.]

826. My 816, Aug. 9, 4 p. m.<sup>39</sup> Following the Norwegian Crown Princess' departure from Stockholm yesterday the Norwegian Legation gave to the press the following statement which was broadcast by Swedish radio last evening and published in all newspapers this morning:

"Crown Princess Martha of Norway and her three children, the Princesses Ragnhild and Astrid and Prince Harald, will leave for the United States in the next few days to visit President Roosevelt. The President has sent a personal invitation to Crown Princess Martha to visit him with her children, and the departure will be by an American ship from Petsamo."<sup>40</sup>

GREENE

124.57/58 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, August 15, 1940—noon.

[Received August 15—10:45 a. m.]

3532. I was called to the Foreign Office today to be informed by the Chief of Protocol that the German authorities had decided to request the withdrawal from Norway, Belgium, Luxemburg and Holland of all officers of foreign governments who were diplomats or had appeared on the diplomatic lists in those countries and that in the case of the American Government the following persons were affected by this regulation: Lightner at Oslo; Rankin<sup>41</sup> at Brussels and Waller<sup>42</sup> at Luxemburg. Although I explained the fact that Lightner had functioned at Oslo solely in his capacity as foreign service officer without any definite diplomatic status (see my 3139, July 29, noon<sup>43</sup>) I was told that he could not return to Oslo but following the rehearsal of previous explanations regarding Waller I was informed that his case would be considered further. The withdrawal is to be effective by August 30.

<sup>39</sup> Not printed.<sup>40</sup> In undated telegram received August 16, 5:43 a. m., from the Department's representative on the return voyage of the *American Legion*, it was stated that Crown Princess Martha and suite arrived on board the *American Legion* at 8 p. m. on August 15 (340.1115A/1365).<sup>41</sup> Karl L. Rankin, Commercial Attaché at the Embassy in Belgium.<sup>42</sup> George P. Waller, Second Secretary of Legation in Luxemburg.<sup>43</sup> Apparently an incorrect reference.

I was also informed that requests to close the consular offices in Brussels and The Hague might be expected but that the matter had not been definitely settled and that foreign consular offices would be permitted in other important cities of those countries.

I await the Department's instructions as to the foregoing and in the meanwhile recommend the assignment of Lightner to this Embassy.

KIRK

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857.0011/92a : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, August 29, 1940.

2561. From the President:

"For H. R. H. Crown Prince Olav: Your delightful wife and children are safely with us tonight at Hyde Park and have stood the difficult voyage well. We shall take very good care of them and we are very happy to have them in our family circle.<sup>44</sup> I send to you, your distinguished father my affectionate regards and every good wish. Please also tell your Uncle<sup>45</sup> that Madame Ostgaard<sup>46</sup> and Einar<sup>47</sup> are with us and that all is well with them. Roosevelt."

HULL

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857.0011/93 : Telegram

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

LONDON, August 31, 1940.

[Received August 31—9:55 a. m.]

From Schoenfeld, Norwegian series No. 2, 31st. The King of Norway summoned me this morning and requested that following message be conveyed to the President:

"I am deeply grateful to you for all you are doing for the Crown Princess. Both I and the Crown Prince assure you of our deep thanks and our very warm regards."

[Schoenfeld]

KENNEDY

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<sup>44</sup> Later, the Crown Princess and her family occupied a country house near Washington, D. C.

<sup>45</sup> Presumably Col. Nikolai Ramm Ostgaard, appointed by the King of Norway as governor to the Crown Prince in 1914. He later served as an aide to the Crown Prince and became his adjutant in 1924.

<sup>46</sup> Lady-in-waiting to Crown Princess Martha.

<sup>47</sup> Madame Ostgaard's son.

## II. INVASION OF THE NETHERLANDS, LUXEMBURG, AND BELGIUM BY GERMANY <sup>48</sup>

740.0011 European War 1939/1806: Telegram

*The Ambassador in Belgium (Cudahy) to the Secretary of State*

BRUSSELS, March 12, 1940—6 p. m.

[Received March 12—2: 25 p. m.]

57. From an unimpeachable source I am advised that Germany has decided that no acceptable peace terms can be expected from France and Great Britain and is therefore determined to bring off large-scale military offensive. My informant states he has no information of approximate date but Belgian Ambassador <sup>48a</sup> in Berlin states order has gone forth to prepare German hospitals for reception of large number of casualties to be expected.

Copy to the Legation at The Hague.

CUDAHY

740.0011 European War 1939/455

*The Chargé in Luxembourg (Waller) to the Secretary of State*

No. 17

LUXEMBURG, April 1, 1940.

[Received April 20.]

SIR: I have the honor to inform the Department that during the past week violation of Luxembourg neutrality by aeroplanes of German, French and English nationality has been steadily increasing. On March 26th some twenty fighting planes cruised over the Grand Duchy, and during an hour I watched a portion of them repeatedly repulsed by French anti-aircraft guns. During other days following the noise of planes flying very high was frequently audible, even when the craft themselves were invisible. Yesterday a combat took place over Bettemburg during which machine gun bullets from both sides literally rained down on the town, fortunately without any more serious damage than the breaking of one window. The day before yesterday planes flying very high over Diekirch provoked anti-aircraft fire from the German lines aimed at such an angle that two or more shells fell in the outskirts of that town, without,—happily,—doing more damage than making two holes or pits some five feet in diameter.

Owing to its small size and geographical location no part of the Grand Duchy is entirely safe from the danger of falling bullets from aerial combats, or from shrapnel aimed from Germany or France at

<sup>48</sup> For correspondence regarding a collective protest by the American Republics against the violation of the sovereignty and neutrality of Belgium, Holland, and Luxembourg by Germany, see pp. 727 ff.

<sup>48a</sup> Vicomte Jacques Davignon.

aeroplanes. Yesterday a stray shell exploded in Grevenmacher, fortunately without damage to any person.

Respectfully yours,

GEORGE PLATT WALLER

740.0011 European War 1939/2248 : Telegram

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

THE HAGUE, April 16, 1940—11 a. m.

[Received April 16—8:40 a. m.]

119. On Sunday Dutch anti-aircraft batteries and pursuit planes were in action against British, French and German planes over Netherlands territory.

GORDON

740.0011 European War 1939/2308 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Belgium (Cudahy) to the Secretary of State*

BRUSSELS, April 18, 1940—6 p. m.

[Received April 18—1:30 p. m.]

87. For the President and Secretary of State only. While the present crisis is believed to be passed there is a feeling that the lull is only temporary and that the threat of German invasion remains with the fundamentals of the situation unchanged.

The King sent for me this morning and asked me to tell the President that he considered the invasion of Belgium only matter of time. He asked me very earnestly to request the President to formulate a statement for publication to be issued at the time German invasion next appears imminent. In this statement it would be set forth that the United States could not view with indifference and would be profoundly shocked by a violation of Belgian neutrality and that Great Britain and France do not contemplate a peace for the destruction of Germany and the humiliation of the German people.

I impressed upon the King that the effect of such a statement would be dependent entirely upon its timing. He said he realized this and would advise me when he considered the time opportune.

I believe the proposal for the President to make a statement that the United States could not view with indifference and would be profoundly shocked by a violation of Belgian neutrality is consistent with the position of the President but I would advise against any prediction or anything approaching a commitment in regard to the British and French peace terms.

CUDAHY

740.0011 European War 1939/2343 : Telegram

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

THE HAGUE, April 19, 1940—5 p. m.

[Received April 19—4: 12 p. m.]

129. My 117, April 15, 3 p. m.<sup>49</sup> In radio address this afternoon Prime Minister<sup>49a</sup> announced that the entire country has now been placed under martial law.

GORDON

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740.0011 European War 1939/2308 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Belgium (Cudahy)*

WASHINGTON, April 19, 1940—6 p. m.

45. Your 87, April 18, 6 p. m. was laid before the President before he left Washington for Warm Springs last evening.

We are giving the closest attention to the situation and we are anxious to be helpful to the utmost of our ability. We would therefore appreciate being kept closely informed of any developments which may come to your attention.

HULL

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740.0011 European War 1939/2568 : Telegram

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

PARIS, May 1, 1940—9 a. m.

[Received May 1—6: 43 a. m.]

551. The Belgian Ambassador<sup>49b</sup> said to me last night that his Government had now made it entirely clear to the German Government that if German troops should enter the Netherlands Belgium would march in support of the Netherlands immediately.

BULLITT

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856.001W64/52½ : Telegram

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

THE HAGUE, May 7, 1940—11 p. m.

[Received May 7—9: 09 p. m.]

146. Please communicate the following immediately to the President. Department's instruction 321 of December 21 [29] and its enclo-

<sup>49</sup> Not printed.

<sup>49a</sup> D. J. de Geer.

<sup>49b</sup> P. Le Tellier.

sure.<sup>50</sup> The Queen desires to know whether in the event that the Princess and her children should, either within or outside of the Netherlands, be cut off from and unable to communicate with the Queen, a request from the Princess or Prince Bernhard in one of their own names for the despatch of a cruiser to take them and the children to the United States would have the same weight as a similar request on her own part.

GORDON

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856.001W64/52½ : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, May 8, 1940—1 a. m.

66. Your 146, May 7, 11 p. m. The President desires me to say that any request from the Princess Royal for the despatch of a cruiser will of course be regarded as equivalent to a request from the Queen herself. The President suggests that in the interest of the safety of the Princess and of her family it would be wise for them to consider travelling by way of France to Lisbon where this government has based at this present moment a cruiser which could transport the royal family to the United States.

Any ship in the channel is of course liable to air attack.

Please inform the Queen that the President in line with his previous message will do everything possible to assure the safety of the Princess's family in the event that an emergency arises.<sup>51</sup>

WELLES

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740.0011 European War 1939/2726 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Belgium (Cudahy) to the Secretary of State*

BRUSSELS, May 8, 1940—6 p. m.

[Received May 8—2:20 p. m.]

99. The Foreign Minister<sup>52</sup> advises me he has been informed by Belgian Ambassador in Berlin that German Foreign Office has prepared a memorandum reciting grievances against Belgium and the Netherlands which concludes by the imposition of unreasonable and

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<sup>50</sup> Not printed. The instruction enclosed a letter which was described as a personal message from President Roosevelt for delivery to Queen Wilhelmina. A draft of this letter, dated December 19, 1939, is in the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library at Hyde Park, N. Y. It invited the Queen to send her grandchildren to stay with President and Mrs. Roosevelt, and also extended the invitation to Princess Juliana if she should care to come. (856.001W64/50)

<sup>51</sup> The Minister in the Netherlands replied in telegram No. 151, May 9, 1940, noon, that the Queen had requested that her warm appreciation of his message be conveyed to the President (856.001W64/52½).

<sup>52</sup> Paul-Henri Spaak.

unacceptable demands in the nature of an ultimatum. The Ambassador advised that von Kuhlman (German Foreign Minister in 1917) and Kiewitz would leave Berlin this morning and go to The Hague as personal envoys of Hitler to discuss current "political problems" existing between the two countries.

Foreign Minister said that late this afternoon he had been informed by Dutch Minister in Brussels that Von Kuhlman and Kiewitz arrived at The Hague and would confer with Dutch authorities this evening.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs tells me he has no other evidence than that herein indicated but it is his belief that an ultimatum will be presented to Holland demanding unopposed entry of German troops to that country. He believes that similar demands will be made upon Belgium but stresses that he has no evidence other than that herein stated upon which to base this belief. He assures me again that an invasion of Holland opposed by the Dutch will mean military intervention by Belgium.

Copy to The Hague.

CUDAHY

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740.0011 European War 1939/2775 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Belgium (Cudahy) to the Secretary of State*

BRUSSELS, May 9, 1940—5 p. m.

[Received May 9—4: 20 p. m.]

100. For the President and the Secretary of State. I have just conferred with the King. He does not anticipate an attack on this country at the present time. He expressed the opinion that the alarm in the Netherlands is another exhibit of the war of nerves and points out as significant, in support of this belief, that the envoys mentioned in my telegram No. 99, May 8, 6 p. m., and reported by the Belgian Ambassador in Berlin as having left Berlin yesterday for The Hague have not yet been reported at The Hague.

He assured me he would keep me advised of developments and when convinced that an invasion of Belgium was imminent would inform me so that I could telegraph you for timing action suggested in my 87, of April 18, addressed to the President and Secretary of State.

CUDAHY

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740.0011 European War 1939/2762 : Telegram

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

THE HAGUE, May 10, 1940—5 a. m.

[Received May 10—3: 07 a. m.]

155. Foreign Office has just telephoned me that the Netherlands considers itself in a state of war with Germany and has appealed for

aid from France and England. The Germans have crossed the frontier and have bombed military objectives including the airfield of Wallhaven.

Anti-aircraft and machine gun firing began in The Hague shortly after 4:00 this morning. Commercial Attaché saw two bombers drop bombs near a barracks on the outskirts of the city.

Please acknowledge hour of receipt.

GORDON

740.0011 European War 1939/2763: Telegram

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

THE HAGUE, May 10, 1940—6 a. m.

[Received May 10—3:58 a. m.]

156. My 155, May 10, 5 a. m. The Ministry of Defense states that German ground forces have attacked along entire eastern frontier. German air force has bombed all airports. Parachute troops have been attempting to land near Delft.

From the Chancery three planes have been seen shot down within the last hour, one of them crashing within a few hundred yards of the Chancery. Please acknowledge hour of receipt.

GORDON

740.0011 European War 1939/2767: Telegram

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

PARIS, May 10, 1940—8 a. m.

[Received May 10—6:10 a. m.]

600. Rochat<sup>53</sup> informed me this morning that in addition to invading Belgium, The Netherlands and Luxembourg, German bombers had dropped bombs on various towns in France notably Laon and Villers-Cotterets.

The news reaching the French Foreign Office from the Netherlands indicates that considerable numbers of German parachutists have been landed from planes in the neighborhood of The Hague and Rotterdam and that they are seriously interfering with the Dutch defense. The Dutch are fighting with all the forces at their command. The invasion of Luxembourg began by an attempt at infiltration shortly after 2 o'clock and a general attack about 4 o'clock this morning.

German planes flew over Paris at 5:00 this morning.

BULLITT

<sup>53</sup> Charles Rochat, French Director of Political Affairs.



740.0011 European War 1939/2755: Telegram

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

PARIS, May 10, 1940—9 a. m.

[Received May 10—7: 19 a. m.]

601. I managed to get a telephone connection with Ambassador Cudahy in Brussels at 8:45 this morning. He said that without presenting any note, without giving any warning, a large fleet of German bombers bombed Brussels at 5:15 this morning. One of the bombs had dropped 300 feet from the American Embassy which is in the residential quarter of the city. Ambassador Cudahy said that he had called on the Belgian Minister for Foreign Affairs at 6 o'clock this morning. The Minister had told him that Belgium had received no ultimatum of any kind from Germany and no warning whatsoever that an attack was to be made by Germany.

The German Ambassador in Brussels had not yet called on the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Ambassador Cudahy said that he had been talking with Luxemburg at 2 o'clock this morning and had been informed that the Germans had fired across the Luxemburg frontier and that the Luxemburg Government expected a German invasion at any minute. His telephone connection had been cut off and he had been unable to reestablish communications with Luxemburg.

The Belgian Minister for Foreign Affairs had informed him that the Germans had invaded the Netherlands without warning at 4 o'clock this morning.

He has been informed, although not officially, that heavy fighting was in progress on the Meuse and the Canal Albert.

I promised to call Ambassador Cudahy again at 11 o'clock this morning. He asked me to telephone the foregoing immediately to the White House.

BULLITT

740.0011 European War 1939/2787: Telegram

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

BERLIN, May 10, 1940—9 a. m.

[Received 9: 10 a. m.]

1265. At 5:30 this morning Ribbentrop<sup>54</sup> summoned the chiefs of mission of Holland, Belgium and Luxemburg and read them statements advising them of Germany's determination to "safeguard the neutrality" of their countries by military measures.

In the lengthy identic memoranda read to the diplomatic representatives of the Dutch and Belgian Governments, which was sub-

<sup>54</sup> Joachim von Ribbentrop, Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs.

sequently read by Ribbentrop before a conference for the foreign press, it was stated that it was the Allies' real intention to attack Germany by an invasion of Holland and Belgium, and the latter Governments were respectively charged with having compromised their neutrality in the following ways: The pro-Ally and anti-German attitude of their press, intrigue with British Secret Service agents for the fomenting of revolution in Germany, military collusion with the Allies in violation of their neutrality declarations, Belgium's action in fortifying exclusively its eastern frontier against Germany, Dutch failure to prevent flights of British planes over Dutch territory, and the recent concentrations of troops on the Dutch and Belgian frontiers with Germany. The memorandum stated that Germany was being unwillingly forced into military action, the sole responsibility for which lay upon the Allies and the culpable officials of Holland and Belgium. It was asserted that Germany by its action did not intend to attack the integrity of these two countries or their possessions in Europe or in the colonies either now or in the future. The memorandum concluded with an appeal for nonresistance and with a statement that any opposition offered would be crushed with every means.

The memorandum to the Luxemburg Government refers to the frustration of German efforts to neutralize Luxemburg by international agreement and states that in view of Luxemburg's territorial position it had been necessary to include it within the scope of German military action. In his declaration to the foreign press Ribbentrop stated that after receiving proof of the Allies' intention [to] land troops in Holland and Belgium for an attack upon the Ruhr the Fuehrer had decided to take Dutch and Belgian neutrality under his protection and cause the German Army to deal with the Allies in a language they will understand. Two lengthy documents were circulated to the foreign press the first of which is a report prepared by the German Army high command outlining the alleged unneutral military measures of Holland and Belgium and the second of which is a report signed by Himmler<sup>55</sup> describing the activities of British agents in these two countries.

The Embassy understands that in his interview with Ribbentrop, the Belgian Ambassador heatedly denied the existence of Belgian secret understandings with the Allies and told Ribbentrop that the invasion of his country was a criminal adventure which would be as unfortunate for Germany as it was in 1914. It is understood that the Belgian Ambassador inquired whether an actual invasion had as yet occurred and said that if this were the case he would demand his passports. The Foreign Office is reported to have stated that it was

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<sup>55</sup> Heinrich Himmler, Reich Chief of the Schutzstaffeln and the Gestapo.

as yet uninformed on this point. This Embassy is informed that up to the present the Belgian Ambassador has not been able to get in touch with his Government, although telephone communication had been promised him by the German Foreign Office.

HEATH

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740.0011 European War 1939/2795 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Belgium (Cudahy) to the Secretary of State*

BRUSSELS, May 10, 1940—10 a. m.

[Received 12:25 p. m.]

104. I have just been informed by Foreign Office that at 8:40 this morning the German Ambassador <sup>55a</sup> called on the Foreign Minister at the Foreign Office and stated that because of the French and British threat to the neutrality of Belgium the German Government had decided to take military measures for the safeguarding of their neutrality. The German Ambassador stated that a great German force was massed on the Belgian frontier entirely adequate to protect the country and ensure its neutrality; that if the Belgian Government permitted the entry of German troops the German Government would give its guarantee to respect Belgian neutrality, also guarantee the safety of the King and the permanence of the Crown. The Foreign Minister refused to listen to the reading of the Ambassador's statement setting forth this declaration and with great spirit expressed his repugnance at the ruthless tactics of the Germans in attacking the open city of Brussels without any note or warning of any description.

CUDAHY

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740.0011 European War 1939/2756 : Telegram

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

PARIS, May 10, 1940—noon.

[Received May 10—7:27 a. m.]

606. I talked with Ambassador Cudahy on the telephone at 11:15 this morning. He stated that the Germans had already overrun the whole of Luxemburg and the whole of Limburg. There was heavy fighting in the Ardennes. There had been another air raid warning in Brussels but no German planes had crossed the city.

Ambassador Cudahy added that he had almost been knocked down by the force of the bomb which fell 300 feet from his Embassy and that one of his ears had been deafened by it and was still deaf. A number of windows in the Embassy had been shattered.

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<sup>55a</sup> Vicco von Bülow-Schwante.

Ambassador Cudahy said that the information of the French Military Attaché indicated that the Germans had seized the military airport in Amsterdam by the descent of parachutists but that the Dutch had retaken it.

BULLITT

740.0011 European War 1939/2830: Telegram

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

BERLIN, May 10, 1940—9 p. m.  
[Received May 11—7:45 a. m.]

1286. Embassy's 1265, May 10, 9 a. m., and 1276, May 10, 11 a. m.<sup>56</sup> Following is a translation of a *note verbale* delivered by the Belgian Embassy to the Foreign Office this afternoon:

"The King's Embassy has the honor to protest in the most energetic manner against the aggression of which for the second time in 25 years Belgium is the victim on the part of Germany.

The Government of the Reich solemnly confirmed on October 13, 1937, its determination to make no attempt on the inviolability and the integrity of Belgium 'in all circumstances and to respect at all times Belgian territory except needless to say in the case in which Belgium in an armed conflict in which Germany finds herself engaged should take part in a military action against her.' Germany of her own accord solemnly renewed this pledge on August 26, 1939, on the eve of the present conflict.

Since the declaration of October 13, 1937, Germany has many times paid tribute to the innocuousness of the attitude of Belgium. During the course of the present conflict Belgium has not ceased to observe the most scrupulous neutrality. The King's Embassy rejects therefore with indignation the tendentious reasons forged to meet the needs of the case which were set forth in the memorandum given to the Belgian Ambassador on the 10th of this month at 6 o'clock in the morning by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Reich.

The Belgian Embassy desires again to recall that at the moment when the war threatened to break out the King of the Belgians joining with other heads of state and more particularly with the Queen of the Netherlands did everything to avert it; in November last he renewed with this same sovereign his efforts to put an end thereto.

This new aggression by Germany deprived of all justification will shock violently the universal conscience. The Reich will carry the responsibility therefor in history.

In consequence of the foregoing the King's Embassy begs the Minister of Foreign Affairs to return without delay the necessary passports for the Belgian Ambassador and his family as well as for those persons in his service of non-German nationality, likewise for all the members of the diplomatic mission, their families and their non-German persons."

<sup>56</sup> Latter not printed.

I understand that the Belgian Ambassador has asked to proceed to Switzerland and that the Embassy is also requesting permission for the Belgian consular personnel in Germany and the Belgian officials in Copenhagen and Oslo to leave. I should appreciate immediate advices as to the plans which are being made for the departure of the German diplomatic and consular officers in Belgium as it may be assumed that the German authorities will consider those plans in arranging for the departure from Germany of Belgian representatives.

KIRK

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740.0011 European War 1939/2831 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, May 10, 1940—midnight.

[Received May 11—1:35 a. m.]

1287. My 1286, May 10, 9 p. m. It is understood that the Netherlands Legation also presented to the German Foreign Office a note protesting Germany's military [aggression?] and requesting the return of the passports of the members of the Legation. This evening the Counselors of the Dutch Legation and the Belgian Embassy were summoned to the Foreign Office and after being kept waiting for over an hour were received separately by a subordinate official who described the notes as an insolent gesture and stated that the German Government was unable to accord them notice. It is learned that the Dutch Counselor accepted the return of his Legation's note, but observed that a copy was kept by the Foreign Office while the Belgian Counselor refused to withdraw the communication from his Embassy.

KIRK

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740.0011 European War 1939/2896 : Telegram

*The King of the Belgians (Leopold III) to President Roosevelt*

[Translation <sup>67</sup>]

BRUSSELS, May 10, 1940.

Brutally attacked by Germany which had entered into the most solemn engagements with her, Belgium will defend herself with all of her strength against the invader. In these tragic hours which my country is undergoing, I am addressing myself to Your Excellency, who so often has demonstrated towards Belgium an affectionate interest, in the certainty that you will support with all of your moral authority the efforts which we are now firmly decided to make in order to preserve our independence.

LEOPOLD

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<sup>67</sup> Translation is that printed in the Department of State *Bulletin*, May 11, 1940, p. 492.

740.0011 European War 1939/2834 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, May 11, 1940—noon.

[Received May 11—10:25 a. m.]

1293. My number 1287, May 10, midnight. In announcing the refusal of the German Foreign Office to accept the Dutch and Belgian notes of protest a DNB<sup>58</sup> report published in this morning's press describes these communications as the "height of impudence, shamelessness and stupidity" and characterizes the Dutch and Belgian mention of an invasion of their countries as being "childish" in view of Ribbentrop's statement of yesterday. According to DNB the Dutch Minister and the Belgian Ambassador have been requested to ask for their passports "in the usual proper form."

KIRK

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740.0011 European War 1939/2844 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Belgium (Cudahy) to the Secretary of State*

BRUSSELS, May 11, 1940—noon.

[Received 3:50 p. m.]

108. Beginning at dawn this morning Brussels has again been subject to air attack and an attack is occurring as this is written. No information yet available as to casualties and damage inflicted.

The King at the outset of hostilities assumed command of the army and went to the front where the Foreign Office advises he will remain.

A declaration was issued by the King yesterday calling upon all Belgians to stand firm and resolutely for the defence of their country and expressing conviction in ultimate victory for the independence of Belgium.

During the night further detachments of British troops passed through Brussels on their way to the front.

The Service de Sûreté is functioning with great vigor in arresting all suspected of enemy sympathy and has rounded up a large number of German agents. Von Bülow Schwante, the German Ambassador, is expected to leave tonight on special train accompanied by all German Embassy personnel. There is no information regarding departure of Belgian Ambassador from Berlin.

Please notify at my expense families of all this Embassy personnel that we are all well and happy.

CUDAHY

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<sup>58</sup> Deutsches Nachrichten Büro, German news agency.

740.0011 European War 1939/2882 : Telegram

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

PARIS, May 11, 1940—7 p. m.  
[Received May 11—6:41 p. m.]

633. For the President. You have I am sure seen the splendid telegrams that the Pope has addressed to the King of the Belgians, the Queen of the Netherlands and the Grand Duchess of Luxemburg.

I do not know what you may have in mind as an expression of America's moral condemnation of the German attack on these three countries but I feel that either by telegrams similar to those of the Pope or by some other declaration you should state the case for decency in the world.

Incidentally the evening papers in Paris publish the fact that there are more than 100 dead and wounded civilians in France as a result of German bombardments, the majority women and children.

BULLITT

740.0011 European War 1939/2896 : Telegram

*President Roosevelt to the King of the Belgians (Leopold III)*

WASHINGTON, May 11, 1940.

I have received Your Majesty's telegram. As I stated in an address which I delivered last night to representatives of the twenty-one American Republics, the cruel invasion by force of arms of the independent nations of Belgium, The Netherlands, and Luxembourg has shocked and angered the people of the United States and, I feel sure, their neighbors in the Western Hemisphere. The people of the United States hope, as do I, that policies which seek to dominate peaceful and independent peoples through force and military aggression may be arrested, and that the Government and people of Belgium may preserve their integrity and their freedom. As an old personal friend I send you my warm personal regards.

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

811.51/4029 : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, May 13, 1940—1 a. m.

86. Treasury informs us that the Netherlands and Belgian Governments are considering advising their nationals to destroy American securities in their possession where there is danger that such securities might be lost or captured. In such cases the governments mentioned will probably advise the owners to accomplish the destruction in the

presence of an appropriate notary or judicial officer and also a responsible official of a bank, preferably one whose signature is on file with the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. It is further intended to have the owner and these witnesses certify to the securities so destroyed, identifying them appropriately, and to request authentication of the signature of the government officer by a consular [*consul?*] of the United States, after which such certificates of destruction would be left with the consul to be forwarded to the United States by pouch.

You are authorized to receive such certificates and to authenticate the signatures of appropriate government officials who have witnessed such destruction. In cases of importance and if circumstances permit you may, if requested, witness such destruction and state that fact in the document. You may also transmit such certificates by pouch. If requested execute in triplicate retaining one copy, giving one copy to interested party and forwarding original to Department. You should point out that authentication and transmission of such a document does not constitute an assurance that the destroyed securities will be replaced, but only creates documentary evidence which might be of assistance in case replacement is later sought. You should also make it clear that while every care will be taken to ensure the safe transmission and custody of such certificates the United States Government and its officers accept no responsibility in that connection.

Repeat to Consul General at Amsterdam, and to Consul at Rotterdam if practicable.

HULL

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740.0011 European War 1939/2892 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, May 13, 1940—1 p. m.  
[Received May 13—11: 22 a. m.]

1322. As far as the Embassy is aware none of the Berlin papers have as yet carried any mention of the exchange of messages between President Roosevelt and the King of the Belgians. The DNB ticker service, however, issued yesterday evening under a Brussels dateline the following report reading as follows in translation:

“King Leopold addressed a message to President Roosevelt, in which he requested Roosevelt to support Belgium with his full authority. In his reply President Roosevelt expressed the hope that German policy would be wrecked.”

KIRK



840.51 Frozen Credits/85 : Telegram

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

THE HAGUE, May 14, 1940—11 a. m.

[Received May 14—8:23 a. m.]

8. Foreign Office has just requested me to ask you with utmost urgency if, as it hopes, under the Credit Freezing Emergency Act as extended the Netherlands it is necessary to obtain a license to effect a valid transfer of either principal or interest of the frozen asset. Foreign Office further inquires if the answer to the foregoing is in the affirmative whether or not that constitutes as effective protection as the destruction of securities under the conditions outlined in Department's 86, May 13, 1 p. m. [*a. m.*]

GORDON

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840.51 Frozen Credits/85 : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, May 14, 1940—3 p. m.

97. Your 8, May 14, 11 a. m. Under credit freezing emergency act as extended, it is necessary to obtain a license to effect a valid transfer of either principal or interest of securities registered in the name of a known Dutch national or Dutch resident. It is impractical by this means to block transfer of bearer obligations or certificates, as such securities may appear in other markets.

We cannot undertake to say that this constitutes as effective protection as destruction of securities, since the problem remains as to how the holder of these securities may later be able to prove his ownership, and there is always the possibility that an apparently valid transfer made under compulsion might appear, and it is possible that such a transfer might be licensed. However, in the event of Dutch governmental action transferring title to the Dutch government or some specified agency, the Dutch would be in a better position both from the point of view of blocking transfer and of realization. This, of course, does not apply to bearer securities unless the securities themselves, or proofs of their destruction, are in the possession of the Dutch government.

HULL

740.0011 European War 1939/2944 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, May 14, 1940—midnight.

[Received May 14—11 : 09 p. m.]

1330. The DNB has just published the following announcement by the German high command :

“After the capitulation of Rotterdam and in view of the impending pressure upon the Dutch capital the Dutch command has given up the purposeless resistance and has ordered its troops to suspend fighting. In Zeeland fighting is continuing.”

KIRK

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740.0011 European War 1939/3051 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, May 15, 1940—10 a. m.

[Received 6 : 20 p. m.]

1332. Judging from the outward manifestations as noted in Berlin the entry of the war upon its critical phase caused little general surprise and in view of the public optimism which the German successes in Norway had created the depressing effects of a shock have been in large part avoided. Thus prepared the public seems to have already settled down to a state of anxious expectancy which however is most notably controlled as regards any outward demonstrations.

The moral stigma on the reputation of Germany caused by her invasion of Holland and Belgium is realized by the more intelligent sections of the population but with the persistent and effective propaganda and reports of continual successes to date even these circles have largely come to the point of view that German dominance is an historical necessity overriding the rights and sufferings of smaller states in its path. Even when the latter considerations are accorded a certain validity they are subordinated to the belief that the war has now irrevocably begun and must be fought out to the bitterest end utilizing any and all means and facing the most far-reaching sacrifices. The uncritical majority seem to have been fairly well convinced by propaganda that Belgium and Holland were secretly assisting the Allies in the prosecution of the war and therefore deserve their fate but many of the older people who experienced the effects of the last war entertain feelings of scepticism and hopeless dread of what the future may hold. A possibly larger part of the young people, however, who have been indoctrinated by the influences of National Socialism appear to accept Germany's war venture as a gamble which it has more than an

even chance of winning, particularly in the light of what they regard as Allied failures and evidences of weakness.

Although it is realized in this group that strategical considerations will determine the course of the German campaign it is felt that as the deserving victim, Great Britain will be made to bear the largest share of German retribution. The limits to which this idea of retribution is envisaged as extending varies in different groups of thought and includes not only the extremism [*extremism?*] to annihilate the British Empire but also a more moderate purpose of gaining force by a tactical position of advantage from which a peace proposal may be regarded as possible of a successful launching.

At all events the belief is gaining ground that Germany's fate will depend upon its ability to forestall the vengeance that may be wrought upon it by defeat and that this issue can now only be decided by force of arms. Thus to this extent Hitler seems to have placed the public in a position which compels their allegiance and while there are few demonstrations of enthusiasm the German people seem to be going about their appointed tasks with accustomed obedience and a half-hearted patriotic determination.

KIRK

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740.0011 European War 1939/3052 : Telegram

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

PARIS, May 16, 1940—11 a. m.

[Received May 16—7:21 a. m.]

692. For the President. Paul Reynaud<sup>59</sup> said to me at 10:20 this morning that the news which I did not dare to put in frank form in my telegram No. 690 of last night to you<sup>60</sup> recounting my conversation with Daladier<sup>61</sup> while Gamelin<sup>62</sup> telephoned was true.

The Belgian Army south of Namur had collapsed completely. The Germans had poured through this gap motorized units. These motorized units had now reached the region of Laon and Reims.

The hole made by the collapse of the Belgian Army had not been filled to the slightest degree and the German Army was pouring through it all its motorized and mechanized divisions.

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<sup>59</sup> French Premier and Minister for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>60</sup> Not printed.

<sup>61</sup> Edouard Daladier, French Minister of National Defense and War; became Minister for Foreign Affairs on May 18, 1940.

<sup>62</sup> Maurice Gamelin, Commander in Chief of the French Army.

The final and most horrible and incredible blow was that all the railroad workers of Belgium had gone on strike and were refusing to transport French troops.

In consequence it appeared to be impossible to hope that the hole could be stopped.

Reynaud concluded his statements to me by the words "I am sorry for the democracies".

BULLITT

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740.00116 European War 1939/252: Telegram

*The Ambassador in Belgium (Cudahy) to the Secretary of State*

BRUSSELS, May 16, 1940—noon.  
[Received May 16—9:05 a. m.]

149. For the President. I have been asked by the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps the Apostolic Nuncio <sup>62a</sup> to request of you that you address an appeal to the German Government not to subject Brussels to bombardment.

The Nuncio told me that he was making a similar request of the Italian Ambassador to be addressed to the King of Italy.

The Belgian governmental authorities assure me that Brussels is an unfortified city and that there are no troops stationed here other than for police purposes.

CUDAHY

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740.00116 European War 1939/252: Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Chargé in Germany (Kirk)* <sup>63</sup>

WASHINGTON, May 16, 1940.

1278. Please immediately convey through appropriate channels the following message from the President to the Chancellor:

The Belgian Governmental Authorities have given me positive assurances that Brussels is an unfortified town and that there are no troops stationed there other than for police purposes. Recalling the order issued by the German Government at the outbreak of hostilities last September that it would restrict its operations to military objectives, may I in the name of humanity appeal to you not to subject Brussels to bombardment which could only increase the tragedy and suffering of thousands of defenseless men, women, and children and serve no military end.

HULL

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<sup>62a</sup> Msgr. Clemente Micara.

<sup>63</sup> Marginal note: "Approved by the President by telephone 10:45 a. m. May 16. S[umner] W[elles]."

740.0011 European War 1939/3176

*The Netherlands Minister (London) to the Secretary of State*

No. 2840

WASHINGTON, May 16, 1940.

SIR: I have the honor to inform Your Excellency that I have received a telegraphic communication from the Netherlands Minister in London, informing me that Her Majesty Queen Wilhelmina and the Netherlands Government are for the time being in London<sup>64</sup> and that in the greater part of The Netherlands the Netherlands Army has laid down arms.

The Netherlands, however, remain to be in a state of war with Germany and consequently the Netherlands Navy and the armed forces operating in those parts of The Netherlands, which have not been occupied, will continue to fight.

Please accept [etc.]

A. LOUDON

856.001W64/53a : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, May 18, 1940—7 p. m.

899. From the President.

"Kennedy Secret for the Queen of The Netherlands."<sup>65</sup>

I need not tell you that I am proud of the splendid resistance put up by your armed forces against impossible odds.

I do not minimize the splendid possibility that the forces of aggression may yet be repelled on the Continent but if because of inhuman bombing of England it becomes advisable for you and your family to come to the United States please do not hesitate to advise me. I think today the best exit is via Ireland and I can send a cruiser or merchant ship with convoy to Irish port but naturally at least a week advance notice is necessary.

We can keep in touch via Ambassador Kennedy in London or Minister David Gray in Dublin, who is my cousin. Franklin D. Roosevelt."

HULL

<sup>64</sup> On August 10, 1940, R. E. Schoenfeld was designated to perform duties as American Chargé near the Netherlands Government at London.

<sup>65</sup> Queen Wilhelmina arrived in England May 13.

856.001W64/53½ : Telegram

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

LONDON, May 20, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received May 20—11 a. m.]

1273. Department's 899, May 18, 7 p. m. For the President. I delivered your message to Queen Wilhelmina at Buckingham Palace at 2:30 today. She was visibly touched by your message and spoke again of how kind you had always been to her and what deep appreciation she felt towards all your efforts for peace. She will keep me advised as to the content of your message.

The Netherland Foreign Minister <sup>66</sup> was there and he is very doubtful about the security of Ireland as a place of safety. All the reports are that there is great possibility of trouble there.

KENNEDY

856.001W64/53¾ : Telegram

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

LONDON, May 21, 1940—noon.

[Received May 21—7:33 a. m.]

1294. My 1273, May 20, 4 p. m. For the President.

“Message of Her Majesty the Queen of the Netherlands to the President of the United States.

I am very grateful for your personal message which the Ambassador of the United States brought me this afternoon.

Your appreciation of the splendid resistance of my armed forces against overwhelming numbers of enemy troops deeply touched me. In this appreciation everyone will join who realizes the superhuman effort they made.

Your kind consideration of my personal welfare and that of my family is a great comfort to me in these days of stress. If circumstances should call for it—may God forbid its necessity—I will not fail to remember your generous initiative. (Signed) Wilhelmina, May 20th, 1940.”

KENNEDY

740.0011 European War 1939/3215 : Telegram

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

PARIS, May 21, 1940—6 p. m.

[Received May 21—4:28 p. m.]

794. The Belgian Ambassador has just called on me with a message from King Leopold for President Roosevelt. The message is dated

<sup>66</sup> Elco Nicolaas van Kleffens.

May 21, 1940 at the General Headquarters of the Belgian Army. An English translation of the message reads as follows:

"Once before, in the tragic days from 1914 to 1918, the American people gave splendid relief to my people.

All your efforts sought to avoid the recurrence of war horrors.

Once more, neutral and loyal Belgium has been violated without provocation by the same aggressor, by whom destruction and ruin are spread everywhere.

The Belgian Army, faithful to its heritage of honor and the legacy left it by my Father, fights with all its strength, resisting foot by foot.

The civilian population, women, children, old people, live in anguish, scattered, without shelter, in dire distress, their present situation is even more dreadful than the one in which they found themselves in 1914 when they were so wonderfully helped by the Commission for Relief in Belgium, which for 4 years was regarded by us as the incarnation of human ideals and American generosity.

I earnestly appeal to you on behalf of the Belgian people and I take this opportunity of assuring you of my deep admiration for the high ideal which inspires the free American people, and which you exemplify in your messages and your deeds. (Signed) Leopold."

BULLITT

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740.0011 European War 1939/3215 : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, May 23, 1940—noon.

462. Please ask the Belgian Ambassador to transmit the following message from the President to King Leopold:

"I have received Your Majesty's message from the battlefield and hasten to assure you of the deep sympathy which goes out from the American people to Belgium in its heroic battle for freedom and integrity and to the women and children and old people of your country who are the tragic victims of a brutal invasion.

"Americans, individuals and private organizations, aware of this unprecedented emergency, have not hesitated as the shocking reports of appalling suffering, widespread distress and wanton devastation have poured in from the war zone. Funds spontaneously contributed by the American public were immediately allotted by the American Red Cross for the special relief of the desperately suffering refugees of Belgium and France. Further sums were assigned by the Red Cross for the purchase of ambulances, medical supplies, emergency field hospitals and other immediate necessities of your stricken people.

"American organizations abroad have sprung into action and are now straining all their resources to shelter, feed and clothe the civilian sick, the wounded and the destitute. Red Cross chapters throughout this country are working overtime to speed up their production of surgical dressings, blankets and articles of clothing.

"I cite these examples in order to reassure Your Majesty that the people of the United States are deeply conscious of the suffering and

despair of innocent non-combatants and are directing their every resource to the relief of the millions of human beings who are being engulfed in misery. Americans, who, through God's will, have been spared the horrors of war, are thoroughly conscious of their moral duty to stem with compassion and humanitarian assistance the tide of destitution which is sweeping over other parts of the world.

"I am certain that I can speak for the American people when I say to you, in reply to your appeal, that they are prepared to respond quickly and generously in this tragic time. Franklin D. Roosevelt."

HULL

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740.0011 European War 1939/3277 : Telegram

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

PARIS, May 24, 1940—11 a. m.

[Received May 24—8:04 a. m.]

844. Your 462, May 23, noon. I delivered the President's message to the Belgian Ambassador this morning. He informed me that he would transmit it at once to the Belgian Government; but that unfortunately he could not communicate it to King Leopold who was cut off with the French, Belgian, and British Armies now fighting on Belgian soil.

BULLITT

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856.001W64/533 : Telegram

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

LONDON, May 25, 1940—2 p. m.

[Received 6:08 p. m.]

1372. The Dutch Foreign Minister called to see me this morning. He again expressed Queen Wilhelmina's deep gratitude for the President's wire. He wanted to point out to me that the Queen was here with her entire Government and she proposed, of course, to carry on as long as it was possible to do so. She realized that if she were to go to America, she could not carry on her Government. Therefore, she supposed she must go to Canada.

However, the question of leaving England is causing great worry. The Foreign Minister is unable to make the British Government believe that they are faced with a critical situation if this battle in France goes badly. He said that the Germans have furnished a new surprise in every country they have gone into and make no mistake they are storing up something terrible for England. He said when he inquired as to just what troops were going to face a possible



German invasion of some kind, he found out that there are very few seasoned troops; the rest are territorials. He said to imagine these people fighting this avalanche of Germans is perfectly ridiculous. He said they landed tremendous numbers of soldiers from transports on football fields or any place; they landed 10½-inch howitzers and trench mortars from these transports and instantly set up substantial defensive and offensive units. With his own eyes, he saw parachutists disguised in Dutch and other disguises.

He said they have very secretly two Dutch warships, one quite fast and one stronger, armed but not quite so fast, waiting at Falmouth, but they feel that as they are guests here they cannot move their Government from London until the British move and the British, because of their pride, refuse to take any action on the possibility of a quick exit. He said pride stops them from recognizing the truth and they see the whole picture in the wrong light. He still has some gold here but a very small proportion. He frankly is worried that England does not recognize what it is going to be up against, will only realize when it is impossible to take any constructive action.

KENNEDY

124.55/74 : Telegram

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

ROME, May 27, 1940—11 a. m.

[Received May 27—8:50 a. m.]

418. The following is the substance of a confidential message dated May 22nd which I have just received from Cudahy for transmission to you:

Request message to the families of all at the Embassy and Consulate that they are all well.

All codes except Gray have been destroyed. Cudahy has been without communication since May 16th but is led to believe that they may be reestablished in about 10 days' time. Representations on the subject in Berlin might be helpful.

The occupation of Belgium by the German Army, he says, has reduced our usefulness in Belgium. There are only a few Americans left and the work of the Embassy in a very short time will be confined to the representation of the six missions whose interests the United States has taken over (Great Britain, France, the Netherlands, South Africa, Canada, and Luxemburg) and to relief work, especially obtaining food. He is convinced that the scope of the latter work will be limited and could be accomplished as well, if not better, by a committee of Americans not related to our Foreign Service. He is also convinced that the most significant work he can do at this time is to report firsthand to the President and the Secretary. In view of the

above facts he would like discretion for decision to leave Brussels with the staffs of the Mission and Consulate with the exception of such personnel as it will be necessary to leave there for administrative functions under the direction of a sufficiently high ranking officer attached to the Embassy at Berlin but on duty in Brussels.

He has been requested to serve in conjunction with the Apostolic Nuncio and the Italian Ambassador as honorary chairman of a Belgian committee for food supply and requests authorization to accept.

He requests to be informed as soon as possible what steps if any to send money, food or supplies to Belgium have been taken in America by the Red Cross, Hoover, or any other organizations.

In conclusion he stresses the strictly confidential character of this message.

If the Department has no other means of communication with Cudahy, the bearer of the above message from him is returning to Brussels in about 10 days and could carry your reply.

PHILLIPS

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124.55/75 : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, May 27, 1940—6 p. m.

144. Your 418, May 27, 11 a. m. We are very gratified to hear from Cudahy that he and his staff and their families and the members and families of the Consulate are well. We have taken note of the matters mentioned in the third paragraph.

As regards the contents of the fourth paragraph Department is definitely of the opinion that the work under his jurisdiction now is of the utmost importance and that it merits the attention of the official representatives of the American Government. The President and the Department are alike of the opinion that he continue his residence and his official duties in so far as may be possible under the circumstances that exist.

The Department is of the opinion that he should not serve as chairman of the committee he mentions but that he should cooperate with such a committee and be helpful in choosing the membership of it and in coordinating that committee with the efforts of the Red Cross or any other committee whether it is of American or other origin in bringing relief to the people of Belgium.

He will be advised as to the steps which have been and will be taken by the Red Cross and other organizations in their efforts to effectuate relief.

Department will be glad if you will take advantage of the opportunity to send the substance of the above message to Cudahy.

HULL

740.0011 European War 1939/3358: Telegram

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

PARIS, May 28, 1940.

[Received May 28—8 p. m.]

924. The following is an English translation of the texts, as reported by Havas, of the proclamation read over the radio to the Belgian people this afternoon by Monsieur Pierlot, Belgian Prime Minister:

“Disregarding the formal and unanimous decisions of the Government, the King has just opened separate negotiations and dealt with the enemy.

Belgium will be stupefied, but the fault of one man cannot be imputed to the entire nation.

Our Army has not deserved the fate inflicted upon it. The act which we deplore is without legal value. It does not bind the country. According to the terms of the Belgian Constitution, which the King has sworn to observe, all powers emanate from the nation. They are carried out according to the Constitution. No act of the King may have effect if it is not countersigned by a Minister.

The principle is absolute. It is a fundamental rule in the functioning of our institutions.

The King, breaking the ties which bound him to his people, has placed himself in the power of the invader. From now on he is no longer in a position to govern. It stands to reason that the functions of Chief of State cannot be carried out under foreign control. Officers and civil servants are thus relieved of the duty of obedience by which they were bound by their oath of allegiance. Furthermore, the Belgian Constitution establishes continuity of power. Its provisions apply particularly in the present case when it is impossible for the King to reign. At such a time the two Houses must be assembled. In the interval, the constitutional powers of the King are exercised in the name of the Belgian people, by the Ministers assembled in Council and under their responsibility.

Relying on this principle, the present Government, alone duly constituted, and invested with the confidence of the Chambers, which have avowed their will to defend to the end, in union with the Allies, the independence of Belgium and the integrity of its territory against the most odious of aggressions.

The Government will not fail in its duty.

Assembled in Paris, in agreement with the presidents of the two legislative assemblies, and with the Ministers of State, with whom they have been able to consult, the Government, sure of interpreting the will of the people, is resolved to continue the struggle for the deliverance of the country.

From among the courageous youth who have responded to the appeal of the Government, united with the Belgian military forces in France and in Great Britain, a new army will be raised and organized. It will enter into the line of battle at the side of the Allies. Belgians unfit for military service will be utilized in accordance with their capacity in civilian mobilization or military production.

Thus all the forces still at our disposal will be placed in the service of a cause which has become ours since Germany's aggression.

From today the measures necessary to carrying out these resolutions as rapidly as possible will be taken. It is important to affirm immediately and in tangible manner the solidarity which continues to unite us to the powers who lent us their protection as they had promised.

Belgians, we are living through the most painful trial of our history. The time has come to recall the lessons of valor and of honor which were given us by those who fought from 1914 to 1918. Come what may, we will remain worthy of them."

The afternoon's *Paris Soir* expresses in the following words the feeling of almost every Frenchman about Leopold's treachery:

"The unbelievable treason of the son the [*of?*] the 'soldier king' has aroused consternation and anger in France. These sentiments are understandable. All those who have someone dear to them who is fighting at the front, especially those whose fathers, whose husbands, whose sons, whose brothers are in the army of the north, will never forget that the 'felon king' today made it possible for our heroic soldiers and their valiant British comrades to be stabbed in the back by the enemy. It was in response to the appeal of King Leopold that our armies rushed into Belgium. In capitulating, King Leopold has betrayed both his country and his allies. But the French, now that their stupor has passed, have regained control of themselves. This new trial only causes them to clinch their fists and to gather together more resolutely to fight victoriously to the end."

BULLITT

855.01/23

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Secretary of State (Berle)*

[WASHINGTON,] May 28, 1940.

The Belgian Ambassador <sup>67</sup> and M. Theunis, <sup>68</sup> accompanied by Mr. Moffat, <sup>68a</sup> came in to see me, at their request. They had hoped to see Mr. Welles, but were unable to do so.

Both, and particularly M. Theunis, were obviously in a high state of agitation.

They handed me the attached statement <sup>69</sup> announcing that M. Pierlot <sup>69a</sup> considered that the surrender of the King of the Belgians was contrary to the views of the Belgian government, and that the government proposed to carry on the war.

<sup>67</sup> Count Robert van der Straten-Ponthoz.

<sup>68</sup> Georges Theunis, Belgian Ambassador-at-Large.

<sup>68a</sup> J. Pierrepont Moffat, Chief of the Division of European Affairs.

<sup>69</sup> Not printed.

<sup>69a</sup> H. M. E. Pierlot, Belgian Prime Minister.

I asked what they considered was the present status of the Belgian government.

The Ambassador answered that they considered that the Belgian government was intact, and was functioning at Paris. The King was now a prisoner and therefore could not now exercise his rights as king. For the time being, all constitutional rights and powers devolved on the government.

The Belgian constitution provided that in such case Parliament should be assembled and a regent appointed. Plainly, Parliament could not assemble. By consequence, it was expected that the government would carry on.

M. Theunis was bitter at the French for casting the whole blame of the northern defeat on the Belgians, adding that it was not the Belgian line that had broken, but the French line, at Sedan. It was like the French, he said, to take all the credit if things went well and blame their neighbors if things went badly.

He was likewise critical of the King.

I said that we were slow to pass judgment here, knowing of the great strain; but that we sympathized with their difficulties, and took note of his declaration. It appeared, during the course of the conversation, that the two gentlemen had been in touch with the Belgian Ambassador at London; and with the Belgian Minister of Finance in Paris, from whom they had confirmation of the fact that the Belgian government had unanimously determined against the King's capitulation, but he had capitulated, in any event. His excuse was that the Belgian army was now without rations and almost without ammunition.

A. A. BERLE, JR.

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856.001W64/534 : Telegram

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

LONDON, May 28, 1940—8 p. m.  
[Received May 28—5: 18 p. m.]

1414. For the President and Secretary. The Dutch Foreign Minister has just called to see me. He is still very unhappy that the British do not seem to be making any plans ahead for the possibilities that might arise and the Queen instructed him to come and say to me that she and the Prince have decided to remain here for further developments, but they do want Princess Juliana and the children to go to Canada. The reason they want her to go to Canada instead of the United States is because if anything should happen to the Queen she would have to function as the head of the Government.

The Dutch Foreign Minister realizes that America cannot or would

not want to send a cruiser or ship into belligerent waters so his suggestion is that the Princess and her two children on Friday night of this week be put on one of the Dutch cruisers which will take her to meet any ship that you designate, which ship in turn might take her to Canada.

He realizes that this is a very difficult thing for you to work out, but that you have been so kind in your offers and suggestions that the Queen wished you to know what she would like to do at this minute, but she understands of course the difficulties in the situation for you.

Will you advise me as soon as possible as they are anxious to make plans.

KENNEDY

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856.001W64/53‡ : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, May 29, 1940—1 p. m.

1024. Your 1414, May 28, 8 p. m. The President desires me to ask you to say to the Dutch Foreign Minister that this Government desires, of course, to show every possible courtesy to the Princess and her children and to facilitate her journey in every way. The President believes, however, that at this time of the year in the North Atlantic, the transfer of the Princess and her family from a Dutch cruiser to an American vessel would be exceedingly hazardous if not actually dangerous. The President believes, therefore, that the Dutch cruiser which takes the Princess and her party on board should make the entire voyage from the British port to this side of the Atlantic. The entire trip should not take more than 4 days. If it is decided that the cruiser should proceed to a New England port, every care will be taken of the Princess and her family by the authorities of this Government while they are within the United States pending their arrival in Canada.

HULL

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740.0011 European War 1939/3607 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, June 7, 1940—noon.

[Received 5:19 p. m.]

1721. No. 162 from Brussels. From Cudahy.

"I handed the following to German military authorities in Brussels June 2 for transmission through Berlin, but learn never received.

"Today I was handed the following letter (given below in translation) by King Leopold who asked me to transmit it to the President

without delay. An identical letter, the King told me, had been placed in the hands of the Papal Nuncio in Brussels for delivery to the Pope.

"Bruges, May 28, 1940 to the President :

In the midst of the general confusion brought about by the prodigiously rapid development of events amid which we are living the importance of which are incalculable I wish to state that Belgium and its army have done their whole duty.

Belgium has kept its international undertakings first in scrupulously maintaining its neutrality and then in defending foot by foot the whole length of its territory.

Attacked by enormous forces our army reached in good order a strongly organized line of defense in liaison with the armies of those who came to our aid and to whom we had appealed. However, military events which had taken place outside our territory forced us to evacuate this battlefield and necessitated a series of movements of withdrawals driving us towards the sea.

Our army then gave of its best without counting the cost, in a 4-days' battle conducted jointly with the Allied armies. We finally found ourselves surrounded in a very limited, densely populated territory already invaded by several hundred thousand civilians without shelter, without food, without water, moving from one place to another to escape from air bombardments.

Yesterday our last means of resistance were broken under the weight of a crushing superiority of forces and aviation.

Under these conditions I attempted to avoid a conflict which would today have led to our extermination without helping the Allies. No one has the right to sacrifice uselessly human life.

Whatever happens I propose to continue to share the fate of my army and my people. I have for a number of days been asked to leave my soldiers. I have repulsed this suggestion which for the head of the army would have meant desertion. Moreover, by remaining on Belgian soil I wish to support my people in the trial which it is passing through.

The solicitude which the United States have always shown Belgium makes it a duty for me to explain the facts to you without delay. (signed) Leopold."

The King told me that on May 27 he sent an emissary from his headquarters at Bruges with a message for me to see the King at Bruges at once. The area about Bruges was in violent combat at the time this messenger was sent and the messenger never reached Brussels.["?"]"

HEATH

740.0011 European War 1939/3619: Telegram

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

BERLIN, June 8, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received 8:37 p. m.]

1751. From Cudahy. Following is submitted for guidance of Department regarding decision as to status of the Belgian Government now reported in France.

Since May 17, German military authorities have assumed charge of all executive and administrative activities in Belgium. German military law has been in effect since that date except in civil cases in which Belgian judicial tribunals continue jurisdiction and render judgment in the name of the King. But the King is a prisoner of war and according to a declaration reported to have been issued by the Prime Minister of Belgium speaking from France, the King is incapable of exercising

the prerogative of sovereign. I am reliably informed that the King has expressed an intention to withdraw from all political activity pending determination of his country's political status.

Before the German occupation, the King had the respect and affection of his people. The Germans, since taking possession of Belgium, have exercised moderation and have displayed a tendency to cultivate the good will of the people. It is amazing how well they are succeeding. Defeated, their country invaded, and resentful in the spectacle of vast destruction, a feeling of hostility has been engendered against French and British Allies, especially the British, with a resultant acquiescence approaching friendliness to the fact of German occupation. Regarding the King, the majority sentiment is one of loyalty and the belief that his decision to surrender his army was based upon a hopeless military position and by heroic humanitarian considerations. This is the view of most returning soldiers and officers who believe that the Belgian Army was hopelessly encircled, that to fight on would have served no useful purpose for the Allies and would have meant further great slaughter. This view is strengthened by the statement of 1938 [1940?] the Cardinal read to all parishes in the country July [June] 2 (my telegram of July 8 [June 7]<sup>70</sup>).

As previously reported the Belgian Government left Brussels May 16, was reported subsequently at La Panne, Belgium, Poitiers and Le Havre and latest information is that Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, several other Cabinet members and some members of Senate and Chamber are at Nozay, France. Three Ministers have been reported as now returned to Belgium.

The capital and seat of the Government is defined in the Constitution as Brussels. Nothing in Constitution permits or authorizes authoritative act of government when government is sitting outside territorial limits of Belgium. There is no evidence of quorum of Chamber and Senate in Nozay or that alleged government in France has *de jure* authority to legislate or exercise administrative functions.

All Ministers and Ambassadors to Belgium are accredited only to King as Chief of State. While nearly all Chiefs of Mission have left Brussels nearly half of Missions maintaining a Chargé or Secretary there.

Above is written to indicate in broad and sketchy outline the confusion and difficulty of arriving at political definition of Belgium at this time. My reading of events as reported is that King has not been removed by Ministers nor has he abrogated [*abdicated?*], but by reason of being a prisoner of war his status as sovereign is suspended.

There is no evidence that Belgian Government in France has any *de jure* authority.

<sup>70</sup> Telegram No. 1713 not printed.



In practical analysis German authorities are in military occupation of Belgium and pending clarification of whole situation my recommendation would be that Department make no decision at this time regarding recognition of Belgian Government in France. [Cudahy.]

HEATH

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856.001W64/54 : Telegram

*The Chargé in Canada (Simmons) to the Secretary of State*

OTTAWA, June 10, 1940—noon.

[Received June 10—11:47 a. m.]

122. I am reliably informed in confidence from high governmental source that Queen Wilhelmina and certain other members of Netherland Royal Family will arrive by British destroyer in Canada approximately today.<sup>71</sup>

SIMMONS

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[For note from the German Foreign Office requesting the United States to withdraw the diplomatic missions in Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxemburg, see telegram No. 2223, July 1, 10 a. m., from the Chargé in Germany, page 174. For Department's instructions to close the missions, effective not later than July 15, 1940, see telegram No. 1856, July 4, noon, page 175.]

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850A.01/46

*The Luxemburg Chargé (Le Gallais) to the Secretary of State*

[Translation]

[WASHINGTON,] September 4, 1940.

MR. SECRETARY OF STATE: On instructions from the Government of Her Royal Highness the Grand Duchess, I have the honor to make the following known to Your Excellency:

"Despite its word given at the beginning of the war to respect the integrity and the neutrality of the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg, the Reich caused Luxemburg territory to be invaded and occupied during the night of May 9-10 of this year. To remove their activity from the pressure of the invader, Her Royal Highness the Grand Duchess and her Government went to another country, in order there to protest

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<sup>71</sup> Crown Princess Juliana of the Netherlands and her two children arrived in Canada on June 11, 1940, to stay in Ottawa for duration of the war. Queen Wilhelmina remained in England with her Government.

against this act of force and in order there freely to defend the interests of their country before other nations.

“To assure the civil administration of the country during the foreign military occupation, the Government, before its departure, did not fail to give the necessary instructions to the administrative authorities of Luxemburg who remained at their posts. This in conformity with the principles of international law.

“Now, the acts of interference of the German authorities in the administration of the Grand Duchy and the measures decreed by them since May 10 were not long in revealing the true intentions of the Reich with respect to Luxemburg. In fact, a few days after the invasion, the country was declared an enemy country and after a brief transition period the military administration was replaced by a German civil administration under the orders of a *Gauleiter*. The latter made his entrance into the city of Luxemburg at the head of German police troops. In a speech which he made on that occasion, he proclaimed the German character of the Luxemburg population. Successively, he has suppressed the use of the French language, which has for centuries been the official language of the country, required the exclusive use of the German language, declared the Constitution abolished, relieved officials of their oath of fidelity to Her Royal Highness the Grand Duchess and forbidden the use of the expressions ‘Grand Duchy and Country of Luxemburg.’

“Against the arbitrariness of these measures taken in violation of international law, of treaties and of promises given by Germany, Her Royal Highness the Grand Duchess and Her Government *formally* protest. They will never recognize their validity.

“Neither in the past nor in the present has the attitude of the Sovereign nor the attitude of Her Ministers and the attitude of the population furnished the slightest pretext to the injustice which the Reich is in the act of committing with respect to a small country, the most peaceful of all.

“Although the authorities of the Reich have done everything since May 10 to prevent Her Royal Highness the Grand Duchess and the Grand Ducal Government from entering into contact with the Luxemburg population, Her Royal Highness the Grand Duchess and the Government know that in making this protest, they are acting in full accord with the Luxemburg people who, if they were free to express their sentiments, would not fail to affirm their will to remain free and independent, as scarcely a year ago, they had occasion to do in celebrating with unanimous enthusiasm the Centennial of the Independence of the Grand Duchy.”

I beg you to accept [etc.]

HUGUES LE GALLAIS

855.01/59

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Secretary of State  
(Berle)*

[WASHINGTON,] November 8, 1940.

The Belgian Ambassador and M. Theunis called today, at their request, to ask whether we could not take advantage of the recent appointment of Schoenfeld as Chargé d'Affaires to the Belgian Government,<sup>72</sup> to reiterate the fact that we continued to recognize the Government of Belgium.

M. Theunis said that there was a general impression that the Government of Belgium had dissolved; that we no longer recognized that there was such a government; and that it would be a very great service to the morale of Belgians everywhere and of the Belgian Government, if we could use the appointment of Schoenfeld as an occasion for saying that we continued to recognize the Belgian Government. He thought the time was appropriate, since the Prime Minister of Belgium, M. Pierlot, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, M. Spaak, had finally escaped from Spain and had arrived in London. In consequence, there was a functioning Ministry at London. M. Theunis here was carrying on for the Belgian Government, and for the Government of the Belgian Congo.

I said I would take the matter up with the Department and advise.

The Belgian Ambassador asked particularly whether, if we decided to make such a statement, he could not be advised, so that it would be amply publicized. His conception was that the Secretary might say a few words on the subject in a press conference within a few days.

NOTE: I see no reason why this should not be done, and every reason why it should. Even the Treasury asked us, only a few days ago, whether there was still a Belgian Government and whether we recognized it.

There is such a government—perhaps hazy as to Belgium, but certainly very much a going concern as to the Belgian Congo. In the Belgian Congo there are some thirty thousand Belgian troops, a very considerable population, with considerable assets both there and here, actually covering a large territory. The Léopoldville Government actually functions in connection with the Belgian Government now operating from London. Our appointment of Schoenfeld obviously is equivalent to a continued recognition; and there is no reason why we should not make a short statement, say by way of an answer to a question in a press conference.

A. A. BERLE, JR.

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<sup>72</sup> On November 16 Mr. Schoenfeld was recalled to the Department for consultation, and Theodore C. Achilles was appointed as Chargé in his absence.

855.01/59

*Memorandum by the Assistant Secretary of State (Berle) to the Chief of the Division of Current Information (McDermott)*

[WASHINGTON,] December 2, 1940.

I still think we ought to do something more about stating that we do recognize the Belgian Government now at London.

A press release relating the fact that we still have a Chargé d'Affaires accredited to that Government may help somewhat; but I feel that at some appropriate time, perhaps by a "planted" question, the inquiry ought to be made whether there is a Belgian Government in existence which we recognize, and where; and that the answer ought to be made by the Secretary that the Belgian Government is now functioning at London; that we have a Chargé d'Affaires accredited to it; and that it operates exactly as do the governments of Norway and Holland—or some similar statement.

A. A. BERLE, JR.

[A handwritten note by Howard Bucknell, Jr., Assistant Chief of the Division of Current Information, appears at the bottom of this document inquiring of Mr. Berle if he had seen the press release of November 29, and whether he thought that this covered the matter to which he referred. The press release reads as follows: "The resignation of the Honorable John Cudahy as American Ambassador to Belgium does not leave this Government without representation near the Belgian Government, as it will be recalled that Theodore C. Achilles has been appointed and is acting as Chargé d'Affaires ad interim near the Belgian Government in London."]

### III. INVASION OF FRANCE BY GERMANY AND COLLAPSE OF FRENCH RESISTANCE

811.22751/13: Telegram

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

PARIS, May 13, 1940—2 p. m.

[Received May 13—12:48 p. m.]

639. Personal for the President. The French Government desires to send to the United States for training as aviators a number of young Frenchmen. Before making a formal request for permission to carry out this project Charveriat, Director of Political Affairs at the French Foreign Office, asked me unofficially on behalf of Reynaud <sup>73</sup> and the Ministry of Air if I could find out from you

<sup>73</sup> Paul Reynaud, French Premier and Minister for Foreign Affairs.

whether the sending to the United States of young men to be trained as aviators would embarrass you and, if it did not embarrass you, how the project should be carried out.

If you should approve of the project it would be handled entirely in accordance with your wishes both with regard to numbers of men sent and with regard to forms of training and places of training.

The French aviation schools cannot begin to cope with the needs of the air service. Hence the desire to have men trained in the United States.

Charveriat explained that the French Government would be entirely willing to have these men merely go through preliminary training program of becoming expert transport pilots and would not insist on their being given any military training whatsoever.

I replied that I would refer this question to you personally.

In my own opinion it would be greatly to the advantage of our country to have more trained French pilots: in defending France they would defend us. If France should be defeated they would enlist in our Army.

I hope that your answer will be in the affirmative and that you will cable me soon just how you wish the matter handled. Nothing will be done until I hear from you.

Please answer quickly.

BULLITT

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851.248/346 : Telegram

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

PARIS, May 13, 1940—3 p. m.

[Received May 13—2: 55 p. m.]

640. Personal for the President. The French and British inferiority in the air makes it essential for the French and British to obtain immediately all the pursuit planes and bombardment planes that they can possibly get.

Since yesterday afternoon Paul Reynaud, Laurent-Eynac, Minister for Air, Meny, Undersecretary for Air and the aide-de-camp of General Vuillemin, Supreme Commander for Air, have all asked me to take up with you three questions:

(1) The French Government believes that there are now on the docks in New York about 100 Curtiss P-36 planes in crates. Owing to the length of time that it takes to assemble American planes on French soil, and owing to the inadequate number of French aviation mechanics that can be put on this work, the French Government desires to have the Curtiss airplanes which are now in crates in New York removed from their crates at once and assembled in the United States.

If this should prove to be possible the French Government would send immediately an aircraft carrier which could carry at least 70 planes per voyage.

(2) The question of assemblage in France is equally serious for bombardment planes and the French Government desires if possible in future to have bombardment planes assembled in the United States and flown to Europe.

For various reasons the southern route seems impracticable and the planes would have to be flown by way of the northern route from Canada. I have been asked whether or not it might be possible to have American reserve pilots resign their commissions in the reserve and fly these planes from the United States to England or France. Both Reynaud and Meny, and the representative of General Vuillemin as well asked me to take up this matter with you personally and stated that Colonel Jacquin<sup>74</sup> would be ordered immediately to get in touch with the members of the American Government that he sees regularly to attempt to arrange both these questions. Later, Laurent-Eynac stated to me that a telegram already had been sent to Jacquin.

(3) All the persons referred to above appealed to me to attempt to obtain any number possible of additional pursuit planes and fast bombers. It is the opinion of the French air force that bombardment planes must have A-1 speed of at least 450 kilometers an hour and pursuit planes a speed of at least 520 kilometers an hour in order to be of use in the present war. The only exception is the Curtiss P-36. All the men referred to above emphasized that it is absolutely essential that the schedule of motor deliveries by American motor manufacturers should be exactly gauged to him [*sic*]. There is a slight delay in deliveries of motors for the block 176.

I cannot over-emphasize the importance of the air factor at the present moment or the urgency with which the requests recorded above have been made to me.

BULLITT

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811.22751/13 : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, May 14, 1940—5 p. m.

366. Your 639, May 13, 2 p. m. From the President:

“Under ordinary circumstances this Government would of course be glad to accommodate the French Government to the extent that might be found to be feasible, but such an arrangement at the present time would tend unduly to compromise our status as a neutral.

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<sup>74</sup> French representative in Washington.

It is believed to be better for all concerned and much more advisable for them to go to Canada where there are fine fields and good summer weather. They would also be in a position to employ American civilians to aid in student instruction. I will be glad to keep in close touch with this matter. Roosevelt.”

HULL

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740.0011 European War 1939/2987: Telegram

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

PARIS, May 15, 1940—noon.

[Received May 15—9:12 a. m.]

666. For the President. Coulondre, former French Ambassador in Berlin, called on me this morning to add another appeal for the French Government for airplanes from the United States. The wastage in the present battle at Sedan is so enormous that a time is foreseen about a month hence when any kind of a plane that can take the air will be better than none.

Is there nothing in the way of obsolete planes of our Army or Navy that can possibly be procured?

BULLITT

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740.0011 European War 1939/2986: Telegram

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

PARIS, May 15, 1940—noon.

[Received May 15—10:02 a. m.]

665. Personal for the President. Paul Reynaud asked me to come to the Foreign Office this morning at 10:15. When I called he said that he wished to keep me and through me you fully informed personally as to the developments at the front. The situation continued to be one of the utmost gravity. The greatest battle in history was in progress in the region of Sedan. The Germans had crossed the Meuse at many points north of Sedan.

This morning at 6 o'clock Daladier <sup>75</sup> had telephoned to him and had stated that the French troops positively could not hold out today against the masses of tanks and airplanes which were being launched against them and that the battle certainly would be lost quickly unless the troops could be protected from German attacks from the air.

He, Reynaud, had telephoned immediately to Churchill <sup>76</sup> in London and had stated that since the Germans had broken through into open country where there were no fortifications whatever on the most di-

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<sup>75</sup> Edouard Daladier, French Minister of National Defense and War; became Minister for Foreign Affairs on May 18, 1940.

<sup>76</sup> Winston Churchill, British Prime Minister.

rect route to Paris and since there was nothing to oppose the floods of German planes and tanks except ordinary infantrymen and artillery the war might be lost in the course of a few days and in his opinion would be lost unless the British should send their airplanes from England at once.

Churchill, Reynaud said, had screamed at him that there was no chance of the war being lost and he, Reynaud, had replied that Churchill knew as well as he knew him that so long as he, Reynaud, should remain Prime Minister France would fight to the bitter end. It was his duty however to tell Churchill the facts. Churchill thereupon promised to call together at the earliest possible moment the War Cabinet and attempt to persuade the War Cabinet to promise to send the British pursuit planes which were being kept in England for the protection of factories to be sent at once to France to join in the battle of the Meuse.

Reynaud added that General Giraud had been recalled from Antwerp to take command of the French troops in the Sedan sector.

Reynaud said that the French planes were outnumbered almost 10 to 1 and he implored me once more to ask you if it might not be possible by any means whatsoever to obtain new supplies of planes from the United States. I answered that you were as aware of the need as he was and that it was no lack of desire to help but simply the fact that the planes did not exist.

He then suggested that the planes of other types than those which the French had bought hitherto might be available in small quantities and asked if it might not be possible to obtain such planes. I replied that his own representative in Washington Colonel Jacquin knew better than anyone else what could be bought in America and that he had only to order Jacquin to act in order to obtain every plane available. He said that the difficulty was that Jacquin was not aware of the extreme gravity of the situation. I said that he should be informed.

Reynaud went on to say that the information from Italy indicated that Mussolini was preparing to attack almost immediately.

He repeated his request for old American destroyers. Will you please let me know if you can do anything about this matter?

I communicated to Reynaud your views that aviators should be trained in Canada and not in the United States. I added that you would be glad to keep in close touch with the matter and suggested that since the training was to be carried out in Canada the best way to organize it would probably be to have Lord Lothian<sup>77</sup> call on you to make certain that nothing was done which would conflict with your desires.

<sup>77</sup> British Ambassador in the United States.



I assume that when you said to me over the telephone yesterday that "the boat was all right" you meant that there was no objection to sending an aircraft carrier to take planes which had already been set up. Please cable me a confirmation of this immediately.

In concluding our conversation Reynaud said that the French counter-attacks against the German "hernia" in the Sedan region had not been successful either in cutting it off or reducing it. On the contrary the "hernia" was growing hour by hour.

The situation could not be more grave.

BULLITT

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740.0011 European War 1939/2986: Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, May 15, 1940—5 p. m.

373. Your 665, May 15, noon. With regard to sending an aircraft carrier to carry planes which have already been set up, it would not seem possible to load the planes in New York as, under international law and American statute, a vessel of war cannot increase its armed strength in neutral ports. However, there would seem to be no difficulties if the French desired to have the planes set up in the United States, flown to Canada, and thence by Allied pilots to some port on the east coast of Canada, possibly Halifax, where an aircraft carrier could load them.

Colonel Jacquin should naturally receive immediate instructions and adequate authority.

HULL

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740.0011 European War 1939/3050: Telegram

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

PARIS, May 15, 1940—5 p. m.

[Received May 15—4: 40 p. m.]

682. Personal for the President. In connection with Paul Reynaud's request for destroyers for use in the Mediterranean I had a discussion with the Minister of Marine <sup>78</sup> today and he brought Admiral Darlan, Supreme Commander of the French Naval Forces, into the conversation by telephone.

The Minister of Marine and Darlan asked me most urgently to obtain your consent for purchase or lease by the French Government from the American Navy 12 of our old destroyers.

I understand that we now have 151 old destroyers in commission of which 52 are doing neutrality patrol and that we have 68 old destroyers

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<sup>78</sup> Cesar Campinchi.

not in commission which it would take 2 to 3 months to put into commission. Since the need is immediate I trust that if it is possible to sell or lease 12 of these old destroyers you might be able to take 12 of the best of those that are now in commission.

The Minister of Marine also said that he understood that we had 54 old patrol bombers which our Navy considered obsolete but which would be most useful to the French in destroying submarines in the Mediterranean. He asked me urgently to obtain permission from you for the French Government to purchase these 54 old bombing planes. These planes are I understand marked P. B. S., were manufactured in the Navy aircraft factory, are equipped with Pratt and Whitney motors and make approximately 225 miles an hour.

In the course of our conversation Campinchi showed me telegrams from the French Naval Attaché in Madrid which gave the following facts.

Yesterday the Spanish Minister of Marine <sup>78a</sup> stated to the British Naval Attaché that the Italian Government had invited the assistance of the Spanish Government for the laying of minefields in the western Mediterranean. The Spanish Government had refused this assistance.

The Spanish Minister of Marine had then stated that he feared greatly that the Italians would attempt to seize the Balearic Islands. The Spanish Government had decided to resist any attempt of the Italians to land in the Balearics and in case the Italians should attempt such a landing would be grateful to have the assistance of the British Navy.

Another telegram from the Naval Attaché in Madrid stated that Serrano Suñer <sup>79</sup> was building up with the assistance of the Italians a tremendous "fifth column" organization designed to bring Spain into the war on the side of Italy.

I see no reason why the 54 old patrol bombing planes cannot be sold to the French at once and I hope most heartily that you will also be able to sell to the French the 12 old destroyers.

Please cable me at the earliest possible moment an affirmative answer to these requests. Incidentally the requests were made personally and unofficially and will not be presented in official form unless you should desire.

BULLITT

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740.0011 European War 1939/3050 : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, May 16, 1940—1 p. m.

378. In your talks with the appropriate French officials you may point out that for us to sell or lease some of our old destroyers would

<sup>78a</sup> Salvador Moreno Fernández.

<sup>79</sup> Spanish Minister of Interior.

as a practical matter involve submitting the question to Congress which for a variety of reasons is not considered opportune. Even were the Congressional hurdle successfully passed it would take at the very least 6 weeks or more to prepare a destroyer for an ocean voyage, to send it across the Atlantic, to allow time for a foreign crew to familiarize itself with the workings of its machinery, et cetera. More important, however, is the fact that the United States has no excess of tonnage and in certain contingencies which we cannot afford to ignore, involving questions of hemispheric defense and our obligations in the Pacific, there would be an actual shortage of destroyers for our own needs.

With regard to airplanes our authorities are going to do everything possible to make available the latest types and the maximum number consistent with our own absolute national safety.

As a thought that might be pursued further by the French we suggest the possibility of wide-scale purchase of planes in this country now held in private hands. We recognize that they would be neither fast nor uniform in type, yet in the present desperate shortage which you describe they might be better than nothing and could certainly be shipped without any delay.

HULL

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740.0011 European War 1939/3005 $\frac{1}{2}$ <sub>10</sub>: Telegram

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

LONDON, May 16, 1940—6 p. m.

[Received 12:53 p. m.]

1237. Personal for the President and Secretary. Churchill has flown to Paris to try and strengthen the French morale. The situation is deadly acute. The French are not even fighting on the line. If the French persist in present course of action my friend does not believe that England can fight alone and therefore there will be another fight in the Government because Churchill said he will fight until England is burnt to the ground.

(See my 1211, May 15, 2 a. m.<sup>80</sup>)

The English feel the real reason for the French funk is the air bombardment of civilian population. The English bombed the Ruhr last night and today there was a row in the Cabinet over the sending of more planes to France. Churchill wanted to send a substantial number of squadrons, leaving the position here rather precarious. They finally compromised on sending four squadrons, which some people in the Government feel are too many at this time since the

<sup>80</sup> Vol. III, p. 29.

Germans will definitely return last night's engagement unless they decide to finish off their present job in Belgium and take care of England later on.

Assuming the French do not stiffen up, the President might start considering what he can do to save an Allied débacle but it is not beyond the realm of reason that this crackup can come like a stroke of lightning and any action to be effective must be conceived now. My friend thinks nothing can save them from absolute defeat unless the President with some touch of genius and God's blessing can do it.

This information is absolutely reliable.

KENNEDY

740.0011 European War 1939/3115§ : Telegram

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

PARIS, May 17, 1940—3 p. m.  
[Received May 17—1:30 p. m.]

720. Personal for the President. Reynaud and the Minister for Air and Mandel<sup>81</sup> have all spoken to me unofficially about the need to obtain American pilots as soon as possible.

I am told that if the Government of the United States would permit reserve pilots to resign their reserve commissions with the understanding that if they should survive the present war they would be reinstated and if the French should establish at Windsor, Ontario, a recruiting bureau which would offer the franc equivalent of \$400 per month per pilot plus expenses it is almost certain that a thousand pilots would desire to enlist in the French Army at once.

Would you have any objection to such procedure? This question is entirely personal, unofficial and off the record.

BULLITT

740.0011 European War 1939/3115% : Telegram

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

PARIS, May 17, 1940—7 p. m.  
[Received May 17—3:26 p. m.]

726. Personal for the President. In connection with the suggestion in my telegram 720, May 17, 3 p. m., I have just had a conversation with General Laffèche, Canadian Assistant Secretary of War, who is at the moment acting as Military Attaché in Paris.

He asserts that nearly a thousand American reserve pilots already have offered their services to Canada; but that in order to avoid

<sup>81</sup> Georges Mandel, French Minister of Colonies, appointed Minister of the Interior May 18, 1940.

repercussions in the United States which might be undesirable the Canadian Prime Minister<sup>82</sup> has refused to permit the enlistment of these volunteers. He suggested that a word from you to Mackenzie King indicating that such enlistment would not be distasteful to you would result in immediate enlistments. Surely public opinion in the United States at this critical moment would approve and applaud such volunteers.

BULLITT

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740.0011 European War 1939/31154: Telegram

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

PARIS, May 17, 1940—8 p. m.  
[Received May 17—7:12 p. m.]

728. Personal for the President. I regret to be obliged to send information of the sort in this telegram by cable but I feel that it may be important at a time when we are enlarging as rapidly as possible our Army, Navy, and Air Force.

The Belgian railway strike was organized by the Communists on orders from Moscow. It has now been broken by the shooting of the Communist ringleaders.

Two infinitely more serious "fifth column" operations have taken place in the French Army.

Nearly all the French heavy tanks were manned by Communist workmen from the Renault works in the outskirts of Paris. When they were given the order at a most critical moment to advance against the German tanks they did not move. In one case when 63 French heavy tanks were ordered to make an attack only 5 went forward and 58 remained where they were. Furthermore, the men in the tanks in a number of cases smashed vital parts of the machinery.

I am informed that these men will be shot tonight.

An even more serious "fifth column" action in cooperation with the Germans on orders of the Soviet Government are the Chasseurs. One regiment of Chasseurs which was composed of Communists from the Paris industrial suburbs revolted 3 days ago, seized the vital town of Compiègne on the German path to Paris and are still in possession of the town. They number 18,000 and I am informed that they will be attacked by the air force and tanks this evening.

Please keep this information for your most private ear. It is not known in France and in all sincerity I believe that it is not mortally serious. As soon as Reynaud has the nerve to act on Napoleon's excellent principle "from time to time it is necessary to shoot a

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<sup>82</sup> W. L. Mackenzie King.

general in order to encourage the others" the "fifth column" will disappear.

Please for the sake of the future, nail every Communist or Communist sympathizer in our Army, Navy and Air Force.

BULLITT

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740.0011 European War 1939/3139 : Telegram

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

PARIS, May 18, 1940—5 p. m.

[Received May 18—4 p. m.]

744. For the President and the Secretary. Leger<sup>83</sup> this afternoon reminded me that Paul Reynaud intended to send this evening through diplomatic channels a personal appeal to the President describing the gravity of the situation and asking the President if it might not be possible for him to obtain from the Congress a declaration of war against Germany.

I said that in my opinion such an appeal would be far worse than useless. The Prime Minister knew as well as he, Leger, and myself, that the President was doing everything humanly possible within the limits imposed by reality to help at this grave hour.

I felt certain that the President would not make any appeal to Congress to declare war on Germany and I was equally sure that the Congress would vote almost unanimously against a declaration of war on Germany.

I went on to say that any such appeal by the French Prime Minister would seem to me unworthy of his responsibilities at the present moment. The moment was too serious, not only for France and England but also the United States, to have anything but frank dealing between the three Governments. Such an appeal by Paul Reynaud would be purely for the record. He wished some day to be able to show that he had made an appeal to the President of the United States and that the President of the United States had rejected this appeal. That seemed to me cheap, and I trusted that no such appeal would be made.

I added that if Paul Reynaud should insist, Saint-Quentin<sup>84</sup> might ask to see the President to discuss the situation with him informally and I was certain that without presenting any appeal he would ascertain from the President that a declaration of war by the United States against Germany was totally out of the question.

Leger said to me that he was grateful to me for having spoken to him so frankly, that he would do what he could to stave off the action on which Paul Reynaud had decided. But he asked me if I should

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<sup>83</sup> Alexis Léger, Secretary General of the French Foreign Office.

<sup>84</sup> Count de Saint-Quentin, French Ambassador in the United States.

see Paul Reynaud this evening to express to him personally my conviction that a declaration of war by the United States against Germany was completely out of the question. I replied that I would do so.

At the moment Paul Reynaud is at General Headquarters but I expect to see him about 8:00 o'clock.

The German tank attack from Dragomann to St. Quentin and Valenciennes is being pushed with terrific intensity. The French troops have been obliged to retreat but are holding the tanks much better than on previous days.

Leger compared the action of the tanks at the moment to leaps of a tiger seeking to find an escape from his cage hurling himself against the bars. He said that the tank attack against Reims had been thrown back completely due not only to the generalship, but also to the personal heroism of General Huntziger who had charged to meet the tanks literally at the head of his troops and had thus inspired such bravery that the tanks had been thrown back with considerable loss.

BULLITT

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740.0011 European War 1939/3140: Telegram

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

PARIS, May 18, 1940—10 p. m.

[Received May 18—9:12 p. m.]

749. Personal for the President and the Secretary. I had a long talk with Reynaud at 8:45 this evening. He had just come from General Headquarters. He pointed out on a map in his office the exact positions.

The German drive at the moment is directed north northwest against the general district of St. Quentin and Valenciennes.

Reynaud asked me please to telegraph you immediately and say that the tanks in this area were still proceeding steadily toward the Channel. The immediate objective of the Germans was to cut off the French Army which was in the Antwerp region and was one of the best of the French Armies. The secondary objective was to take all the Channel ports and cut off contact between France and England. Since France was inferior both in numbers of soldiers and in quantity of material to Germany the result would be, if the Germans should reach the Channel, that although France would continue to fight to the bitter end the German machine would swing down and finally take Paris.

The experience of the present war had proved that whereas armies during the last war moved at the rate of 4 miles an hour, today they can be moved at 30 miles an hour. As a result conquests could be carried out with incredible speed.

The war might end in an absolute defeat of France and England in less than 2 months.

He felt that it was his duty as Prime Minister of France to let you know that the situation was in his opinion as serious as it could possibly be.

Reynaud then said that he had thought of handing me a formal note for transmission to you stating the following.

The French Government was deeply and profoundly grateful to you for everything that you had done to assist in obtaining available war materials in the United States. It was obvious however that with the best will in the world sufficiently great quantities of material could not be obtained in the critical period of the next month to give the French Army the material equality which was essential.

He felt profoundly convinced that if the French Army should be defeated Great Britain would be strangled in short order by German submarines based on French ports and by German airplanes based on France and the Netherlands and Belgium. He was equally convinced that Hitler would have little trouble in installing Nazi regimes in many countries of South America and that in the near future the United States itself would be menaced as directly and completely as France was today.

He had noted the change in public opinion in the United States during the past few days. It would be an enormous encouragement to France and England and it would be in his opinion of immense influence in Italy if you should be able to make a public statement that if France and England should be defeated the vital interests of the United States would be threatened and that the United States in defense of its vital interests could not permit the defeat of France and England.

He then concluded by saying that he was fully prepared to put what he had said to me in a written note tomorrow if you should care to receive this communication from him in the form of a written note.<sup>85</sup> It was obvious that Leger had communicated the substance of what I had said to him, Leger, this afternoon. (See my No. 744, May 18, 5 p. m.)

I said that I did not exactly understand his aim in making this communication. I pointed out that a statement from you as to defense of vital interests of the United States had no such weight as a similar statement from the Prime Minister of England or of France since Congress alone had the power to declare war and I felt certain that Congress would not at the present time declare war on Germany. Such a statement by you therefore would be a word without physical force behind it and words without force today counted for little.

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<sup>85</sup> See last sentence of Department's telegram No. 445, May 22, 3 p. m., p. 232.



Reynaud then said that he could not believe that the Congress of the United States would not be ready to face the facts which were that the defeat of France and England would be followed by the defeat of an isolated America.

I said that I agreed with him that Hitler would attack the Americas as soon as he should be physically able to do so, but that I could not imagine that public opinion in the United States, however far it might have progressed during the past few days, was ready to envisage a declaration of war since in point of fact the people of the United States were aroused because of the realization of their own military weakness and were, I was certain, determined not to send American soldiers to Europe and were keenly conscious that they had virtually no airplanes to send to Europe and that the American fleet was properly stationed in the Pacific.

Reynaud then said that at any rate such a statement by you would have the greatest effect in heartening the French and in discouraging the Germans and Italians and then turned to another subject and left this one in the air.

The truth seems to be that he had not thought the matter out and that he desired to send a note for the record which was forestalled by my conversation with Leger this afternoon.

Before I left him however he asked me once more to be sure to transmit this message to you immediately and to ask for a reply.

I hope that you will let me have an appropriate answer as soon as possible.

I entirely agree with Reynaud as to the gravity of the situation and I feel certain that if Hitler should be able to conquer France and England he would turn his attention at once to South America and eventually attempt to install a Nazi government in the United States. I do not see however the exact value of a declaration of the sort that Reynaud wants. To have value such a declaration would have to mean that we would go to war in the near future.

BULLITT

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851.248/357: Telegram

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

PARIS, May 20, 1940—10 a. m.  
[Received May 20—7:26 a. m.]

759. For the President. Please give me answers at the earliest possible moment on following questions in previous telegrams: (1) 54 PB Navy bombers; (2) Mackenzie King—reserve pilots to Canada; (3) 2,000 French 75's; (4) destroyers; (5) Reynaud's communication which was made orally to me instead of by written note.

BULLITT

740.0011 European War 1939/3115%: Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, May 21, 1940—1 p. m.

425. Your 726, May 17, 7 p. m. Canadian Legation has been informed orally and secretly to the following effect:

We realize that the Canadian Government has been leaning over backwards in the matter of not incorporating Americans in the Canadian armed forces; we further realize that Canada would never under any circumstances recruit in this country or try to circumvent in any ways our enlistment laws; we further understand that Americans enlisting in the Canadian Air Force or other armed forces in Canada are not required to take an oath of allegiance to the King (merely an oath to obey orders given), and hence would not lose their American citizenship. Now, if Mr. Mackenzie King wished to adopt a more liberal policy and to indicate in some careful manner (without of course indicating in any way that the matter had been discussed with American authorities) that Americans of proper age who of their own volition came to Canada and desired to join the air corps or other fighting forces would not be automatically turned down, this would not be embarrassing to Washington.

The Canadian Chargé said this message would be most welcome and that he would convey it to Mr. Mackenzie King without delay and in complete confidence.

HULL

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740.0011 European War 1939/3222: Telegram

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

PARIS, May 21, 1940—10 p. m.  
[Received May 21—6:58 p. m.]

799. Charles-Roux, the new Secretary General of the French Foreign Office, asked to see me at 7 o'clock this evening. He said that Paul Reynaud had asked him today urgently to obtain a reply to his communication to me reported in my number 749 of May 18, 10 p. m.

I replied that I regretted to have to say that I had received no answer from my Government on this subject. There appeared to be some delay in telegraphic communications from the United States to France.

I then repeated to him the comments that I had made to Leger and Paul Reynaud reported in my telegrams 744, May 18, 5 p. m., and 749, May 18, 10 p. m. He said that he understood our point of view perfectly.

Later the President said to me over the telephone that a reply to my telegrams on this subject approving entirely what I had said should have gone forward to me yesterday.

I therefore telephoned to Charles-Roux and said to him that the position of the American Government was exactly the position I had expressed to him earlier this evening.

BULLITT

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740.0011 European War 1939/3228 : Telegram

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

PARIS, May 22, 1940—11 a. m.

[Received May 22—10 a. m.]

803. I am receiving hundreds of letters daily from French men, women and children, senators, mothers, peasants, imploring me to persuade the Government and the people of the United States to help at this hour not merely with sympathy but with armed force.

As the suffering grows greater a certain amount of bitterness is inevitable. Up to the present time these letters have been couched in terms of gratitude and appeal but there is an undertone [apparent omission]. The cry in every letter is for planes.

BULLITT

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851.248/357 : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, May 22, 1940—3 p. m.

445. Your 759, May 20, 10 a. m., and 797, May 21, 8 p. m.<sup>86</sup> The President desires me to inform you, in reply to question number 1 set forth in the first of your two telegrams above referred to, that it would be silly for France to buy the old PM obsolete planes. The same thing applies to the P2X2-3's which are becoming obsolete. They only make 139 MPH without bombs. The Department replied to your question number 2 in its 425, May 21, 1 p. m. The President desires me to say in reply to your question number 3, that under no circumstances could the War Department declare any of the 75's surplus and this has to be done in order to sell them to a foreign country. The Department replied to your question number 4 in its telegram 378, May 16, 1 p. m. With regard to your question number 5, an answer approving your views as to the inadvisability of a written message from Reynaud to the President was given you over the telephone by the President himself and was not repeated in a telegram.

HULL

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<sup>86</sup> Latter not printed.

740.0011 European War 1939/3018 $\frac{1}{10}$ : Telegram*The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Kennedy) to the Secretary of State*

LONDON, May 27, 1940—9 p. m.

[Received May 27—6:45 p. m.]

1400. Personal for the Secretary. My impression of the situation here now is that it could not be worse. Only a miracle can save the British expeditionary force from being wiped out or as I said yesterday, surrender. I feel that Reynaud's visit yesterday was much more serious than appears on the surface. I think the possibility of the French considering a peace move is not beyond the realm of reason and I suspect that the Germans would be willing to make peace with both the French and British now—of course on their own terms, but on terms that would be a great deal better than they would be if the war continues. The method to be used to force the French to consider peace is probably annihilation from the air of one city after another. I talked with an airman this afternoon who has been in charge of one of the air squadrons and he said Calais is practically razed to the ground, that the fighters cannot locate the bombers any longer because of the terrific amount of smoke. The people here whose judgment I respect feel that if they start doing this to Lille and other French cities the French will not take it very long.

I realize this is a terrific telegram, but there is no question that it's in the air here. The result of that will be a row amongst certain elements in the Cabinet here; Churchill, Mattlee, [*Attlee?*]<sup>87</sup> and others will want to fight to the death, but there will be other numbers who realize that physical destruction of men and property in England will not be a proper offset to a loss of pride. In addition to that, the English people, while they suspect a terrible situation, really do not realize how bad it is. When they do, I don't know which group they will follow—the do or die, or the group that want a settlement. It is critical no matter which way you look at it.

KENNEDY

740.0011 European War 1939/2855 $\frac{2}{28}$ : Telegram*The Ambassador in France (Bullitt) to the Secretary of State*

PARIS, May 28, 1940—1 p. m.

[Received May 28—9:30 a. m.]

915. Personal for the President. Paul Reynaud asked to see me urgently at 11 o'clock this morning.

<sup>87</sup> Clement Attlee, British Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Commons.

I called on him at the Ministry of War. He said that he wished to consult me with regard to an appeal to you by the King of England and the President of France. He had written out one sentence of this appeal which began: "The armies fighting to preserve the liberties of the world have been stabbed in the back."

He then rose and said: "I will should [*show?*] you what the situation is."

He showed me the positions on the map which had been held by the Belgian Army. They ran from the seacoast past Bruges almost down to the French frontier.

He said that as soon as the Belgians laid down their arms a German armored division drove for Dunkirk. As a result the whole British Army and the finest French Army were totally cut off from supplies of food and munitions. Their situation was desperate. They would fight until the last cartridge. They could do nothing but die well.

As soon as they should be destroyed all the German armored divisions would descend on Paris striking probably from Laon and probably not even bothering to sweep first on Rouen and Havre.

The French Army would fight to the bitter end but it seemed certain that the end would be bitter and rapid.

At this moment when all that was decent in the world was threatened he felt obliged to address a supreme appeal to you. Enough evidence had accumulated to make it absolutely certain that if France and England should be conquered by the Germans, Hitler would move almost immediately against the United States. The fact was that the act of the King of the Belgians had been a knife-thrust that might be fatal not only to France and England but also to America. Under the circumstances he felt that the President of France and the King of England must address today a message to you.

I replied that it was obviously the right of the British sovereign and the President of France to address you at such a moment; but that I advised him before cabling such a message to have the British Government communicate immediately with Lord Lothian who could advise the British Government and French Government better than anyone else just what should be said and what should not be said. He promised me that he would have the British Government consult Lothian immediately and that no action would be taken before consulting Lothian.

Reynaud then went on to say that he knew perfectly well that even though the United States should declare war on Germany tomorrow we could not fly an army to France in airplanes which did not exist but there was our fleet. He implored me to ask you to order the Atlantic fleet at once to the Mediterranean. This act might at least prevent another stab in the back from Mussolini.

740.0011 European War 1939/2855<sup>7</sup>/<sub>28</sub>: Telegram

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

ROME, May 28, 1940—2 p. m.  
[Received May 28—1: 48 p. m.]

426. Personal for Welles<sup>88</sup> from Kirk.<sup>89</sup>

"I came down here hurriedly for the sole purpose of telephoning you to say that there was something very much on my mind which I wanted to discuss in Washington and to ask if you thought I could come. If so I propose to try to arrange from here for passage on the first clipper flight from Lisbon as no such arrangement can be made speedily in Berlin. I now find that connections from here are so doubtful that I probably could not reach Washington for a week or more, and furthermore that as events seem to be moving so rapidly whatever use there might be in my suggestions would be negated if I should want [*wait?*] to present them in person.

I therefore feel I must give you by cable an indication of the matter in mind although I mistrust this form of communication and realize that any such outline is probably worse than none at all. The point is that I am convinced that a continuation of the progress marked during the past 2 weeks by the German arms will destroy the kind of world which is essential to the existence of our national life and that consequently the fight is already our own. We are now being largely discounted as a factor in this fight because it is expected that it will be over before we are effectively a part of it and it is certain that great care will be taken by Germany to keep us out.

It may not be the moment to speak of the element of morale but our immediate entrance into the war could not help but affect profoundly both sides and furthermore without any certain knowledge I am told that we could fly over immediately several hundred planes and ship many more within the space of a week. My proposal therefore is that we make up our minds to enter the war immediately. Before doing so, however, we should submit at once a general plan for a peace that would take into consideration not only the preservation of those values and interests essential to the integrity of the countries at war with Germany but also the fact that a strong and reasonably satisfied German people is essential for lasting peace and order. In brief it must be a peace which both sides could *justifiably* accept.

If Germany refuses we declare war and take such active part in it immediately as we can without jeopardizing the actual defense of our country. The other American Republics should follow.

I realize fully how this must sound and how many considerations it ignores, but I am not leading from hysteria. I am convinced that

<sup>88</sup> Sumner Welles, Under Secretary of State.

<sup>89</sup> Alexander C. Kirk, American Chargé in Germany.

if Germany wins a quick war and dictates a peace there will be no place for us in the kind of world that will follow. If, on the other hand, Germany is eventually beaten by its present opponents it will be at the end of such a war that not only may a just peace be precluded but the social and political system on which our own life is based may be overthrown by general revolution. My plan, therefore, is to attempt to inject some sanity into the present madness and if we fail in that we shall then throw on our weight in order to turn the scales at the moment when a quick victory may be essential to Germany. In so doing we shall only be taking part in a fight which in the last analysis must be ours if we are to preserve our own existence.

Would it be of the least use for me to come over to demonstrate in person my conviction in what I say? If possible, or advisable, please just flash me an indication in care of the Embassy at Rome but if I hear nothing by day after tomorrow I shall return to Berlin."

PHILLIPS

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740.0011 European War 1939/3352%: Telegram

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

PARIS, May 28, 1940—9 p. m.

[Received May 28—8:20 p. m.]

928. For the President and Secretary. I had a long discussion on the present situation with Daladier today.

He said that the reaction of the entire French people to the treachery of the King of the Belgians had been superb. Morale in France had never been higher than today and the determination to carry on the war whatever the cost had never been stronger (this is entirely true).

He went on to say that war nowadays unfortunately was no longer a question of the human spirit but a question of machines. An enormous proportion of French war material had been destroyed by the Germans or captured by them.

He was convinced that the French would fight on with a spirit which would command the admiration of the world but whether they could fight on successfully with the material that remained in their hands was another question.

He felt certain that if Italy should attack either in North Africa which was now virtually defenseless or with bombing planes on the Riviera and Marseille which were totally denuded of planes the destruction of France would be rapid.

He therefore appealed to me once more to attempt to obtain some action from the United States which would prevent Italy's entry into the war. Words and sympathy were all very well but at this moment acts were needed. The act which he felt could prevent action by

Mussolini would be the sending of the Atlantic fleet to the Mediterranean. Short of that he saw nothing.

It was sad that civilization in the world should fall because a great nation with a great President could simply talk.

BULLITT

740.0011 European War 1939/2855 $\frac{1}{2}$ s : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, May 29, 1940—noon.

147. For Kirk from the Under Secretary. Your 426, May 28, 2 p. m. The Secretary and I both feel you should come immediately to the United States on leave of absence. Try and make arrangements to come by clipper if possible. We will announce here that your return is solely to take a long postponed and much needed leave of absence in this country. [Welles.]

HULL

740.0011 European War 1939/3398a : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, May 30, 1940—4 p. m.

535. A way has now been found by which the War and Navy Departments can transfer to private manufacturers for immediate resale to the British and French Governments such munitions desired by them as may be released with due regard to our own national defense requirements. Purvis<sup>90</sup> and his French colleague will commence conversations tomorrow, Friday, morning, with the appropriate authorities here and it is anticipated that final arrangements can be concluded within 5 days. Among the munitions which the War Department will be able to transfer will be 500 of the 75's desired by the French authorities.

HULL

740.0011 European War 1939/3391j : Telegram

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

PARIS, May 30, 1940—10 p. m.

[Received May 31—7:44 a. m.]

955. For the President and the Secretary. The British and French troops in the Dunkirk area once more today displayed a heroism

<sup>90</sup> Arthur Purvis, President of Anglo-French Purchasing Board in the United States.



worthy of the best traditions of both nations. The superiority in quality of the French and British aviators has made it possible for them to establish, whenever numbers are equal or nearly equal, a definite superiority in the air. The German pursuit planes have apparently received orders to turn and run whenever French and British pursuit planes appear. At least they do this and do not offer battle. German success in the air depends entirely on superior masses of planes.

This war is not lost and every plane that can be sent today will be worth a hundred next year.

BULLITT

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740.0011 European War 1939/3500½ : Telegram

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

PARIS, June 4, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received June 4—2:30 p. m.]

1022. Personal for the President. Marshal Pétain<sup>91</sup> lunched with me alone today. After luncheon, talking in the garden, he said that he wondered if the French Government had ever given you a completely frank view of the present situation. I replied that I feel that both Reynaud and Daladier talked with me with entire frankness. He went on to say that nevertheless he would like to let you know how he personally viewed the situation.

The threefold superiority of the Germans in man power was accompanied by a much greater superiority in aeroplanes and in tanks.

The airplane had proved to be the decisive weapon in this war. France was hopelessly outnumbered in the air.

Against the German attack which would be made before the end of this week on the Somme and in the region of Laon and the region of Reims the French had nothing to oppose but their courage. In all forms of material they were now desperately outclassed.

He did not wish me to conceal from you the fact that he himself envisaged very definitely the possibility that the Germans would be able to cross the Somme and the lower Seine and envelop Paris. Every inch added to the length of the French line would make the German superiority in numbers more effective.

As if the odds were not already enough two new elements had now entered into his calculations.

(1) It was certain that Italy would enter the war. There were no planes to combat the Italian planes and the destruction which the

<sup>91</sup> Henri Philippe Pétain, Vice President of the French Council of Ministers.

Italian planes might inflict on the southern portions of France would be terrible. Moreover the Italians might land troops from parachutes and take the entire French Alps region from the rear.

(2) Even more serious was the behavior of the British during the last few days. So long as the British Army had been in Flanders the British had engaged their Air Force fully. But they had insisted that their Army should be taken off first and that the French divisions should hold the lines fighting against the Germans while the British were embarked. Since all the British had been embarked the British had ceased to send their planes in anything like the numbers they had employed so long as the British Expeditionary Force was at Dunkirk.

Furthermore, at this moment when the French had almost no reserves and were facing the greatest attack in human history the British were pretending that they could send no reserves from England. There was actually now one British division in France and the British were asserting that they could send no more.

Moreover they had refused to send over the British aviation, which alone could combat the German Air Force, to support the French Army. Moreover, they had refused to agree to unified command in the Mediterranean when it was obvious that only a unified command and a joint attack of the British and French forces in the Mediterranean the moment Mussolini should declare war could give hope of eliminating Italy from the conflict.

Under the circumstances he was obliged to feel that the British intended to permit the French to fight without help until the last available drop of French blood should have been shed and that then with quantities of troops on British soil and plenty of planes and a dominant fleet the British after a very brief resistance or even without resistance would make a peace of compromise with Hitler, which might even involve a British Government under a British Fascist leader.

The Marshal added that he intended to make statements in line with the above at the meeting of the War Council tomorrow. He felt that unless the British Government should send to France, to engage in the battle which was imminent, both its air force and reserve divisions the French Government would do its utmost to come to terms immediately with Germany whatever might happen to England. He added that it was not fair for any French Government to permit the British to behave in a totally callous and selfish manner while demanding the sacrifice of every able-bodied Frenchman.

BULLITT

740.0011 European War 1939/3545½ : Telegram

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

PARIS, June 5, 1940—midnight.

[Received June 6—9:25 a. m.]

1047. Personal for the President. Reynaud was enormously pleased by his conversation with you on the telephone this evening. As he told you the fighting is going well. The French infantry have held all the German attacks in spite of German superiority in material and especially in planes. I had a long talk with Reynaud this afternoon in the course of which he said to me that he had sent this morning the stiffest note that he could compose to Winston Churchill on the subject of the withdrawal of the British pursuit planes from France.

He added that a number of British bombardment planes were still operating in France but the British had withdrawn their entire pursuit force. This made it easy for the German bombers to drop as many bombs as they could carry on the French troops.

Reynaud said that he considered it utterly shocking that the British should withdraw these planes and added that Churchill gave as an excuse the conviction that British pursuit planes must be based on British bases, that it was unwise to base them on French flying fields and that since they could not operate in the present battle except from French flying fields they should not operate at all.

Reynaud was expecting a reply from Churchill to be delivered shortly after I left him tonight. He said to me, before I left, that if Churchill's reply should be in the negative he would attack Churchill tomorrow as violently as he could. Either the British were allies or they were not. If they were allies, they could not, with honor, withdraw their planes from the crucial battle of the war any more than King Leopold with honor could withdraw his soldiers.

Reynaud also told me that he had decided that he must eliminate Daladier from the Government since Daladier was becoming the scapegoat for the difficulties of the French Army at the outbreak of the war.

Reynaud asserted that Bérenger, Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate, had called on him this morning to say that the Senate Foreign Relations Committee would refuse any longer to receive Daladier.

Reynaud added that he intended to keep both the portfolio of Foreign Affairs and the portfolio of War. He intended to direct the Ministry for Foreign Affairs himself and to let General de Gaulle run the Ministry of War.

Two weeks ago this General was a Colonel in the tank corps. He showed great initiative and courage in stemming the German advance on Paris. One day last week when I was talking to Reynaud he called him in to introduce him to me. He is a young man who appears to be vigorous and intelligent.

I handed Reynaud myself this evening the latest recent information of the General Staff which indicated that the Italians have made a large concentration of troops at Cuneo and that they may attack the French Alps in the region of the Riviera.

If Italy should enter the war the French need for planes would be desperate especially if the British should continue to refuse to send their pursuit planes to France.

Personally I feel that the question of sending the British pursuit planes to participate in the present battle is the touchstone with regard to future British policy. If the British continue to refuse to send their planes I believe it indicates that they have decided not to give any further serious support to France in her terrible struggle against Germany (and potentially, Italy) but to give just enough to keep France fighting to the bitter end.

The determination of France to fight to the bitter end is absolute, as Reynaud said to me this evening.

If the British now refuse this essential support it will mean, I believe, that the British intend to conserve their fleet and air force and their army, and, either before a German attack on England or shortly afterwards, to install eight Fascist[s] trained under Oswald Mosley<sup>92</sup> and accept vassalage to Hitler.

The consequences of such a British policy to the United States would be extraordinarily grave, and I believe that we cannot afford to permit the British to refuse to send their pursuit planes to France any more than the French can afford to permit it.

BULLITT

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740.0011 European War 1939/3552 $\frac{1}{4}$ : Telegram

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

PARIS, June 6, 1940—5 p. m.

[Received 6:02 p. m.]

1057. For the President and the Secretary. Sir Ronald Campbell, the British Ambassador who just lunched with me alone, stated that the reason for the British refusal to send their remaining pursuit planes to France is that they are convinced that at the rate of destruc-

<sup>92</sup> Leader of the British Union of Fascists.

tion in the present battle there would be no British pursuit planes left at the end of 2 weeks.

He went on to say that his opinion, which he asserted was based on statements of General Weygand,<sup>93</sup> was that while the French would fight with the utmost bravery there was no hope of preventing the Germans from occupying Paris and destroying the French Army. The British Government therefore felt that it must keep what planes it still had in Great Britain.

I replied that I hoped he realized that in taking such an attitude the British Government was running an enormous risk that the people of France realizing that the British had withdrawn their pursuit planes [and?] that King Leopold had withdrawn his army, would feel betrayed and would feel disposed to make peace with Germany and even perhaps in a rage turn against Great Britain.

The British Ambassador said that he was fully aware of this danger but so far as he was concerned he had little or no hope that the French might be able to resist the present German assault. He felt that Churchill was prepared to go much further than any of his advisers in supporting the French and that if no planes should be sent now it would be because there were not sufficient planes available and that there was no hope of stopping the German attack.

I replied that the French had every hope of stopping the German advance now. The French were prepared to shed every drop of French blood available. From the purely selfish point of view of the British Government the decision to be made involved an extremely careful calculation.

If it should be decided that there was no hope of stopping the Germans now by sending every available British soldier and British plane, in that case the British, from their own selfish point of view, might decide not to send either soldiers or planes. On the other hand the British Government might decide that the present battle was the decisive battle of the war and that every available British soldier and plane should be put into it.

I expressed the personal opinion that if the Germans should succeed in destroying the French Army and occupying the entire north coast of France it would be possible for the Germans to establish a line of mines and submarines at Calais and another such line to the west of Southampton, and that an invasion of Great Britain in force would become a definite possibility. I felt, therefore, that even from the most selfish point of view it would be to the interest of Great Britain to bring all planes and troops available into the present battle.

BULLITT

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<sup>93</sup> Gen. Maxime Weygand, Commander in Chief of the French Army replacing General Gamelin.

740.0011 European War 1939/3552 $\frac{1}{4}$ : Telegram

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

PARIS, June 6, 1940—7 p. m.

[Received 10 p. m.]

1064. Personal for the President and the Secretary. I have just discussed with Reynaud the statements of the British Ambassador reported in my No. 1057 of June 6, 5 p. m. Reynaud said that it was a flat lie to say that Weygand had ever made any statement indicating great pessimism as to the outcome of the battle now in progress.

The truth about the battle to date was that in spite of the withdrawal of the British pursuit planes the French were holding magnificently everywhere along the line and had not given ground anywhere.

The truth, also, was that the single British division in France supported by the only British armored force had run from the Somme back to the Bresle. The single breach in the French line was therefore at the only spot held by the British.

Under the circumstances he felt that it was utterly shocking for the British to refuse to send their pursuit planes.

BULLITT

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S11.4611 France/161

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

[WASHINGTON,] June 7, 1940.

The French Ambassador <sup>93a</sup> called to see me late yesterday evening and showed me a message which he had received from his Prime Minister instructing him to obtain a personal interview with the President in order to take up the question dealt with in the document attached herewith <sup>94</sup> which he left with me.

When I spoke with the President this morning the President said that there was really no use in his seeing the Ambassador since he could reply to the inquiry made through me. He asked me, consequently, to tell the Ambassador that of the destroyers mentioned, the first would not be launched for another six months, and the last of the lot would not be launched for at least a year and a half, and that under these conditions it did not seem to the President that the destroyers would be of any service to the French Government in the urgent situation they described. He further asked me to say that the release of the destroyers mentioned would require an act of Congress which the President thought it was inexpedient at this time

<sup>93a</sup> Count René Doynel de Saint-Quentin.

<sup>94</sup> Not printed.

to suggest, and finally that in as much as a good many months would elapse before the first destroyer was off the ways, there would be ample time for reconsideration if it later seemed wise to this Government to accede to the request made.

In accordance with the President's desires, I called up the Ambassador on the telephone and gave him this message. The Ambassador, however, was very much upset and deeply chagrined that the President would not see him personally. He explained to me why he felt this way. He said that he was the first to recognize that the President was so overburdened with official matters that there was no justification for his receiving the Ambassador merely to say personally what he had already communicated to the Ambassador through me. He said, however, that in the message which he had received from his Prime Minister, he had been given to understand that Ambassador Bullitt had told M. Paul Reynaud that the Ambassador did not go to see the President personally except on very rare occasions and had left the impression that the Ambassador had been derelict in his duties by failing to see the President on every possible occasion in order to urge personally the granting of requests of this character. For that reason the instructions he had received had instructed him positively to request an audience of the President and he said there would be no question but that his own Prime Minister would consider him *persona non grata* to the President if under these circumstances the President now did not see him.

I subsequently explained the matter to the President who in view of these circumstances agreed to receive the Ambassador at 1:45 p. m. today.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

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740.0011 European War 1939/35521 $\frac{1}{4}$ : Telegram

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

PARIS, June 10, 1940—2 p. m.

[Received June 10—12:18 p. m.]

1120. For the President and Secretary. In commenting on the news that Ciano<sup>95</sup> had summoned François-Poncet,<sup>96</sup> Reynaud said without bitterness, "What really distinguished, noble and admirable persons the Italians are to stab us in the back at this moment."<sup>97</sup>

He then made arrangements to speak at 8:30 this evening over the radio.

Just before receiving this news Reynaud said that he desired to speak to the President again by telephone.

<sup>95</sup> Count Galeazzo Ciano, Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>96</sup> André François-Poncet, French Ambassador in Italy.

<sup>97</sup> Italy entered the war against France on June 10, 1940.

I replied that I thought it would be impossible for him to talk with the President today since the President would be en route to Charlottesville, Virginia.

He said that in that event he would like to deliver to me before 4 o'clock this afternoon a personal message to be telegraphed to the President.

In my presence he wrote out the message in which he stated that he wanted the President to know that if he and the Government should be obliged to leave Paris it would be only to carry on the war more effectively. The French so long as he should remain in power would fight in front of Paris and behind Paris. They would close themselves in a bastion in Brittany so long as there was a man to fight. They would then fight in the colonies of Africa and they would fight in their colonies in America if necessary at the end.

There is no question whatsoever about Reynaud's determination and the determination of the French Army to make the end of France as noble as her past. After receiving the news from Rome Reynaud said that it would not change in any way the determination of the French to fight to the bitter end.

In conclusion Reynaud said that he was being pressed on all sides to leave Paris today. He intended to stay to the last possible moment. When that moment would come he did not know. German tanks had succeeded in crossing the Seine at two points. Furthermore German troops had advanced to Fère-en-Tardenois west of Reims.

I cannot express my admiration for the courage with which the French are meeting one of the most tragic situations in history. The British are still keeping at home three-fourths of their pursuit planes.

BULLITT

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740.0011 European War 1939/3640½ : Telegram

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

PARIS, June 10, 1940—6 p. m.

[Received 11 : 30 p. m.]

1132. Personal for the President. I have just received from Paul Reynaud, President of the Council of Ministers, the following message to you. He telephoned to me and asked me to transmit it immediately since his own code clerks could not possibly do the work. This is the full text of the message referred to in my telegram earlier today.

"Mr. President: I wish first to express to you my gratitude for the generous aid that you have decided to give to us in aviation and armament.

For 6 days and 6 nights our divisions have been fighting without one hour of rest against an army which has a crushing superiority in numbers and material. Today the enemy is almost at the gates of Paris.



We shall fight in front of Paris; we shall fight behind Paris; we shall close ourselves in one of our provinces to fight and if we should be driven out of it we shall establish ourselves in North Africa to continue the fight and if necessary in our American possessions.

A portion of the government has already left Paris. I am making ready to leave for the front. That will be to intensify the struggle with all the forces which we still have and not to abandon the struggle.

May I ask you, Mr. President, to explain all this yourself to your people, to all the citizens of the United States, saying to them that we are determined to sacrifice ourselves in the struggle that we are carrying on for all free men.

This very hour another dictatorship has stabbed France in the back. Another frontier is threatened. A naval war will begin.

You have replied generously to the appeal which I made to you a few days ago across the Atlantic. Today this 10th of June 1940 it is my duty to ask you for new and even larger assistance.

At the same time that you explain this situation to the men and women of America, I beseech you to declare publicly that the United States will give the Allies aid and material support by all means 'short of an expeditionary force'. I beseech you to do this before it is too late. I know the gravity of such a gesture. Its very gravity demands that it should not be made too late.

You said to us yourself on the 5th of October 1937: <sup>98</sup>

'I am compelled and you are compelled . . . to look ahead. The peace, the freedom and the security of 90 percent of the population of the world is being jeopardized by the remaining 10 percent who are threatening a breakdown of all international order and law. Surely the 90 percent who want to live in peace under law and in accordance with moral standards that have received almost trusty [*universal*] acceptance through the centuries, can and must find some way to make their will prevail.'

The hour has now come for these 90 percent of the citizens of the world to unite against the mortal danger which menaces us all. I have confidence in the solidarity of the American people in this vital struggle which the Allies are carrying on for their own salvation, but also for the salvation of the American democracy. Paul Reynaud."<sup>99</sup>

I see no reason why you should not make public this message from Reynaud. He would be only too happy if you should make it public.

BULLITT

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740.0011 European War 1939/3728½ : Telegram

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

LONDON, June 12, 1940—9 p. m.  
[Received June 12—7: 45 p. m.]

1622. Prime Minister to President Roosevelt. Following from Former Naval Person.<sup>98a</sup>

<sup>98</sup> See address by the President at Chicago, October 5, 1937, Department of State Press Releases, October 9, 1937, pp. 275, 278.

<sup>98a</sup> Code name for Winston Churchill, British Prime Minister.

Personal and Secret. I spent last night and this morning at the French G Q G<sup>99</sup> where the situation was explained to me in the gravest terms by Generals Weygand and Georges. You have no doubt received full particulars from Mr. Bullitt. The practical point is what will happen when and if the French front breaks, Paris is taken and General Weygand reports formally to his Government that France can no longer continue what he calls "coordinated war". The aged Marshal Pétain who was none too good in April and July 1918 is I fear ready to lend his name and prestige to a treaty of peace for France. Reynaud on the other hand is for fighting on and he has a young General de Gaulle who believes much can be done. Admiral Darlan declares he will send the French fleet to Canada; it would be disastrous if the two big modern ships fell into bad hands. It seems to me that there must be many elements in France who will wish to continue the struggle, either in France or in the French colonies or in both. This, therefore, is the moment for you to strengthen Reynaud the utmost you can and try to tip the balance in favor of the best and longest possible French resistance. I venture to put this point before you although I know you must understand it as well as I do.

Of course I made it clear to the French that we shall continue whatever happened and that we thought Hitler could not win the war or the mastery of the world until he had disposed of us, which has not been found easy in the past and which perhaps will not be found easy now. I made it clear to the French that we had good hopes of victory and anyhow had no doubts whatever of what our duty was. If there is anything you can say publicly or privately to the French now is the time. [Former Naval Person.]

Before I left the Prime Minister he urged me strongly to present again his crying need for destroyers. They lost two more yesterday. With invasion threatened and the trade routes likely to be attacked with the help of Italian submarines he feels he is in a most precarious position and believes he needs destroyers more than anything else including planes. Replacements and repairs are by no means filling the gap.

KENNEDY

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740.0011 European War 1939/3770a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the First Secretary of Embassy in France (Matthews), at Tours*

WASHINGTON, June 13, 1940—1 p. m.

1. From the President. If Ambassador Biddle<sup>1</sup> is available ask him to communicate immediately to Prime Minister Reynaud the following message from the President.<sup>1a</sup> If Ambassador Biddle is not available please deliver the message urgently yourself.

<sup>99</sup> Grand Quartier Général, at Tours, France.

<sup>1</sup> Anthony J. Drexel Biddle, Jr., Deputy Ambassador in France.

<sup>1a</sup> This message was quoted to the Ambassador in the United Kingdom in Department's telegram No. 1179, June 13, 1 p. m., with instructions to communicate it as quickly as possible to Prime Minister Churchill (740.0011 European War 1939/3775a).

"Your message of June 10 has moved me very deeply. As I have already stated to you and to Mr. Churchill, this Government is doing everything in its power to make available to the Allied Governments the material they so urgently require, and our efforts to do still more are being redoubled. This is so because of our faith in and our support of the ideals for which the Allies are fighting.

The magnificent resistance of the French and British armies has profoundly impressed the American people.

I am personally particularly impressed by your declaration that France will continue to fight on behalf of democracy even if it means slow withdrawal, even to North Africa and the Atlantic. It is most important to remember that the French and British fleets continue mastery of the Atlantic and other oceans; also to remember that vital materials from the outside world are necessary to maintain all armies.

I am also greatly heartened by what Prime Minister Churchill said a few days ago about the continued resistance of the British Empire and that determination would seem to apply equally to the great French Empire all over the world. Naval power in world affairs still carries the lessons of history, as Admiral Darlan well knows."

When this message is delivered it must be made entirely clear that the message is personal and private and not for publication.

HULL

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740.0011 European War 1939/3487<sup>1</sup>/<sub>10</sub>: Telegram

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

LONDON, June 14, 1940—1 a. m.

[Received June 13—10: 29 p. m.]

1643. Personal for the President and the Secretary. I have just read minutes of today's meeting at Tours. Reynaud told Churchill that Weygand was insisting on an armistice; the French Army could not fight any longer—there was nothing but death and destruction ahead for all of France; German propaganda was seeping through the Army as well as the populace; it was only matter of hours but that the Army would refuse to fight. Therefore Reynaud at insistence of his Ministers must ask England to release France from her agreement not to sign separate peace; after all it had been France that had suffered, it was her soldiers who had died, and without any recrimination on either side Reynaud expected England to agree to peace for France. Churchill answered that, of course, no matter what happened there would be no recrimination.

It was unfortunate that France had suffered such losses, but England's moment for her losses was arriving, yet it was England's intention to stand firm and not to surrender, that Hitler could never be vic-

torious unless England were defeated, that France under any kind of an agreement with Germany would be a thing of the past and no matter what her temporary losses were she meant to fight to make France live. England would carry on from the new world with her fleet and France could do likewise, because with both fleets against her Germany could never live. After these two statements it seems to me that for the record it really got down to Reynaud saying that unless the United States declared war on Germany and came in France was not going to fight.

Reynaud wanted to send another message to President Roosevelt saying that the hour had arrived, that France must make peace unless the United States came in with all sorts of help short of sending an expeditionary force, if they would not declare war on Germany. Churchill urged Reynaud not to come to a decision until President Roosevelt's answer to Reynaud's request had come in. He went on to point out that if Reynaud made peace regardless of England's interest the day might come when the people of France would be starved because the British fleet might well be the means of stopping food from coming to them.

From reading the minutes I could not help but feel that barring an absolute declaration of war by the United States the French were about to give up and that Churchill was making desperate effort to have France continue guerrilla warfare and with their fleet carry on the Government somewhere else.

The arrival of your note to Reynaud which I handed to Churchill immediately on his return from Paris gave British Cabinet great courage and Churchill feels that it is sufficiently strong to warrant the French fighting on.

Whether that is so or not time alone will tell but from a cold observation as I read it I think it will take more than that. I called you (on phone) at Churchill's insistence to ask you if your note<sup>2</sup> could be published because Churchill said that morale in France must be bucked up in order to keep them in the fight and he thinks your note will do it.

The danger of publication of your note to Reynaud as I see it is that Churchill sees in your note an absolute commitment of the United States to the Allies that if France fights on the United States will be in the war to help them if things go bad at some later date. Frankly as I read the message that is what I see in it. I realize the tragedy of the present moment and how important it is for the success of these poor people that their morale should be bucked up; nevertheless I see a great danger in the message as a commitment at a later date.

KENNEDY

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<sup>2</sup> See telegram No. 1, June 13, 1 p. m., to the First Secretary of Embassy in France, p. 247.

740.0011 European War 1939/3487<sup>7</sup>/<sub>10</sub>: Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, June 13, 1940—10 p. m.

1195. Your 1643, June 14, 1 a. m.<sup>2a</sup> Personal from the President. My message to Reynaud not to be published in any circumstances. It was in no sense intended to commit and does not commit this Government to the slightest military activities in support of the Allies. This plan was carefully avoided in drafting the message to Reynaud. There is of course no authority except in Congress to make any commitment of this nature. The French fleet and its disposition for future use was the matter primarily in mind in sending the message.

If there is any possibility of misunderstanding please insist that Churchill at once convey this statement to the appropriate French officials. [Roosevelt.]

HULL

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740.0011 European War 1939/3487<sup>8</sup>/<sub>11</sub>: Telegram

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

LONDON, June 14, 1940—3 a. m.

[Received June 13—11:30 p. m.]

1645. Personal for the President and the Secretary from Former Naval Person. Ambassador Kennedy will have told you about the British meeting today with the French at Tours of which I showed him our record. I cannot exaggerate its critical character. They were very nearly gone. Weygand had advocated an armistice while he still had enough troops to prevent France from lapsing into anarchy. Reynaud asked us whether in view of the sacrifice and sufferings of France we would release her from the obligation about not making a separate peace. Although the fact that we have unavoidably been largely out of this terrible battle weighed with us, I did not hesitate in the name of the British Government to refuse consent to an armistice or separate peace. I urged that this issue should not be discussed until a further appeal has been made by Reynaud to you and the United States, which I undertook to second. Agreement was reached on this and a much better mood prevailed for the moment with Reynaud and his Ministers.

Reynaud felt strongly that it would be beyond his power to encourage his people to fight on without hope of ultimate victory, and that

<sup>2a</sup> *Supra*; the first two sections of this telegram were received on June 13 at 9 p. m. and 9:20 p. m., respectively, Washington time.

hope could only be kindled by American intervention up to the extreme limit open to you. As he put it, they wanted to see light at the end of the tunnel.

While we were flying back here your magnificent message was sent and Ambassador Kennedy brought it to me on my arrival. The British Cabinet was profoundly impressed and desire me to express their gratitude for it, but, Mr. President, I must tell you that it seems to me absolutely vital that this message should be published tomorrow, June 14, in order that it may play the decisive part in turning the course of world history. It will I am sure decide the French to deny Hitler a patched-up peace with France. He needs this peace in order to destroy us and take a long step forward to world mastery. All the far-reaching plans, strategic, economic, political and moral, which your message expounds may be stillborn if the French cut out now. Therefore I urge that the message should be published now. We realize fully that the moment Hitler finds he cannot dictate a Nazi peace in Paris he will turn his fury on to us. We shall do our best to withstand it and if we succeed wide new doors are opened upon the future and all will come out even at the end of the day. [Former Naval Person.]

KENNEDY

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740.0011 European War 1939/3487%<sub>10</sub>: Telegram

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

LONDON, June 14, 1940—noon.

[Received June 14—10:40 a. m.]

1649. Personal for the President. I talked with Churchill at 9:20 this morning and made perfectly clear to him your attitude regarding publication of your message to Reynaud. On my arrival at the office this morning I received your personal and confidential message transmitted in the State Department's 1643, June 14, 1 p. m.<sup>3</sup> I immediately called Churchill on the telephone about 11:30 and, Johnson<sup>4</sup> being present while I was talking, repeated to him the sense of your statement and explained again clearly that there was no authority in the United States Government except in Congress to make any commitment regarding war. Churchill was obviously terribly disappointed as he had counted on publication of this message to put a little stiffening into the French backbone. I told him of your desire that any misapprehension which might exist in the minds of French officials re-

<sup>3</sup> Apparently this is an error and reference is to Department's telegram No. 1195, June 13, 10 p. m., p. 250.

<sup>4</sup> Herschel V. Johnson, Counselor of Embassy.

garding the meaning of the message be cleared up, and that they should understand that the matter primarily in mind in sending it was the French fleet and its disposition for future use. He expressed his disappointment and said he was afraid conveying such a message now to the French would merely dampen what fires remained. I replied that I was passing your message on to him as instructed and that the action he would take on it of course was up to him.

He inquired if there had been any reply from you to his last message very early this morning. I told him not yet but that I would get in touch with him immediately if and when anything came.

KENNEDY

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740.0011 European War 1939/3790 : Telegram

*The Deputy Ambassador in France (Biddle) to the Secretary of State*

(PARIS) TOURS, June 14, 1940—noon.

[Received 4:25 p. m.]

13. For the President. I called on Reynaud at 8:15 this morning prior to the receipt of the President's message contained in telegram No. 1, June 13.

Reynaud handed me the following document requesting that it be transmitted to you immediately. This message he said was obviously confidential. He added, however, that if you found it advisable it could be divulged in secret sessions of the appropriate Senate and House Committees.

"Mr. President: I thank you for having published in America the message I sent you on June 10. I told you then that for 6 days and 6 nights our troops had been fighting without an hour of respite, and at 1 against 3, with war material 5 times less powerful.

Four days of bloody fighting have gone by since then. Our Army is now cut into several parts. Our divisions are decimated. Generals are commanding battalions. The Reichswehr has just entered Paris. We are going to attempt to withdraw our exhausted forces in order to fight new battles. It is doubtful, since they are at grips with an enemy which is constantly throwing in fresh troops, that this can be accomplished.

At the most tragic hour of its history France must choose.

Will she continue to sacrifice her youth into a hopeless struggle?

Will her Government leave the national territory so as not to give itself up to the enemy and in order to be able to continue the struggle on the sea and in North Africa? Will the whole country then live abandoned abating itself under the shadow of Nazi domination with all that that means for its body and its soul?

Or will France ask Hitler for conditions of an armistice?

We can choose the first way, that of resistance, only if a chance of victory appears in the distance and if a light shines at the end of the tunnel.

In the present situation in spite of the weakening of the enemy's forces due to the sacrifice of the French Army the defeat of England, our loyal ally, left to her own resources, appears possible if not probable.

From that time on France can continue the struggle only if American intervention reverses the situation by making an Allied victory certain.

The only chance of saving the French nation, vanguard of democracies, and through her to save England, by whose side France could then remain with her powerful Navy, is to throw into the balance, this very day, the weight of American power.

It is the only chance also of keeping Hitler, after he has destroyed France, and then England, from attacking America thus renewing the fight of the Horatii against the three Curiatii.

I know that the declaration of war does not depend on you alone.

But I must tell you at this hour, so grave in our history as in yours, that if you cannot give to France in the hours to come the certainty that the United States will come into the war within a very short time, the fate of the world will change. Then you will see France go under like a drowning man and disappear, after having cast a last look towards the land of liberty from which she awaited salvation. Signed Paul Reynaud."

Reynaud was in a state of profound depression and anxiety. He stated that an immediate reply to the above message was of the most vital importance not only to the future of France but the future of all democratic countries. He emphasized the fact that the possible collapse of the French Armies was a question not of days but of hours. The single hope of France and in his opinion England rested in immediate declaration of war by the United States. Only in such event would it be possible for the French Armies to continue the struggle from Northern Africa.

According to his most recent information France's Army had been cut into several separate bodies by the German motorized columns. These armies were retreating independently of each other without effective liaison. Each group was endeavoring to keep itself intact: one group was retreating towards Brittany, one towards the center of France, and one towards Dijon. Although these groups were fighting with almost superhuman courage the retreat was being carried out under unbelievably difficult circumstances. German planes were constantly bombing the lines of communication. In some cases the explosive charges which the French Army had placed under the bridges to destroy them after their retreat had been detonated by German bombs and a considerable amount of artillery and other valuable equipment thus had had to be abandoned.

He emphasized that the situation in which the French Army now found itself was worse than the situation of the German Army when it surrendered in 1918.



In the meeting of the Council of Ministers last evening Reynaud had been able only with the greatest difficulty to obtain their consent to continue the struggle. He solemnly declared that an affirmative reply to the above message was the only basis upon which France could continue the fight; in the absence of a declaration of war by the United States there was no hope for the future. France would be destroyed and her youth annihilated.

It was clear to me that in the absence of some positive action by us within the next 48 hours the French Government will feel that there is no course left but surrender. He pleaded for some word from you tonight.

I am now proceeding to Bordeaux with . . . code but the unbelievable condition of the roads is such that the hour and even day of my arrival is uncertain. At Reynaud's suggestion, therefore, any message should be sent in . . . to the Consul at Bordeaux<sup>5</sup> with instructions for immediate delivery to him. I am trying to telephone the Consul.

BIDDLE

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740.0011 European War 1939/3728½: Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, June 14, 1940—3 p. m.

1202. Personal for the Ambassador. The following message is sent by the President to the former naval person in reply to the message contained in your 1645, June 14, 3 a. m.

"I am very much impressed by your message, and I am grateful to you for giving me so frankly the account of the meeting at Tours yesterday.

The magnificent courage and determination shown by the British and French Governments and by the British and French soldiers have never been exceeded.

You realize, as I hope Prime Minister Reynaud realizes, that we are doing our utmost in the United States to furnish all of the matériel and supplies which can possibly be released to the Allied Governments. At the same time, I believe you will likewise realize that, while our efforts will be exerted towards making available an ever increasing amount of matériel and supplies, a certain amount of time must pass before our efforts in this sense can be successful to the full extent desired.

As I asked Ambassador Kennedy last night to inform you, my message of yesterday's date addressed to the French Prime Minister was in no sense intended to commit and did not commit this Government to military participation in support of the Allied governments.

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<sup>5</sup> Henry S. Waterman.

You well know that there is of course no authority under our Constitution except in the Congress to make any commitment of this nature. As Ambassador Kennedy also informed you, when I sent the message I had very much in mind the question of the French fleet and its disposition for future use. I regret that I am unable to agree to your request that my message be published, since I believe it to be imperative that there be avoided any possible misunderstanding with regard to the facts set forth above.

I have asked the Congress as a first step to appropriate fifty million dollars for the immediate furnishing of food and clothing to civilian refugees in France, and the Senate yesterday unanimously approved this recommendation.

I appreciate fully the significance and weight of the considerations set forth in your message.

As naval people you and I fully appreciate the vital strength of the fleet in being and command of the seas means in the long run the saving of democracy and the recovery of those suffering temporary reverses.

It seems logical to assume that in any war if an armistice is asked for, it becomes almost impossible thereafter to avoid inclusion of a fleet in the terms discussed, especially if such fleet is still under the control of the government seeking the armistice. On the other hand, if a general seeks an armistice for his land forces, he does not control or include the disposition of naval forces. Roosevelt."

HULL

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740.0011 European War 1939/3790: Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Consul at Bordeaux (Waterman)*

WASHINGTON, June 15, 1940—11 a. m.

14. For Ambassador Biddle. Your 13, June 14, noon. Please communicate immediately the following message from the President to the Prime Minister:

"I am sending you this reply to your message of yesterday which I am sure you will realize has received the most earnest, as well as the most friendly, study on our part.

First of all, let me reiterate the ever-increasing admiration with which the American people and their Government are viewing the resplendent courage with which the French armies are resisting the invaders on French soil.

I wish also to reiterate in the most emphatic terms that, making every possible effort under present conditions, the Government of the United States has made it possible for the Allied armies to obtain during the weeks that have just passed airplanes, artillery and munitions of many kinds and that this Government so long as the Allied governments continue to resist will redouble its efforts in this direction. I believe it is possible to say that every week that goes by will see additional matériel on its way to the Allied nations.

In accordance with its policy not to recognize the results of conquest of territory acquired through military aggression, the Govern-

ment of the United States will not consider as valid any attempts to infringe by force the independence and territorial integrity of France.

In these hours which are so heart-rending for the French people and yourself, I send you the assurances of my utmost sympathy and I can further assure you that so long as the French people continue in defense of their liberty which constitutes the cause of popular institutions throughout the world, so long will they rest assured that matériel and supplies will be sent to them from the United States in ever-increasing quantities and kinds.

I know that you will understand that these statements carry with them no implication of military commitments. Only the Congress can make such commitments.[""]

HULL

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740.0011 European War 1939/3814a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Deputy Ambassador in France (Biddle),  
at Bordeaux*

WASHINGTON, June 15, 1940—noon.

13. President's communication to Reynaud, No. 1, to Tours date June 13, 1 p. m. in which reference was made to numerous utterances of the French and others about continuing the war in Southern France and even across to Africa, and also containing the President's statements regarding the amount of materials and supplies being furnished the Allies and his assurance of increased quantities from week to week. This dispatch was sent personal and confidential and not to be made public. Please see that this is not done.

HULL

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740.0011 European War 1939/3691¼ : Telegram

*The Deputy Ambassador in France (Biddle) to the Secretary of State*

(PARIS) BORDEAUX, June 15, 1940—5 p. m.

[Received June (16?)—2:48 a. m.]

3. I feel that I should make it entirely clear that the French Government is now faced with only two alternatives, namely to sue for peace, which would of course have to be unconditional, or to move to North Africa and continue the fight. The decision as to which to take will depend on the nature of your reply and the encouragement or lack thereof contained in it.

If the former is chosen it is probable that your mediation will be asked with a view to reducing the harshness of the German terms—the probable severity of which I believe is too dimly realized even by the Government. Those that advocate surrender stress the very

real likelihood of uprising of an enraged people against the masters, both political and industrial, who have so criminally betrayed and deceived them: the innocent will suffer with guilty and much blood will flow. They also point to German vengeance which will be wreaked on France for continuance of the struggle from Africa and loss of the uncaptured fleet. They question the morale of a French evacuated army in Africa whose families are left to Nazi rule.

Those who urge removal of the Government to North Africa foresee that only thus can a free and independent France survive; that only thus can the symbol of a living France be maintained; that only thus can the French fleet be kept afloat for the democracies.

The decision will be taken tomorrow morning.

BIDDLE

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740.0011 European War 1939/3728§ : Telegram

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

LONDON, June 15, 1940—midnight.

[Received June 15—7 p. m.]

1678. Personal for the President.

“10:45 p. m., 15th June, 1940. President of the United States from Former Naval Person.

Since sending you my message this afternoon<sup>o</sup> I have heard that Monsieur Reynaud, in a telegram which he has just sent to you, has practically said that the decision of France to continue the war from overseas depends on your being able to assure the French Government that the United States of America will come into the war at a very early date.

When I sent you my message just now I did not know that Monsieur Reynaud had stated the dilemma in these terms, but I am afraid there is no getting away from the fact that this is the choice before us now.

Indeed, the British Ambassador in Bordeaux tells me that if your reply does not contain the assurance asked for, the French will very quickly ask for an armistice, and I much doubt whether it will be possible in that event for us to keep the French fleet out of German hands.

When I speak of the United States entering the war I am, of course, not thinking in terms of an expeditionary force, which I know is out of the question. What I have in mind is the tremendous moral effect that such an American decision would produce not merely in France but also in all the democratic countries of the world and in the opposite sense of the German and Italian peoples.”

KENNEDY

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<sup>o</sup> Presumably telegram No. 1677, June 15, 1940, 9 p. m., vol. III, p. 53.

740.0011 European War 1939/3848: Telegram

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

BERLIN, June 15, 1940.

[Received June 17—1 a. m.]

1889. Following message from American Embassy in Paris has just been orally communicated by German military authorities: "The occupation of Paris took place entirely without disorder or loss of life. All members of this mission are in excellent health. Bullitt."

**HEATH**

740.0011 European War 1939/3691¾: Telegram

*The Deputy Ambassador in France (Biddle) to the Secretary of State*

(PARIS) BORDEAUX, June 16, 1940—1 a. m.

[Received 5:40 a. m.]

4. For the President and Secretary. The Cabinet unanimously decided to ask for the terms of an armistice. They have asked the British in view of the agreement between the two Allies for their concurrence in this move. They expect to have the British answer tomorrow and this has just been confirmed to me by my British colleague.

Reynaud to whom I delivered your message at 7 and whom I saw again at midnight explained that only by such a move could he show the French people who have been kept in utter ignorance of the real gravity of the military situation the severity of German terms and justify a flight of the Government "to Africa or England." ("I only hope they won't be too moderate" he said.)

I feel, and the British, I find, concur, that the dangers of this move and the shock to the morale of both the Army and the people will far outweigh the political advantages. I believe furthermore that differences within the Government as to future policy may well endanger such plans as they may have for removal elsewhere. While Mandel<sup>7</sup> and Campinchi<sup>8</sup> favor continuance of the fight Pétain and Weygand (who incredible as it may seem appear to feel that a real "negotiated" peace is possible) urge surrender.

I have emphasized throughout my conversations with all the members of the Government with whom I have talked the vital importance of maintaining the freedom of the French fleet.<sup>9</sup> I am relieved to say that tonight I learn that Reynaud obtained, after a real battle in

<sup>7</sup> Georges Mandel, French Minister of Interior; succeeded by Marquet on June 16, 1940.

<sup>8</sup> Cesar Campinchi, French Minister of Marine.

<sup>9</sup> For correspondence regarding concern of the United States over disposition of the French fleet, see vol. II, pp. 452 ff.

which he threatened to resign, the approval of his Government not to surrender the fleet at any cost. Of this he, Mandel, and Campinchi all assured me tonight.

I of course impressed upon them that to this end the maintenance of a free and untrammelled Government was essential; that without continuance of such a Government the American people might find their continuance of the material aid being rendered the Allies a contribution to democracy which was justified neither by ideal nor utility. This I said was clearly and pointedly brought out in your message of this afternoon.

BIDDLE

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740.0011 European War 1939/3691 $\frac{1}{4}$ : Telegram

*The Deputy Ambassador in France (Biddle) to the Secretary of State*

BORDEAUX, June 16, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received June 16—3:43 p. m.]

6. My telegrams Nos. 3, June 15, 5 p. m., and 4, June 16, 1 a. m. Differences of opinion continue within the Government. No decision was taken as to course of action at this morning's Cabinet meeting pending receipt of the British reply which is expected to be delivered this afternoon. A further Council of Ministers is scheduled to begin at 5:00 this evening.

BIDDLE

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740.00119 European War 1939/362 $\frac{1}{2}$ : Telegram

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

LONDON, June 16, 1940—9 p. m.

[Received June 16—4:28 p. m.]

1680. Personal for the Secretary. I saw Halifax<sup>10</sup> at 7 p. m. He said early this morning they had message here from Reynaud saying that French proposed asking President of the United States to ask Germany for an armistice and Reynaud wanted to know if the British would agree to let the French make a separate peace provided the French agreed not to include the French fleet as one of the terms of agreement.

British announced then agreement was not with a man or an administrator (this in answer to the statement that Reynaud said that if the British did not agree to the separate peace Reynaud would resign and then a government might come in that would agree to everything that Hitler wanted). However, the British would agree to let the

<sup>10</sup> Lord Halifax, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

French make a separate peace provided the French fleet sailed at once for British ports and then the British would fight on. They also told Campbell in separate agreement to have the Polish, Czech and Belgian Governments come here. Also have the French Air Force come here or go to North America and all other troops outside of France do the same thing.

Later on the French gold arrived here with some Frenchmen who said Herriot,<sup>11</sup> Mandel and others wanted to fight on and if Reynaud got some stiffening from England he would stick.

So the British drew up a declaration of union between France and England. All partners now, what you have is mine and what I have is yours. All damage done to France, England pays her share. A noble sentiment but just does not mean much so the armistice preparation has been held up pending finding out Reynaud's reaction to the declaration of union.

These are high spots so you can get it in a hurry. Lothian will fill in all the details.

KENNEDY

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740.0011 European War 1939/3691<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>: Telegram

*The Deputy Ambassador in France (Biddle) to the Secretary of State*

BORDEAUX, June 16, 1940—9 p. m.

[Received June 17—7 a. m.]

10. For the President and Secretary. I have just returned from seeing Reynaud who received me immediately after the termination of the meeting of the Council of Ministers this afternoon. He was in a state of fatigue and despondency.

Reynaud opened the conversation by saying that the Council of Ministers would reconvene later this evening and that at the meeting this afternoon no final decision had been taken. He then said that the position in which the French people found [themselves?] was becoming more horrible by the hour. "Masses of refugee women, children and old men were dying on the roads of starvation and illness. Those that had cars were unable to use them for on the main refugee routes there was no gasoline. The supplies of food had long since been devoured." This "heartrending situation" he claimed had so affected many members of his Cabinet that the pressure to "ask for armistice terms" was too strong to be held down. France had pledged her British ally to conclude no separate peace. He was the author of that pledge and could not ask for armistice terms. The "final decision" should be made at the meeting of the Council tonight.

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<sup>11</sup> Edouard Herriot, President of the French Chamber of Deputies.

I said that he must now know what this decision would be. In reply he shrugged his shoulders with a gesture of fatigue and said that he had done what he could and the Cabinet would decide.

I said that I assumed of course a French Government would continue the fight from other shores even if metropolitan France was occupied by the German Army. He shrugged again and looked away. I stressed the necessity for the continuance of a free Government and the saving of the French fleet. Reynaud replied for the first time with real vigor that I need not worry about the fleet: it would never fall into German hands.

Prior to my conversation with Reynaud I talked with Demargery,<sup>11a</sup> chief of his confidential entourage. He said that in all probability Reynaud would tender his resignation when the Council reconvened tonight. As to who would head the new Cabinet he could not say: there was great pressure by certain Cabinet members to have Pétain head the new Cabinet to ask for armistice terms.

From my conversations I feel that Reynaud may resign this evening. While the possibility still exists that the "strong" members of the Cabinet may be able to prevent capitulation and that Reynaud or someone else may form another government determined on continuing the war, such a possibility seems remote.

BIDDLE

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851.00/2023: Telegram

*The Deputy Ambassador in France (Biddle) to the Secretary of State*

BORDEAUX, June 16, 1940—midnight.

[Received June 17—10 a. m.]

11. Pétain and a peace cabinet have succeeded Reynaud. The latter sent for me at 11 tonight. He was calm and entirely himself again—a man relieved of an enormous weight but for the future of France. "I have remained faithful to my word" he said, "and loyal to my policy of closest collaboration with Great Britain and the United States. I shall always remain convinced that such is the only policy. The majority felt the sacrifices France is being called to make are too great to continue. I have resigned and the President has appointed Marshal Pétain in my place. I am profoundly grateful for what your President has done and I hope you will express my gratitude."

Pétain will of course immediately seek an armistice by direct approach, Reynaud thinks to the enemy lines.

His collaborators are Vice President Chautemps (if he accepts); National Defense, Weygand; War, Colson; Foreign Affairs, Baudoin; Justice, Laval; Interior, Marquet (Mayor of Bordeaux); Labor, Paul

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<sup>11a</sup> Roland de Margerie.



Fauré (leader of the pacifist wing of the Socialist Party); Finance, Boutill [*Bouthillier?*]; Public Works, Frossard. The rest said Reynaud are "of no importance". The Ministry of Information (so called) has been abolished.

While it now belongs to history Reynaud referred in glowing terms to Churchill[']s "reply" this afternoon. It was far-reaching in scope: it meant in reality a fusion of the two great Empires. It might he said have marked the beginning of a United States of Europe. The chance has now been lost.

BIDDLE

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740.00119 European War 1939/361: Telegram

*The Deputy Ambassador in France (Biddle) to the Secretary of State*

(PARIS) BORDEAUX, June 19, 1940—11 a. m.

[Received 2:30 p. m.]

27. I have just seen Marshal Pétain following this morning's Cabinet meeting. The German reply to the request for the armistice terms was received by the French Government at 6:30 this morning. The reply stated that the French Government should name plenipotentiaries to discuss the terms; the time and place of meeting with German representatives would be communicated later. The Government this morning decided to name French plenipotentiaries immediately but Pétain told me that if the Germans did not approve the names others would have to be appointed.

Pétain who was calm, though obviously weary, assured me of the desire of his Government "to cooperate in every way with us"; "the friendship of the United States" he said, "is one of the few assets left to France".

His Chef de Cabinet told me that the Government has the impression that the Germans are pushing toward Nantes and pressing down in the Lyon region but are in no hurry to press Bordeaux. The Government interpreted this as an indication of the German desire to give it "a certain amount of independence and breathing space".

Yesterday the French Government, as you know, declared all towns of over 20,000 inhabitants "open cities".

BIDDLE

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740.0011 European War 1939/3984½: Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Consul at Bordeaux (Waterman)*

WASHINGTON, June 19, 1940—8 p. m.

16. For Ambassador Biddle. The President desires that you transmit the following message from him to Paul Reynaud sent in reply to a message which he received yesterday.

"Your very deeply moving message has reached me and I wish to tell you how truly grateful I am for what you were good enough to say.

The American people will not forget the brilliant, courageous and effective resistance which you carried on at the head of your Government in the name of France.

The American people and their Government share the conviction that the ideals which France has exemplified for so many generations—the ideals of human liberty, of democracy and of the highest form of human civilization—will still triumph and that France herself will ultimately regain her full independence and freedom. Franklin D. Roosevelt."

Please telegraph if you are able to deliver this message.

HULL

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740.0011 European War 1939/2855 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, June 20, 1940—3 p. m.  
[Received June 21—7: 54 a. m.]

1974. It is customary in certain Ministries here to have occasional meetings of higher officials where addresses on party doctrine and internal and external political aims of the Reich are delivered. Recently at such a meeting officials were informed by a higher official in the same Ministry that the war aims of the Reich as regards France contemplated that the Channel ports as far as Cherbourg were to be awarded to Belgium which was to have protectorate status under the Reich. German families would be settled in key positions of areas under German influence. See my 1544, May 28, noon.<sup>12</sup> From the Mediterranean to the southern boundary of Belgium there was to be organized a neutral territory, no clear explanation being furnished as to whether it was to have independent political status or not. It was indicated that the destruction of Great Britain was not contemplated but that instead it was anticipated that country would become a subordinate ally to Germany in a campaign against the Soviet Republic which would be staged in the spring of 1941.

The above statements very possibly had no relation to the actual terms proposed and which may shortly be indicated officially or to the real external aims of Hitler but I believe that they are of interest as indicating the ideas discussed among responsible party officials.

HEATH

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<sup>12</sup> Not printed.

740.0011 European War 1939/4082: Telegram

*The Deputy Ambassador in France (Biddle) to the Secretary of State*

(PARIS) BORDEAUX, June 21, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received June 22—8:40 a. m.]

56. It is natural under the tragic circumstances in which France finds herself today [?] for which the French Republic, officialdom and Army and Navy officers and personnel will be increasingly moved by a rising tide of resentment. Guided, perhaps unwittingly, by military facts contained in Marshal Pétain's public appeal of yesterday and the pitiful inadequacy of British military help in terms of divisions and armored units in comparison with 1918 revealed therein it is likewise natural that this resentment should for the time being be directed against France's principal ally, Great Britain. I doubt whether the British themselves yet realize the strength of this feeling though we have seen clear indications in the last few weeks that they are not being kept *au courant* of the hourly changing temperature and plans of the French Government and its leaders to the extent for example that we are: in fact I believe that they are being deliberately kept in the dark. It seems obvious that regardless of the terms of any armistice that might be signed German policy will be to redouble previous efforts to split the two allies and feed the flames of Anglophobia now so rapidly kindling. I need not point out that to a lesser degree we shall share the odium of this "too late and too little" atmosphere in the minds of the mass of Frenchmen who have no knowledge of the help we have been giving and who cannot comprehend our absence from the conflict.

BIDDLE

740.00119 European War 1939/375: Telegram

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

BERLIN, June 21, 1940—8 p. m.

[Received June 21—7 p. m.]

2010. Embassy's telegram No. 1993, June 21, noon.<sup>13</sup> According to a special announcement issued by DNB<sup>14</sup> and broadcast on the German radio at 5:50 p. m., Hitler in the presence of Goering, Brauchitsch, Raeder, Keitel, Ribbentrop and Hess received the French armistice delegation in the historic railway car in the forest of Compiègne<sup>15</sup> and presented them with the German terms.

An account is given of the preamble to the armistice terms which was read by Keitel and which stated that an undefeated Germany had

<sup>13</sup> Not printed.<sup>14</sup> Deutsches Nachrichten Büro, German News Agency.<sup>15</sup> Where Germany signed armistice with Allies on November 11, 1918.

laid down its arms in 1918 because of misplaced confidence in assurances given by President Wilson and confirmed by the Allied Powers; that the memory of that disgraceful episode would now be eradicated because France had been defeated and has sued for terms, but that in view of the heroic French resistance "Germany does not intend to give the armistice terms or the armistice negotiations the character of ignoring so brave an adversary." The preamble concluded

"The purpose of the German demands is:

- (1) To prevent a resumption of the struggle;
- (2) To offer Germany all safeguards for the further conduct of the war against England which is being imposed upon it; and
- (3) To create the prerequisites for the fashioning of a new peace the most essential content of which will be the righting of the wrong which was inflicted by force upon the German Reich itself."

The special announcement ends by stating that after the reading of the preamble Hitler, to the strains of the German national anthem, left the scene of negotiations.

HEATH

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701.5111/672 : Telegram

*The Deputy Ambassador in France (Biddle) to the Secretary of State*

(PARIS) BORDEAUX, June 22, 1940—5 p. m.

[Received 11:20 p. m.]

72. For the President. Reynaud is deeply touched by your personal message and asks me to convey to you an expression of his profound appreciation. He is happy thus to learn that you are aware of his fight to continue resistance.

BIDDLE

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740.00119 European War 1939/384 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, June 22, 1940—11 p. m.

[Received June 23—1:47 a. m.]

2036. At approximately 10:30 tonight the German radio broadcast a special bulletin announcing the signature at 6:50 this evening in the forest of Compiègne of a Franco-German armistice agreement.<sup>16</sup> At the same time it was stated that French plenipotentiaries would proceed to a meeting with Italian plenipotentiaries and that the Franco-German armistice agreement would not enter into effect until 6 hours after the signature of an Italian-French armistice agreement. After

<sup>16</sup> Department of State, *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, series D, vol. ix, p. 671.

the singing of national anthems the announcement concluded with the declaration that now the struggle goes forward against England.

The bulletin contained no information concerning the terms of the Franco-German armistice agreement.

HEATH

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851.01/63

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State*

[WASHINGTON,] June 24, 1940.

The Ambassador of Great Britain called at his request. He stated that although not instructed by his Government, he expected soon to be instructed to ascertain the attitude of this Government towards the Pétain Government at Bordeaux. I said to him that we are today announcing that Ambassador Biddle was specially and temporarily designated to represent this Government with the French Government while it was absent from Paris on account of military dangers and return to his post with the Polish Government, now located in London, by making his way gradually through Spain, accordingly as he might be able to ascertain the safest and most desirable means of transportation. I added that this must not be made public until we make it public. I then said that Ambassador Bullitt's services are over, during German occupation or military control of France, and that while not officially decided, we would expect him to return without any plan or purpose to function further with the French Government located in Bordeaux or Paris during German occupation as stated. I said this was entirely confidential for the present.

C[ORDELL] H[ULL]

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740.0011 European War 1939/4242: Telegram

*The Deputy Ambassador in France (Biddle) to the Secretary of State*

(PARIS) BORDEAUX, June 24, 1940—7 p. m.

[Received June 28—4:24 a. m.]

87. The Anglophobia feeling of which I have told you was developing (my telegrams 57, June 21, 6 p. m., and 80, June 23, 2 p. m.<sup>17</sup>) received, of course, great impetus from the British broadcast announcement last night of their nonrecognition of the "enslaved" Bordeaux government. Anger at France's recent ally is flaming here today in all informed circles aware of the B. B. C.<sup>18</sup> broadcast (while the local

<sup>17</sup> Neither printed.

<sup>18</sup> British Broadcasting Company.

press publishes Marshal Pétain's "reply" to Churchill's radio address no reference is permitted to the severance of relations and the encouragement given the National Committee<sup>19</sup>). Laval, who has just been made Vice President of the Council of Ministers, whom I saw this morning at his request, could not restrain his indignation against the Churchill Government. Such French Army and Navy officers who are still left in Bordeaux seem equally angry. Even the Bank of France officials are shaken from their usual calm and objective approach by the Churchill move.

Reynaud told me this afternoon that at Marshal Pétain's request he had talked to Churchill on the telephone yesterday afternoon to protest against the radio address in the strongest terms. He had given Churchill however renewed pledges which he first obtained from Darlan and Pétain that the French fleet would not fall into German hands. The fact that this appeal for moderation was in effect answered by last night's announcement of recognition of General de Gaulle's National Committee as the only sovereign authority of France seems eloquent proof of the value that the British at least attach to the solemn promises. As I indicated in my telegram number 73a, June 22, 7 p. m.,<sup>20</sup> it is difficult to believe that the French Government is sufficiently trusting really to think that if the fleet or the greater portion thereof returns as stipulated in the armistice to French ports (under German occupation for dismantling) it will not remain intact for such use as Germany may see fit.

BIDDLE

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740.00119 European War 1939/403 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, June 24, 1940—11 p. m.

[Received June 25—2:07 a. m.]

2077. Tonight at 9:55 the German radio broadcast a special announcement to the effect that the Italian-French armistice treaty had been signed at Rome at 7:15 this evening, that the French-German armistice treaty would therefore enter into effect at 1:35 a. m. Tuesday, June 25.

No information concerning the contents of the German-French or the Italian-French armistice treaties has as yet been published here.

HEATH

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<sup>19</sup> French National Committee formed by leaders of Free French forces.

<sup>20</sup> Not printed.

740.00119 European War 1939/426: Telegram

*The Deputy Ambassador in France (Biddle) to the Secretary of State*

(PARIS) BORDEAUX, June 26, 1940—noon.

[Received June 28—8:40 a. m.]

102. With reference to the last sentence of my 88 [83?], June 23, 8 p. m.,<sup>21</sup> the following handout was published last evening by the governmental mouthpiece Havas. It speaks for itself.

"In the course of the meeting in the forest of Compiègne, General Keitel explained that the severity of the terms imposed by Germany on France were rendered necessary by Great Britain's continuation of the war. When the hostilities cease the conditions of the occupation will in all probability be reviewed.

One of the fundamental aims of the negotiation has been to simplify delivering to Germany any arm which is capable of use against England. At no time has the French Government thought that it could cede the fleet. We have arrived at a system of controlled surveillance of the fleet which maintains a reduced fleet in activity for the protection of our colonial empire. Neither Germany nor Italy have contemplated the destruction of our fleet.

Insofar as French aviation, very reduced after the hard fighting of the last month, is concerned, it has also been rendered impossible of use against England. The airplanes are not surrendered; they are disarmed, the motors removed and placed in control station.

On the Franco-German Armistice Commission France will in all probability be represented by General Huntziger, a remarkable man who has shown once again proof of his qualities as a negotiator.

On the Franco-Italian Armistice Commission France will probably be represented by an admiral.

The conversations with Germany at the outset were clothed in a cold and correct tone—almost hard at the beginning. The tone has somewhat relaxed in the loyal contact of two soldiers. The German delegation has never missed an opportunity to recall the heroism of the French.

The French Army has been beaten. It has done more than save its honor; it has done the impossible. On June 5th, the beginning of the battle of France, 55 French divisions were faced by 140 German divisions, plus 11 armored divisions. At the end of the campaign Germany was preparing 80 reserve divisions."

BIDDLE

## IV. THE GRAECO-ITALIAN WAR

(See Volume III, pages 524-610.)

<sup>21</sup> Not printed. The last sentence states: "Whatever the force of the plea of cold necessity, the *volte-face* of the French press to those who recall its clarion calls to sacrifice, even a fortnight ago, is in a word: revolting." (740.00119 European War 1939/398)

# ACTIVITIES OF THE SOVIET UNION IN EASTERN EUROPE, AND SOVIET RELATIONS WITH THE BELLIGERENT POWERS

## I. RELATIONS BETWEEN FINLAND AND THE SOVIET UNION, THE WINTER WAR AND THE PEACE OF MOSCOW<sup>1</sup>

860D.51/390½

*Memorandum by President Roosevelt to the Secretary of State*

WASHINGTON, January 2, 1940.

I fear we cannot make any large loan to Finland under the R. F. C. Act<sup>2</sup> because, frankly, there is not enough security for its re-payment under the existing law.

Please speak to me, however, about the possibility of recommending to Congress<sup>3</sup> Congressional authority for a loan based on an amount equal to what Finland has paid us on its debt since the other nations stopped paying.

F. D. R.

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7601D 61/919 : Telegram

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

[Extract]<sup>4</sup>

LONDON, January 4, 1940—8 p. m.

[Received January 4—6:15 p. m.]

26. For the Secretary and the Under Secretary. I had a talk this afternoon with Lord Halifax.<sup>5</sup> He referred to information which

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<sup>1</sup> For previous correspondence regarding concern of the United States over demands of the Soviet Union upon Finland, and the outbreak of the Winter War, see *Foreign Relations*, 1939, vol. I, pp. 952 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Reconstruction Finance Corporation Act, approved January 22, 1932; 47 Stat. 5. See bracketed note regarding the press release of December 10, 1939, issued by Mr. Jesse H. Jones, Chairman of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, announcing a loan of \$10,000,000, to the Finnish-American Trading Corporation, New York, N. Y., *Foreign Relations*, 1939, vol. I, p. 1026.

<sup>3</sup> For information concerning the introduction of a bill in the Senate on January 8, 1940, to enable loans to be made to Finland, see *ibid.*, p. 1030, footnote 27.

<sup>4</sup> Another portion of this telegram is quoted in telegram No. 11, January 6, 5 p. m., to the Ambassador in Japan, p. 635.

<sup>5</sup> Edward Wood, Viscount Halifax, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.



he said had been communicated to Department by Lord Lothian<sup>6</sup> regarding the British and French approach to Sweden and Norway with respect to assistance to Finland. The Swedish Minister<sup>7</sup> delivered the Swedish reply this morning and had indicated the willingness of his Government to give every facility to the despatch of necessary material through Sweden to the Finns from both Great Britain and France. The Swedish Government is not, however, prepared to allow the passage of foreign troops through Sweden to join up with the Finnish forces. The Swedish Minister also informed Lord Halifax that his Government was not replying to the Anglo-French offer of assistance to Sweden in case she got into trouble through facilitating Allied aid to Finland. The Swedish point of view is that they would rather not discuss at the present time any question of Allied assistance, and Lord Halifax is not critical of this attitude. Aid to Finland he said will proceed along the lines of the "non-intervention" policy during the Spanish Civil War. The British are going to send everything they can spare and have just consented to meet a Finnish request for the despatch of 20,000,000 rounds of small arms ammunition. This will cut the British and French ratio but Lord Halifax says that they have decided it would be much better to send this ammunition where it is needed and can be used at once than simply to hold it in reserve in France where no battles are now taking place. The talk in France, reported freely in the press, of the possibility of sending 10,000 Alpine Chasseurs to fight with the Finnish Army, Lord Halifax thinks, is largely due to political motivation and pressure from the anti-Communist groups. There could be no question of its realization in any case at present in view of the expressed attitude of the Swedish Government. There are spectacular stories in today's press of direct German threats against Sweden if she cooperates in any way with the Allied Powers in bringing assistance to Finland. The Swedish Minister, however, told Lord Halifax this morning that he had no official confirmation of any pressure being brought to bear on Sweden either by Germany or by Russia.<sup>8</sup>

There is no intention here of declaring war on Russia and Lord Halifax said he knew that was the view of the French Government also, however much anti-Communist elements might advocate it.

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<sup>6</sup> Philip Henry Kerr, the Marquess of Lothian, British Ambassador in the United States.

<sup>7</sup> Bjorn Gustaf Prytz.

<sup>8</sup> The Soviet Union sent notes on January 6, 1940, to Norway and Sweden complaining about their attitude toward the war between Finland and the Soviet Union. Norway replied on January 6, 1940, and Sweden on January 10, 1940.

A blue book is to be published next week of the Anglo-French-Russian negotiations at Moscow giving the full story of the breakdown.<sup>9</sup>

JOHNSON

760D.61/928: Telegram

*The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State*

GRANKULLA (HELSINKI), January 5, 1940—10 a. m.  
[Received 4 p. m.]

10. I spoke to the Prime Minister<sup>10</sup> last night in the sense of third paragraph of your telegram 3, January 3.<sup>11</sup> He pointed out that he had not contemplated action by the United States alone at Moscow but had thought that if the United States in cooperation especially with Italy and the Scandinavian countries and the belligerent powers including Germany, if possible, should urge bilateral negotiations to terminate present hostilities between Finland and Russia this would have salutary effect even if it led to no immediate cessation of hostilities. Nevertheless, the Prime Minister asked me to defer final report regarding his views which were still in process of development. He said he would send for me again when he had received a report now on the way to him from the Finnish Minister at Berlin<sup>12</sup> containing a detailed analysis of the German position towards the Finnish conflict with Russia.

The Prime Minister gave me to understand that the attitude of Germany was a primary concern of the Finnish Government and said that if positive German assistance as in the form, for instance, of rumored Russian request for 200 German pilots should be given to the

<sup>9</sup> The Counselor of Embassy, Herschel V. Johnson, explained in his despatch No. 4890, March 16, 1940, the reversal of the decision to publish these documents at this time. Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain announced in the House of Commons on March 6, 1940, that this decision followed further consultation with the French, who had raised objections. The Counselor had learned from a reliable source that the French had been disposed "at the time of the Moscow negotiations to adopt a more lenient attitude than the British with regard to measures that Russia might take, particularly in the Baltic States, to protect herself against 'indirect aggression.'" It therefore seemed inadvisable to publish a version favorable to the British, "if the Soviets could subsequently make public documents showing a striking divergence of view on the part of the French." (741.61/888) A large collection of papers on this matter has now been printed in the United Kingdom, Foreign Office (E. L. Woodward and Rohan Butler, editors), *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939*, 3d ser., vols. v and vi (London, H. M. Stationery Office, 1952, 1953).

<sup>10</sup> Risto H. Ryti.

<sup>11</sup> *Foreign Relations*, 1939, vol. I, p. 1039.

<sup>12</sup> Aarne Wuorimaa.

Soviet Government in the pursuance of the latter's repeated solicitation Finnish resistance could not withstand this added weight. Whereas, until recently Germany had been in the hands of the Soviet Union, the hostilities between Finland and Russia had now made the latter dependent upon Germany notwithstanding the fact that the Finnish-Russian war might be considered a "small" war.

The Prime Minister speaking of Sweden said that the Finnish Government was anxious to continue to receive supplies from Sweden as at present and that this would become more difficult if Sweden should be forced into an attitude of open opposition to Soviet Union or Germany while under present conditions Germany was raising no objection to furnishing war materials to Sweden. Receipt of such materials was making it possible for Sweden to release its own stocks to Finland as Germany was unwilling to permit direct exports of its war supplies to Finland.

The Prime Minister in response to inquiry said that he felt no concern regarding Russian attempts to cut communications between Finland and the outside world. He informed me that the military situation promised another victory involving approximately 40,000 Russians in an unspecified area which I assume to be north of Lake Ladoga. Finally he said that the report of proposed transfer of the German cruiser *Hipper* to the Soviet Union had not been confirmed.

The Prime Minister's attitude was one of continued confidence but of obvious concern regarding magnitude and difficulties of the problems now facing Finland. I was touched by his reference to the proposed loan to Finland from the United States which he said he earnestly hoped would be a loan by our Government and which as he stated he could assure me would be repaid to the last cent if Finland survived. I replied that I had no doubt our Government and people were deeply interested in the survival of Finland as a free and independent nation.

SCHOENFELD

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760D.61/951 : Telegram

*The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State*

GRANKULLA (HELSINKI), January 8, 1940—7 p. m.

[Received 8:38 p. m.]

18. See telegram No. 327, December 28, from Legation at Stockholm.<sup>13</sup> The Minister for Foreign Affairs<sup>14</sup> confirmed to me this

<sup>13</sup> Not printed.

<sup>14</sup> Väinö A. Tanner.

afternoon that according to his information there was divergence of opinion regarding Finnish question between partisans of Ribbentrop<sup>15</sup> and those of Goering<sup>16</sup> in Germany, the latter favoring continuing Swedish assistance to the Finns and other facilities for Finland. At present latter policy was in the ascendant and had been exemplified today by advice that German merchant ships had been authorized to resume traffic to Finnish ports from which they had been excluded presumably by order of German Government since announcement of Russian naval blockade last month. Tanner's explanation of the improvement in the German attitude was the military success of the Finnish Army as it had apparently been thought in Germany that this country would be quickly overrun by the Russians.

Minister for Foreign Affairs said that without wishing to anticipate what the Prime Minister might have to say to me at our next meeting he hoped that as soon as time is deemed opportune effort would be made to work out a method of ending the war with Russia. Finnish Government he said was perhaps not the best judge of timeliness of possible mediation but from his personal knowledge of Stalin<sup>17</sup> he believed that if German cooperation could also be enlisted by the United States with a view to bringing about a settlement present skepticism regarding success of such action might prove unjustified, Stalin's "toughness" of character and recent loss of prestige by the Russian Army notwithstanding.

Tanner referred to the position of Finland placed between the cross-currents and mutual suspicions of the belligerent powers who were inclined to use that position for their own purposes. This caused confusion here and made it hard to see how to proceed in ending the war. However he also spoke of the possibility of the war going on for another year or even two and I gathered that the disconcerting effect of the complicated state of facts on the political side was not weakening the resolution of the Finnish Government in military resistance.

The Minister expressed great appreciation of your readiness to consider concrete proposals which might be made by the Finnish Government to expedite conclusion of peace. He seems to look to you to be alert for the propitious moment to this end.

SCHOENFELD

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<sup>15</sup> Joachim von Ribbentrop, Reich Foreign Minister

<sup>16</sup> Hermann Wilhelm Göring, Field Marshal, President of the Reichstag; Prime Minister of Prussia; Reich Minister for Air.

<sup>17</sup> 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.

860D.51/399

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State*

[WASHINGTON,] January 9, 1940.

The Minister of Finland<sup>18</sup> called and requested a loan of \$60,000,000 and authority to use it with which to pay for armaments. He was also pleading for any possible arrangements for airplanes and certain other implements of war which might be sent from this country without delay. I replied that I could not say much more than I had said informally to him at different times.

760D.61/957: Telegram

*The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State*

GRANKULLA (HELSINKI), January 9, 1940—5 p. m.

[Received 9:28 p. m.]

20. My telegram No. 10, January 5, and No. 18, yesterday. At the request of the Prime Minister I called upon him this afternoon. He said he had now formulated his ideas regarding possible procedure to bring about cessation of hostilities with Russia but he emphasized the same thought as the Minister for Foreign Affairs did yesterday, that choice of time for taking such action was left to you and he hoped you would watch developments with this in mind.

He had a statement in Finnish from which he spoke in English and at my request handed it to me, then dictating the following English version which I wrote down:

"That the United States, together with the other neutral great power Italy, would approach Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and Finland offering their good offices for the purpose of bringing about armistice and peace negotiations and that the United States would invite Italy and Sweden to try to bring pressure to bear on Germany at the same time and for the same purpose."

The Prime Minister said the point was important that the "approach" be made both to the U. S. S. R. and Finland and not only to the former. He volunteered no reference to the report he had mentioned on January 3rd [4th] as being expected from the Finnish Minister at Berlin but I assume that Tanner's statement to me yesterday regarding German policy was based on that report. The Prime Minister said he now agreed with your view that proposed *démarche* would serve no useful purpose at this time. He did feel, however, that it is in the interest of Germany that the war should not spread

<sup>18</sup> Hjalmar J. Procopé.

in this area and hence he considered German cooperation quite possible. The Prime Minister in response to my inquiry expressed opinion that Italy would be willing to exert its influence with Germany to end Finnish-Russian hostilities and that Sweden would do likewise. Although he was primarily interested in peace for his own country he was also hopeful that a peace between the other European belligerents could come about and as to this it was his frank opinion as he said that France might not be indisposed to make peace but despite a certain peace party's views Britain was insistent on removal of Hitler<sup>19</sup> from power in Germany and it was impossible to know when that condition would be met.

While I was with the Prime Minister he received what he said was a bulletin of the day's military activities which he stated had been unimportant. He told me that the latest surrender of Russians mentioned in my telegram 17 yesterday<sup>20</sup> had been especially significant because it was the first time in present hostilities that surrender had been negotiated by Russian officers. Ryti said quantity of planes now coming forward from various sources was becoming appreciable, being not far from 200, and that there would be no shortage of competent pilots for them. The Germans were still holding 6 Italian airplanes intended for Finland but had released a carload of accessories while remaining Italian planes exceeding 20 were on the way by another route. Italy was also supplying 76 mm. antiaircraft guns obtainable only with great difficulty in other countries or unobtainable as in the United States.

The Minister expressed great concern regarding economic and social disintegration of Europe if the war should last a year or two saying that some new "ism" would doubtless arise with disastrous consequences. Hence while he was especially anxious to see the end of the hostilities with the Russians whom he said the Finns did not hate but who were the same backward people they had always been, he was almost equally desirous of a general peace. He referred to resignation of Hore-Belisha<sup>21</sup> from British Cabinet saying that late Secretary for War was not in favor of helping Finland. Neither was Churchill<sup>22</sup> on the alleged ground that Britain must concentrate her strength against Germany and this country was too inaccessible. This he said had also accounted for unwillingness of British Admiralty to send naval forces to Arctic coast of Finland last month.

SCHOENFELD

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<sup>19</sup> Adolf Hitler, Führer and Chancellor of the German Reich from January 30, 1933; Chief of State from August 2, 1934.

<sup>20</sup> Not printed.

<sup>21</sup> Leslie Hore-Belisha was Secretary of State for War until January 5, 1940.

<sup>22</sup> Winston S. Churchill, First Lord of the Admiralty until May 10, 1940; then Prime Minister and Minister of Defence.

860D.24/82 : Telegram

*The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State*

GRANKULLA (HELSINKI), January 12, 1940—6 p. m.

[Received January 12—5 : 20 p. m.]

24. Private and unofficial for General George Marshall<sup>23</sup> from Military Attaché.<sup>24</sup>

"Lieutenant General Nenonen, Chief of Finnish Military Commission, will call on you with regard to immediate Finnish needs. Recommend action be taken at once as delay will seriously handicap our assistance. Cannot overemphasize necessity for speed. Haynes."

SCHOENFELD

740.0011 European War 1939/1489 : Telegram

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

[Extract]

PARIS, January 15, 1940—9 p. m.

[Received 9 : 45 p. m.]

80. Léger<sup>25</sup> went on to say that although the probable attack on the Netherlands and Belgium dominated the situation at the moment, the French Government had by no means forgotten the power of the Finns. He was happy to say that the first 30 planes sent to Finland (see my No. 3062, December 30, 6 p. m.<sup>26</sup>) had already arrived and had taken the air today.

The question of aid to Finland was becoming more and more complicated. The French Government had offered to send an army to Finland either by way of Norway and Sweden or by way of Petsamo. The Norwegians and the Swedes had refused to permit the passage of a French army to Finland and the British had refused to permit any expedition against Petsamo.

The French had gone so far as to propose that if the British would release the three Polish destroyers which are now with the British fleet they would add sufficient French cruisers to them to make a strong Polish fleet and the Polish fleet would cover the landing of the French Army at Petsamo.

The British first had stated that the Poles were absolutely opposed to any such action. General Sikorski, Polish Prime Minister, in the

<sup>23</sup> Chief of Staff, United States Army.<sup>24</sup> Maj. Frank B. Haynes.<sup>25</sup> Alexis Léger, Secretary General of the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs.<sup>26</sup> Not printed.

presence of himself and Daladier<sup>27</sup> had stated flatly that he would be delighted to have a Polish fleet attack Petsamo and cover the landing of the French Army. Confronted with this statement of General Sikorski's the British had finally taken refuge in a simple negative stating that they controlled the Allied effort at sea; that the Polish fleet would have to be based on British ports and that they would not do anything which could be construed by the Bolsheviks as a hostile British act against the Soviet Union.

Léger expressed the opinion that the British were entirely idiotic in believing that they could detach the Russians from the Germans and that they could finally obtain the support of the Soviet Union against Germany.<sup>28</sup>

He went on to say that the French Government had proposed to the British Government that the British and French fleets both should enter the Black Sea and bombard Batum and send airplanes to bomb Baku and thus cut off both Germany and the Soviet Union from supplies of oil. The British Government had replied that no British ship would be fitted for any action in the Black Sea hostile to the Soviet Union. Léger added that the Turkish Government also was opposed to permitting the passage of the French and British fleets to the Black Sea and a bombardment of the Russian coast.

Léger said that he really could not understand the attitude of the British with regard to support to Finland and hostility to the Soviet Union at the present time. He asked me if I had any information on this subject and I replied that I had none. I should be grateful if you have anything of interest that you may care to communicate to me.

The French position is that France will not break diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union or declare war on the Soviet Union but will if possible destroy the Soviet Union—using cannon if necessary.

BULLETIN

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[The Minister in Finland reported in telegram No. 27, January 14, 1940, 10 a. m., that on the preceding afternoon the first air bombing occurred at Helsinki since December 25, 1939 (760D.61/971). Two statements released to the press on January 15, 1940, describing the loss of civilian life and destruction of property caused by Soviet airplanes, are printed in Department of State *Bulletin*, January 20, 1940, page 56.]

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<sup>27</sup> Édouard Daladier, President of the French Council of Ministers.

<sup>28</sup> For correspondence regarding the attempts of the United Kingdom and France to obtain closer relations with the Soviet Union, see pp. 589 ff.



860D.51/401 : Telegram

*The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State*

GRANKULLA (HELSINKI), January 18, 1940—10 a. m.

[Received 7:55 p. m.]

35. Your telegram No. 18, January 16.<sup>29</sup> I handed to the Prime Minister last night for his information copy of the President's letter to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.<sup>30</sup> The Prime Minister after reading it expressed appreciation of the President's action but intimated some concern regarding exclusion of implements of war from classes of products which might be bought with purchasers' proposed credits.<sup>31</sup> I ventured to point out that the President's suggestions were apparently kept deliberately within the limits of established policy of our Government because as he had said the matter of credits to Finland was wholly within the jurisdiction of Congress. The Prime Minister referred to the possibility in the event of Finland's obtaining credit more for the purchase of agricultural and other manufactured products than implements of war, that arrangements might be made with the British Government to use its liquid funds in the United States to buy such implements against compensation in the form of commodities purchased with the credits that might be granted to Finnish Government.

Both the Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs who was also present at dinner at my house last night inquired whether I had received any further information regarding subject matter of my telegram 20, January 9, and I replied in the negative adding that I should doubtless receive your instructions as soon as there were any developments. The Prime Minister told me according to his secret information another defeat of large Russian troops involving possibility of annihilation of a further Russian division on the northern front was developing. It was nevertheless apparent to me again from attitude of the Prime Minister and Tanner that their chief concern remains as before, namely, that military supplies must be forthcoming in adequate quantity and in good time to maintain effective resistance to Russian onslaught.

SCHOENFELD

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<sup>29</sup> Not printed.

<sup>30</sup> For text of identic letter to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives from President Roosevelt, dated January 16, 1940, suggesting methods which Congress in its discretion might adopt to make credits available to Finland to assist in the purchase of agricultural surpluses and manufactured products, not including instruments of war, see Department of State *Bulletin*, January 20, 1940, p. 55.

<sup>31</sup> The Chief of the Division of European Affairs in the Department of State, Pierrepont Moffat, noted in a memorandum of January 16, 1940, that the Finnish Minister that afternoon had "expressed the keenest disappointment at the contents of the letter." (860D.51/405)

860D.24/132

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State*

[WASHINGTON,] January 22, 1940.

The Finnish Minister called and presented General Nenonen and Mr. Wahlfors, two purchasing agents from his country. He also offered me a memorandum<sup>32</sup> regarding the proposed sale of military armaments by the War Department. I requested him to pass the memorandum on to Mr. Joseph C. Green<sup>33</sup> here in the Department.

I then made clear to the Minister and his two associates the entire improbability of this Government selling arms, ammunition or implements of war to the Government of Finland. I said that I did not want them to be misled for a moment. They sought to bring up the technical law in the matter. I replied that wherever fighting was taking place and whatever it might be called in technical law, the one matter of concern in this country is that this Government does not engage in acts or utterances that might materially endanger its peace and safety by causing it to be drawn into war. In these circumstances, I stated that, in my opinion, it need not be expected that this Government would sell arms, ammunition and implements of war to the Government of Finland.<sup>34</sup>

C[ORDELL] H[ULL]

760D.61/1010: Telegram

*The Minister in Sweden (Sterling) to the Secretary of State*

STOCKHOLM, January 22, 1940—5 p. m.

[Received January 22—4 p. m.]

35. My 16, January 12, 2 p. m.<sup>32</sup> Dahlerus<sup>35</sup> called on me Saturday<sup>36</sup> upon his return from Berlin. He reported that he had had a long conversation with Kirk,<sup>37</sup> also several meetings with Goering.

Dahlerus was unwilling to go into details with regard to the views expressed by the latter in connection with an intercession by Germany with Russia to reach a reasonable basis for peace in the Russo-Finnish conflict. He said nevertheless that Goering was still anx-

<sup>32</sup> Not printed.<sup>33</sup> Chief of the Division of Controls.<sup>34</sup> See note of February 8 to the Finnish Minister, p. 287.

<sup>35</sup> Birger Dahlerus, Swedish civil engineer and manufacturer, friend of Göring, used as unofficial intermediary by the Germans in peace attempts with Great Britain in the weeks before the outbreak of war in 1939, and later in the fall. See Department of State, *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, series D, vol. VIII, pp. 140-145, 388, and 397-398.

<sup>36</sup> January 20.

<sup>37</sup> Alexander C. Kirk, Counselor of Embassy in Germany, frequently Chargé d'Affaires.

ious for a settlement; that he (Goering) did not think the time was yet ripe for any action by Germany but it might be in 2 or 3 weeks' time. Dahlerus intimated that Goering had in mind further defeats of Russian troops in Finland and secondly the outcome of the Soviet-German trade conversations in Moscow<sup>39</sup> which up to now had not been productive of favorable results for Germany.

Dahlerus commented upon the advantages which would accrue to Germany in the event of a liquidation of the Finnish situation: (1) supplies from Russia now being diverted to the Russian forces in Finland; (2) conciliation of Italy and Spain; (3) appreciation of Germany's action in the United States and other neutral countries; (4) a first step to an understanding with Britain and France.

STERLING

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860D.51/409: Telegram

*The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State*

GRANKULLA (HELSINKI), January 25, 1940—9 a. m.

[Received January 25—6:15 a. m.]

49. According to press despatches and other reports received here the President's letter of January 16 to Congress regarding proposed credit to Finland will govern the action of Congress which may also reduce amount of such credit substantially below the figure which had been under discussion for some months past. Finnish Government's hope of obtaining credit from our Government rather than from private lenders seems to have been based before the date of the Soviet aggression upon the consideration that loan by the United States Government might be financially more advantageous to Finland than private loan. Since beginning of hostilities, however, I think a controlling consideration has been political significance of loan by our Government. Possible reduction in amount of credit by our Government will perhaps cause disappointment here in view of Finnish Government's financial record but limitation upon use to be made of such credits is more likely to cause outright discouragement in view of the need of implements of war.

Local press has lately published reports from the United States that no less than 1,300,000 barrels of American gasoline were exported to the Soviet Union between September and the end of 1939. These reports too are causing considerable anxiety here notwithstanding my statement to the Prime Minister in pursuance of your telegram No. 211, December 26,<sup>40</sup> which referred to American aviation gas.

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<sup>39</sup> For correspondence on wartime cooperation between Germany and the Soviet Union, see pp. 539 ff.

<sup>40</sup> Not printed; but see memorandum of December 28, 1939, by the Chief of the Division of Controls, *Foreign Relations*, 1939, vol. 1, p. 1035.

If the Department could make an appropriate statement at this time both regarding the financial and gasoline matters, I should be glad to use it to allay apprehension here.

SCHOENFELD

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760D.61/890 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the Soviet Union  
(Steinhardt)*

WASHINGTON, January 27, 1940—noon.

60. Your 1164, December 31, 8 p. m.<sup>41</sup>

(1) The Department has just been informed, through sources upon which it cannot fully rely but which it feels should not be ignored, that officials of a foreign government who are in exceptionally close touch with the situation are inclined to believe that both the Soviet and Finnish Governments would welcome an opportunity to settle their differences without further bloodshed.

(2) You are therefore authorized, unless in your opinion such action would be inadvisable at the present time, to seek an interview with Molotov<sup>42</sup> and to inform him that for some time various neutral non-Baltic governments have been suggesting that this Government approach the Finnish and Soviet Governments in the hope that some means might be found for a cessation of the present conflict without further bloodshed; that this Government is reluctant to make any such move unless it has grounds to believe that such an approach would not be unwelcome to both Governments and that there is at least a possibility that it might meet with some success; and that your Government would appreciate learning whether in his opinion any kind of approach such as that suggested would be received by the Soviet Government in the friendly spirit with which it would be made. You may add that neither the Finnish Government nor any other Government is aware that you have been instructed to lay this matter before him; and that your inquiry directed to him and the reply which he may see fit to make to you will be regarded by this Government as a strictly confidential exchange of views. You should make it clear that in instructing you to discuss this matter with him this Government is motivated solely by its desire to avoid the further shedding of the blood of two peoples for both of whom the American people have feelings of both friendliness and esteem.

(3) In case Molotov manifests any interest, you may add that your Government would appreciate and treat as confidential any informal

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<sup>41</sup> *Foreign Relations*, 1939, vol. I, p. 1038.

<sup>42</sup> Vyacheslav Mikhailovich Molotov, People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union.

suggestion which he may have to offer relative to the manner in which such an approach might best be made.

HULL

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860D.51/409 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld)*

WASHINGTON, January 30, 1940—8 p. m.

36. Your 49, January 25, 9 a. m.

(1) As you undoubtedly know, the Export-Import Bank has agreed to lend up to \$10,000,000 to Finland for the purchase of goods.<sup>43</sup> It is definitely understood that these goods were outside the category of arms, munitions and implements of war. The Department is informed that the commitments so far made against this loan are in the neighborhood of \$3,000,000.

(2) Following the President's letters of January 16<sup>43a</sup> a Senate bill<sup>44</sup> providing for a loan of \$60,000,000 to Finland was amended by the Senate Committee on Banking and Currency by eliminating any specific mention of Finland and by providing for an increase of \$100,000,000 in the revolving credit fund of the Export-Import Bank. The bill as amended further provides that the aggregate amount of loans to any one borrower outstanding and authorized at any one time shall not exceed \$30,000,000; and that no loans shall be made from the fund in violation of International Law as interpreted by the Department of State, or for the purchase of arms, ammunition, or implements of war.

The amended bill has already been favorably acted upon by the Committee on Banking and Currency and is now before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. Pending final action upon this bill and consideration of the situation by the Federal Loan Administrator there is no justification for any speculation as to the amount of Government financing which eventually may be made available to Finland.

(3) In regard to the question of what restrictions, if any, would be imposed upon a loan to Finland it is impossible for the Department to give you definite advice at this time. No official encouragement so far as I am aware has been given Finland to expect Government credits except as might be authorized by Congress on a line with the general policy of this Government in such matters. Sympathy with Finland has been widespread in the United States and has been manifested in many ways, including those mentioned in our 218, December

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<sup>43</sup> See footnote 2, p. 269.

<sup>43a</sup> See footnote 30, p. 273.

<sup>44</sup> See footnote 3, p. 269.

29, 5 p. m.,<sup>45</sup> but the situation with regard to loans is as stated in the second paragraph of the President's letters of January 16.

(4) Procopé has of course emphasized the military significance of an unrestricted loan and the political significance of financial assistance.

(5) With regard to gasoline, available records do not show that petroleum products of any kind including gasoline were exported to the Soviet Union during December and January to date. 883,530 barrels of gasoline were exported to the Soviet Union during September, October and November, all of which went to Siberia and none of which was aviation quality. Heavy shipments of gasoline to Siberia during the autumn are not unusual. In addition two barrels of laboratory quality aviation gasoline was sent to the Soviet Union.<sup>46</sup>

The Department has moreover as announced in the Radio Bulletin of December 20 taken steps to discourage the delivery of plans, plants, manufacturing rights and technical information required for the production of high quality aviation gasoline to countries the armed forces of which are engaged in bombing civilian populations from the air.<sup>47</sup>

Steps have also been taken as announced in the Radio Bulletin of December 15 to discourage the delivery to such countries of aircraft, aircraft armament, aircraft engines, aircraft parts, aircraft accessories, materials essential to airplane manufacture (including molybdenum and aluminum) and aerial bombs or torpedoes.

(6) In your discretion the substance of paragraph numbered 5 may be given to the press provided it is not directly attributed to the Legation or to any American governmental agency.

HULL

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740.0011 European War 1939/1587 : Telegram

*The Minister in Sweden (Sterling) to the Secretary of State*

STOCKHOLM, February 1, 1940—noon.

[Received February 1—9:25 a. m.]

50. During informal conversation last night Prime Minister Hansson made following remarks to Consul General Johnson.

“Ribbentrop still has the upper hand in Germany but Goering may soon be more powerful. The latter derives his strength from his con-

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<sup>45</sup> Not printed; but see the last paragraph of telegram No. 488, December 30, 1939, 8 p. m., from the Minister in Finland, *Foreign Relations*, 1939, vol. I, p. 1037.

<sup>46</sup> According to a report from the Minister in Finland in his telegram No. 65, January 31, 1940, 5 p. m., when the Finnish Foreign Minister was informed about the shipments of gasoline, he “expressed great satisfaction . . . as concern had been felt here on that subject.” (860D.51/413)

<sup>47</sup> For the statement leading to the introduction of the moral embargo, see telegram No. 265, December 4, 1939, 6 p. m., to the Ambassador in the Soviet Union, and footnote 2g, *Foreign Relations*, The Soviet Union, 1933-1939, p. 801.

nection with Army which is anti-Ribbentrop and beginning to distrust Hitler. I am convinced that Goering is a good friend of Sweden and will do what he can to prevent invasion of this country. I have sound reasons for believing that Russia wishes to make peace with Finland and that such a peace may come about within the next few weeks without the intervention of Germany if a basis for negotiation can be found. I am going to meet some prominent Finns secretly tomorrow who are coming to Stockholm to see me in the above connection."

I understand that Hansson is frequently in touch with Soviet Minister here.<sup>48</sup>

STERLING

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760D.61/1049 : Telegram

*The Minister in Sweden (Sterling) to the Secretary of State*

STOCKHOLM, February 2, 1940—6 p. m.

[Received February 2—1:45 p. m.]

56. In connection with the Legation's 50, February 1, noon, the Foreign Office cautiously concedes that a movement is on foot for Russo-Finnish peace and that the initiative comes from Moscow. The Foreign Office is doubtful, however, of a favorable outcome.

STERLING

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760D.61/1055½ : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

MOSCOW, February 2, 1940—10 p. m.

[Received February 3—6:10 a. m.]

134. Department's 60, January 27, noon. Molotov was unable to see me until yesterday afternoon when I conveyed to him as instructed the substance of the Department's telegram under reference.

Before opening the subject I obtained from him on the part of his Government a categorical and definite assurance that the subject of my visit and the visit itself would be held in strictest confidence and would be given no publicity whatever.

I told him that I had been requested by my Government to ascertain whether an approach by my Government looking towards a cessation of the present conflict between the Soviet Union and Finland would be given serious consideration by the Soviet Government and would be received in the friendly spirit in which it would be made. I emphasized to him that my inquiry was being made on the

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<sup>48</sup> Mme. Alexandra Mikhailovna Kollontay.

initiative of my Government alone without the knowledge of the Finnish or any other government. Molotov replied with a detailed exposition of the familiar Soviet contention as to the causes of the outbreak of the war emphasizing the efforts made by the Soviet Government to reach an agreement with Finland and the "provocative" acts of the Finnish Government but continually stressed the intention of the Soviet Government to respect the independence of Finland while at the same time "assuring the adequate defense of Leningrad." He admitted that the Finnish resistance had proved to be much stronger than the Soviet Government had anticipated which he cited as proof of the correctness of the Soviet view that Finland is already equipped to serve as a base of operations "for other powers" against the Soviet Union. He observed that the treaty with the Finnish People's Government<sup>49</sup> which he himself had signed embodied the Soviet desiderata at the time of its signature and provided the security which the Soviet Union considered essential. In reply to a question as to whether his statement implied that the Soviet Government would be prepared to negotiate a settlement with the Finnish Government on the basis of this treaty, Molotov was evasive beyond the twice repeated statement that it would be impossible to negotiate with the "Ryti-Tanner-Mannerheim"<sup>50</sup> Government. Throughout the interview Molotov studiously avoided giving any indication as to whether the Soviet Government was prepared to treat with an independent Finnish Government. It is perhaps significant that throughout a lengthy interview he did not once reaffirm the previous Soviet position that the Kuusinen government<sup>51</sup> is the only legal government with which the Soviets would deal.

He [I] was unable to obtain from Molotov any clear statement as to the attitude of his Government towards an approach from our Government. In reply to my questions on this point he countered by asking if my Government had any suggestions to which I replied that I had only been instructed to inquire as to the attitude of the Soviet Government in the event that such an approach should be made. After a further extended discussion which consisted of a reiteration on the part of Molotov of the several statements reported above I suggested to him that as he had been unprepared for our discussion per-

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<sup>49</sup> Pact of Mutual Assistance and Friendship between the Soviet Union and the "Democratic Republic of Finland," the puppet government set up by the Soviet Union at Terijoki, signed at Moscow on December 2, 1939. A text of this treaty was published in the *New York Times*, December 3, 1939, p. 53; and a summary of the provisions of the treaty is given in telegram No. 1005, December 3, 1939, 1 a. m., from the Ambassador in the Soviet Union, *Foreign Relations*, 1939, vol. I, p. 1018.

<sup>50</sup> Karl Gustav, Baron Mannerheim, Finnish Field Marshal, Head of State December 11, 1918, to July 25, 1919; Chairman of the National Defence Council; Commander in Chief of the Finnish Army in the Winter War.

<sup>51</sup> Otto W. Kuusinen, president of the "People's Government of Finland."



haps he might wish time to consider the subject further. He replied that he would give them after further consideration and that if he had any observations to make he would ask me to come to see him and that if either my Government or I had any further observations to offer he would be glad to receive me at any time.

Throughout the discussion Molotov was evasive in respect of the subject of my inquiry, namely the attitude of the Soviet Government toward an attempt to bring about a settlement of the Finnish-Soviet conflict. While this evasiveness may have been due in part to his unpreparedness for a discussion of the subject and his consequent unwillingness to commit himself one way or the other, [I] did not in any way receive the impression that the Soviet Government is particularly interested at the present time in bringing about the cessation of the conflict through negotiation. It was also my impression that Molotov's cordial attitude throughout the discussion was due less to real interest in the object of my visit than to a desire not to impose by an abrupt rejection any further unnecessary strain on the relations between the United States and the Soviet Union.<sup>52</sup> It is not unlikely moreover that the Kremlin may see certain advantages in keeping the door open for the good offices of the United States at some future time. I believe that if the Soviet Government is interested for any reason in exploring the possibilities of a negotiated peace through the medium of the American Government at the present time or at some subsequent date Molotov as he intimated will ask to see me again for a further discussion of the subject.

In connection with [the] general subject I have learned from a reliable source that early in January the German Ambassador in Moscow,<sup>53</sup> under instructions from his Government approached Molotov with an offer of German mediation in the Finnish-Soviet conflict and that Molotov replied to the effect that the time was not propitious as the Soviet Government was too deeply committed to turn back. I understand however that despite this rejection the German Ambassador received the impression that the offer was merely premature and that at some future date the Soviet Government might be disposed to consider mediation by the German Government. It is rumored that the departure of the German Ambassador who left last night for Berlin although ostensibly in connection with the economic negotiations which have been proceeding in Moscow is actually connected with the subject of German mediation in the Finnish-Soviet conflict.

STEINHARDT

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<sup>52</sup> For correspondence regarding difficulties affecting relations between the United States and the Soviet Union, and the attempts at their alleviation, see vol. III, pp. 244 ff.

<sup>53</sup> Friedrich Werner, Count von der Schulenburg.

760D.61/1063 : Telegram

*The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State*

KAUNIAINEN (HELSINKI), February 5, 1940—5 p. m.

[Received 7:19 p. m.]

74. The Prime Minister told me this afternoon that though he had no details as yet he was informed by army headquarters that the 18th Soviet division at Kittala, northeast of Lake Ladoga, had been destroyed and that 168th division which was near the shore of the lake to the southward was completely cut off and its destruction expected. This development would greatly relieve situation in the area.

Meanwhile the Prime Minister said he had information which was still vague that the Soviet Government might be seeking through Sweden to sound out possibility of establishing contact with Finnish Government while German Government was reported to be cooperating also in Sweden by impressing upon the Swedes that the latter must not openly come into opposition to the Russians. The Prime Minister said that of course Finnish Government had never endeavored to persuade Sweden to join in the war and had no intention of doing so now. He seemed to consider these maneuvers which were still undefined and tentative as having potential importance only. He inquired whether I had any information from you along these lines and I answered that I had none though I had seen a press report of conversation recently between yourself and the Soviet Ambassador of which no account had reached me.<sup>54</sup>

SCHOENFELD

860D.24/146

*The Secretary of State to the Finnish Minister (Procopé)*

The Secretary of State presents his compliments to the Honorable the Minister of Finland and has the honor to refer to the Minister's memorandum of January 22, 1940,<sup>55</sup> in regard to the desire of the Finnish Government to purchase certain listed arms, ammunition, and implements of war from this Government.

In reply, Mr. Hull refers to the conversation which he had with Mr. Procopé on January 22, in which he stated that, when armed conflict was taking place between two governments, whether or not that armed conflict was in a technical sense a war, this Government could not, without endangering its peace and security, sell arms,

<sup>54</sup> A probable reference to the conversation between the Secretary of State and the Ambassador of the Soviet Union, Konstantin Alexandrovich Umansky, on February 1. See memorandum of that date by the Secretary, vol. III, p. 250.

<sup>55</sup> Not printed; but see memorandum of conversation, January 22, by the Secretary of State, p. 279.

ammunition, and implements of war to the parties to that armed conflict. Mr. Hull regrets that he feels constrained to inform Mr. Procopé that, in existing circumstances, this Government cannot sell arms, ammunition, and implements of war to the Government of Finland.

Mr. Hull invites Mr. Procopé's attention to the fact that the domestic market is open to the Government of Finland as it is open to other governments, even those governments which are technically belligerents, and that the President has appointed a Liaison Committee, which has been given the function of assisting foreign purchasing missions to purchase arms, ammunition, and implements of war in this country in so far as the rendering of such assistance is compatible with the interests of the national defense of the United States.

WASHINGTON, February 8, 1940.

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760D.61/1077 : Telegram

*The Minister in Sweden (Sterling) to the Secretary of State*

STOCKHOLM, February 8, 1940—5 p. m.

[Received February 8—2:53 p. m.]

66. Legation's 50, February 1, noon. In conversation today Erkko<sup>56</sup> stated that to date nothing had come of the movements for a Russo-Finnish peace. Apparently the Soviet Minister here (who is half Finnish) has had frequent interviews lately with the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister<sup>57</sup> with the idea of Swedish mediation. Germany, he said, also had recently sounded out the Soviet Government as to the possibility of renewed negotiations but without success. The question of the cession of Hango<sup>58</sup> was vital to Finland, Erkko commented; if the Soviet Government would withdraw that demand there would be a chance of a successful outcome.

STERLING

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760D.61/1081 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, February 9, 1940—3 p. m.

[Received February 9—1:11 p. m.]

161. My telegram No. 159, February 9, 1 p. m.<sup>59</sup> In the course of my conversation with Ritter<sup>60</sup> he confirmed the fact reported in my

<sup>56</sup> Eljas Erkko, Finnish Chargé in Sweden, formerly Minister for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>57</sup> Christian Günther.

<sup>58</sup> Hangö; Khanko.

<sup>59</sup> *Post*, p. 543.

<sup>60</sup> Karl Ritter, Ambassador on special assignment in the German Foreign Office, in charge of economic warfare questions, temporarily in Moscow.

telegram under reference that the German Government had recently offered to mediate between the Finnish and Soviet Governments but had failed to elicit a favorable response from the Soviet Government. He expressed the opinion that the Soviet Government now regarded the Finnish war primarily in the light of its military prestige and consequently was determined for this reason to achieve at least some measures of military success before even giving consideration to the possibilities of a settlement by negotiation.

STEINHARDT

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760D.61/1097 : Telegram

*The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State*

GRANKULLA (HELSINKI), February 13, 1940—6 p. m.

[Received 7:06 p. m.]

87. In the absence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs I asked the Prime Minister today as to the significance of the strong statement issued by Tanner February 11 as reported in my despatch No. 1697 yesterday<sup>61</sup> and to the effect that Finnish Government has no knowledge of any proposed mediation for peace with the Soviet Government and that in view of the aid now arriving from various countries terms of peace could not be dictated to Finland. He said the latter phrase had originally been drafted by Tanner in much stronger language which had been moderated by the Prime Minister though it might still be somewhat provocative. The background of the statement had been that there was reason to believe Soviet Government had actually inspired indirect soundings mentioned in second paragraph of my telegram No. 74, February 5 and had attempted also to drive a wedge between Sweden and Finland by suggesting transfer of Aland Islands to Swedish sovereignty. Minister for Foreign Affairs had just received report indicating that German sympathizers had sought to give the impression recently that an alleged mediation action emanated from the United States and was looked upon with disfavor in Germany.

The Prime Minister said it was now known that notwithstanding German official denial last August that the agreements between Germany and the Soviet Government<sup>62</sup> did not refer to the President of the United States they contained specific reference to this country and I gathered that these references were known here in detail. He added that though naturally desiring peace with the Soviet Government, Finnish Government as implied in Tanner's statement meant

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<sup>61</sup> Not printed.

<sup>62</sup> Treaty of Nonaggression, with secret additional protocol, signed at Moscow on August 23, 1939, *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, series D, vol. VII, pp. 245-247.

to have it only by negotiation between equals and, as for mediation, Finland would not be inclined to accept German mediation for the reason indicated and because to do so would render her position much more difficult at a later stage of the war in other directions which I took to mean later in the war between Germany and the Western Powers.

The Prime Minister told me that the Russians had been making tremendous efforts on the Karelian Isthmus in recent days and 2 days ago had some success but counterattacks had since restored the position though he had no details as yet. Some 400 planes were now available and the principal need at the moment was for artillery and ammunition.

SCHOENFELD

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760D.61/1115 : Telegram

*The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State*

GRANKULLA (HELSINKI), February 16, 1940—2 p. m.

[Received 4:02 p. m.]

96. Former Foreign Minister Hackzell recently expressed the view privately to a member of the Legation that the attitude of the United States in the present conflict with the Soviet Union was only less disappointing to the Finnish people than that of Germany had been. The expressions used in the United States regarding Finland had led the Finns to expect more active help in the present situation of the country and he volunteered the statement that in the meantime it was understood here that the conflict with the Soviet Union unhappily coincided with preparations for the presidential election in the United States which had led to the matter of help for Finland becoming an element in the political situation there.

In sounding the Minister for Foreign Affairs today, however, I gathered that he considered such views were very generally held there. He mentioned the fact that notwithstanding Finland's financial record, hope of obtaining Government credit for \$60,000,000 had not been realized and the reduced amount of credit now being considered would apparently be hedged with restrictions as to its use. Inability of Finnish Government to purchase implements of war from our Government also made it necessary to have recourse to private manufacturers charging high prices.

He said these circumstances doubtless led to the feeling of disappointment, reports of whose existence I had mentioned. I inferred that this feeling must now be considered as deeply and widely held in Finland. Tanner referred to the hope, however, that if Finland survived the present struggle the aid of the United States would be

forthcoming for reconstruction. He seemed to have in mind expressions used both on behalf of our Government and among the public and in the press in the United States of America.

I have recently sounded both the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs in order to ascertain how representative of Finnish opinion views of this kind may be. The Prime Minister gave me to understand that they should not be given special importance saying that similar views were held in some circles even regarding Sweden, the value of whose help to this country could of course not be fully known to the public.

SCHOENFELD

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[For observations by the Ambassador in the Soviet Union on the military activity of the Soviet Union against Finland, and attitude toward the possible conclusion of peace, see paragraphs 4 and 5 of his telegram No. 185, February 17, 6 p. m., printed on page 360.]

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760D.61/1155: Telegram

*The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State*

GRANKULLA (HELSINKI), February 21, 1940—5 p. m.

[Received February 22—1:15 a. m.]

106. My telegram 95, February 16.<sup>63</sup> Minister for Foreign Affairs informed me today Finnish Government will not act for the present on Hungarian suggestion for mediation of the conflict with Russia because there seems to be no reason to suppose such action would be productive of favorable result at Moscow at this time.

SCHOENFELD

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760D.61/1157: Telegram

*The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State*

GRANKULLA (HELSINKI), February 21, 1940—6 p. m.

[Received February 22—1:20 a. m.]

108. Minister of Foreign Affairs told me this afternoon that the German Minister<sup>64</sup> who has just returned from visit to Berlin had indicated no change in German attitude towards Finnish conflict with Russia. He had again defined this attitude as one of strict aloofness and disinterest. German Minister had also asked that Finnish Government confirm official German denials that the Russians were using

<sup>63</sup> Not printed.

<sup>64</sup> Wipert von Blücher.

German technical assistance and war supplies against Finland. Tanner said he had consented to do this and an authorized statement accordingly appeared in local press today to the effect that reports published abroad have not been verified that German officers are assisting Russians in operations against Finland and that Russians have been using German implements of war. German Minister apparently explained again that pact with Soviet Russia had been necessary for Germany to avoid having to wage war on two fronts.

[SCHOENFELD]

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760D.61/1170 : Telegram

*The Minister in Sweden (Sterling) to the Secretary of State*

STOCKHOLM, February 26, 1940.

[Received February 26—8:40 a. m.]

97. In an exclusive interview granted the Stockholm *Dagens Nyheter* and published today the Finnish Foreign Minister, after expressing gratitude for what aid had been given his country and stating that Finland was still willing to negotiate for a just peace, made the point that Finland had hoped that action concerning aid would have followed promises much quicker than they had and that had international aid been given immediately after the outbreak of war the Red army would have been stopped. He is reported to have said that Finland is particularly disappointed with the United States which has not yet decided on the request for a loan of 60 million dollars, a request which is being deliberated with the same minute care as if Finland's serious position is not fully realized by the Americans. After a delay of more than a month it has now been proposed that Finland should obtain a loan of 20 million dollars but, even this amount has been delayed. It would be fatal, Mr. Tanner concludes, if Finland's appeal for help were to be thrown into internal political discussion in the United States.

STERLING

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760D.61/1185 : Telegram

*The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State*

GRANKULLA (HELSINKI), February 28, 1940—2 p. m.

[Received 10 p. m.]

121. Minister for Foreign Affairs told me today that while military situation on the Isthmus front is serious mainly because of the effects upon Finnish troops of a month's continuous fighting without possibility of adequate relief, there is no lack of confidence in the re-

sult of the war. Recent Finnish withdrawal had been due to delay in receiving supplies from abroad and present depressed state of public opinion was mainly the result of the attitude of the Swedish Government as recently revealed. Swedish volunteers had only lately begun to reach fighting lines and one result of Swedish Government's statements had been to slow down their recruitment. So long as volunteers must be recruited as individuals their utility was greatly reduced both in the matter of numbers and with regard to training involving regrettable delays.

Tanner said both British<sup>65</sup> and French Governments had again expressed willingness to send substantial forces here but passage of such organized forces through Norway and Sweden was barred from [by?] the fetish of neutrality in those countries. Entry of such forces into Finland by Arctic coast was considered impracticable by experts.

The Minister referred also to delay in action of our Congress regarding loan legislation, intimating that he had even had it in mind to advocate calling off the whole matter. References in the German press to slow American action in this respect had been humiliating to Finland.

When I inquired whether the Minister thought there had been such change in military situation as might lead to early political developments including peace negotiations he answered in the negative. His mood seemed to be one of bitter irritation at supposed friendly states and not of pessimism and he denied existence of any defeatism in Finland.

SCHOENFELD

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760D.61/1186: Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, February 28, 1940—6 p. m.

[Received 10:27 p. m.]

219. Mr. Assarsson, the new Swedish Minister, called to see me this afternoon. As we are old friends from Stockholm and Lima he gave

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<sup>65</sup>The Chargé in the United Kingdom, in his telegram No. 491, February 28, 9 p. m., reported that in an interview with Lord Halifax, the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, the latter said he had "told the Finnish Minister that Great Britain will continue to send more and more help to Finland within the limits possible." He also stated that the present policy of His Majesty's Government "is that war will not be declared against Russia, although he said that they will pursue their policies in all directions regardless of the possibility that as a result Russia may declare war against them." (711.41/457)



me a detailed composite account of his talks with Molotov and Kalinin<sup>66</sup> on the occasion of the presentation of his letters of credence yesterday. He said he gained the impression that the Soviet Government might be prepared to consider peace with Finland but only on terms considerably more onerous than those proposed during the negotiations which preceded the outbreak of the war. He was of the opinion that the Soviet Union would demand the entire Karelian Isthmus to Viborg, Hango and a relatively small piece of territory northeast of Lake Ladoga but that it might be willing to surrender its claim to the Rybachii Peninsula and would probably be willing to offer some territory in Central Karelia as compensation. He said that Molotov had not mentioned Kuusinen's name but that Kalinin had stressed the necessity of Kuusinen being a member of a new Finnish government. He said that Kalinin had said to him "You know, Kuusinen is not at all Communist" and he inferred that the Soviet government might be satisfied with the inclusion of Kuusinen in a new Finnish government without the necessity of a government dominated by Kuusinen or of a Communist government. He said he felt that the Soviet Government might be prepared to accept a really Finnish democratic government provided Kuusinen were included and that in his opinion this would be the principal stumbling block and that while the Finns might be prepared to cede the Karelian Isthmus up to Viborg, and even Hango, no Finnish negotiators would dare to include Kuusinen even as a minority member of a truly Finnish democratic cabinet.

. . . . .

It is not yet clear whether the intimations of a possible Soviet disposition to consider peace negotiations with Finland are genuine or whether they are in part motivated by a desire to influence the attitude of the Scandinavian countries in regard to increased assistance to Finland by playing on their obvious self-interest in holding out the prospects of a negotiated peace with an independent Finland. In this connection it is of interest to note that Molotov's remarks to the German Ambassador,<sup>67</sup> which apparently closely paralleled his statements to the Swedish Minister, conveyed the impression to the former that there was little prospect of a negotiated peace.

STEINHARDT

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<sup>66</sup> Mikhail Ivanovich Kalinin, President (Chairman) of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the Soviet Union.

<sup>67</sup> See telegram No. 202, February 23, 1 p. m., from the Ambassador in the Soviet Union, p. 547.

760D.61/1184 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, February 28, 1940—7 p. m.

[Received 7:13 p. m.]

220. At a luncheon which Molotov gave in my honor today I had an opportunity to discuss with him at considerable length and with unusual intimacy a number of subjects of current interest. As a result of our conversation I received the definite impression that the Soviet Government is not yet prepared to consider a negotiated peace with Finland but is on the contrary determined after taking Viborg to endeavor to press on toward Helsinki. Should this effort fail of success within a reasonable time the Soviet Government might consider a negotiated peace but I doubt it will do so until this test has been made. I likewise gained the impression that the Soviet Government considers the formal entry of Sweden or Great Britain into the Finnish-Soviet conflict to be unlikely, although not impossible. With respect to my telegram No. 219, February 28, 6 p. m., Molotov made it quite evident that the Soviet Government is well aware of the selfish interest of Sweden with respect to an early settlement of the Finnish-Soviet conflict.

With respect to Japan Molotov's remarks implied that despite the current trade and boundary negotiations the Soviet Government regards that country to be its enemy as well as that of the United States, apropos of which he remarked that he would not be surprised were the American Navy and the Red Army some day to collaborate in suppressing this common foe.

Molotov stated that the Soviet Government is not greatly concerned over developments in the Black Sea area and does not anticipate hostilities there with France, Great Britain, or Turkey. (See last paragraph my 209, February 24, 4 p. m.<sup>68</sup>)

As to relations with the United States it was apparent from Molotov's remarks that the Soviet Government is acutely aware of the present anti-Soviet sentiment in the United States and that it is both annoyed and disturbed thereby. At the same time, however, Molotov clearly indicated that the Soviet Government desires to relax the resulting strain on Soviet-American relations.

In conclusion I sensed that Molotov desired to leave with me the impression that in general the Soviet Government is neither disturbed by nor dissatisfied with its present position and that with regard to

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<sup>68</sup> Not printed.

certain internal inconveniences it is expected that the advent of spring will result in an improvement, especially with respect to food supplies, transportation, etc.

STEINHARDT

760D.61/1201 : Telegram

*The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State*

GRANKULLA (HELSINKI), March 4, 1940—2 p. m.

[Received March 4—1:22 p. m.]

125. Minister for Foreign Affairs told me today that next few days would determine whether negotiations could be undertaken for peace with Soviet Russia or whether it would be necessary to fight to the end. He said soundings had been going on for the past month. Replying to my inquiry whether possible terms had been indicated in these soundings he said Finnish Government had a fairly clear idea of them and that they called for greater concessions than those which had been refused last November. He asked me whether in the event negotiations should begin the United States would lend any help at Moscow. I answered that as I had told the Prime Minister under your instructions about 2 months ago you would be glad to take under benevolent advisement at any time any concrete suggestions Finnish Government might wish to make to you.

Tanner said that last Saturday, presumably meaning March 2, the Allies had again sought consent of Swedish and Norwegian Governments for passage of Allied forces to assist Finland and the reply had again been negative. Swedish Government was advising Finnish Government to make peace and showed no disposition to send substantial forces to help. Swedish attitude, however, was obscure and uncertain probably due to German pressure.

The Minister said again that Finnish troops were tired having had no rest for more than a month. Nevertheless, I gathered that a decision for continuing the fight remains at least equally as likely as one to start negotiations. He mentioned inaccessible location of this country as leading factor from standpoint of the Allies with reference to sending help, pointing out that this affected question of transport and supply of any substantial Allied forces.

I do not believe any decision has been reached here to start peace negotiations and accept any Russian terms. On the contrary, decision to continue the fight seems rather more probable.<sup>69</sup>

SCHOENFELD

<sup>69</sup> The Minister in Finland reported in telegram No. 131, March 6, 3 p. m., that "Field Marshal Mannerheim and the Army deplore present tendency of civil authorities to give consideration to possible negotiations for peace to which they are vehemently opposed at this time." (760D.61/1216)

760D.61/1217 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt)  
to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, March 7, 1940—1 a. m.  
[Received March 6—11:18 p. m.]

248. Personal for the Secretary only. My 219, February 28, 6 p. m., and Department's 145, March 5, 7 p. m.<sup>70</sup> Since my talk with Molotov at his luncheon February 28th the Swedish Minister has had a conversation with him concerning the possibility of bringing the hostilities in Finland to an end. Last night the Swedish Minister had a further talk with Molotov, in the course of which the latter referred to his talks with me and intimated that the Soviet Government would not be averse to an armistice should the Finnish Government desire to send one or more emissaries to Moscow. Although Molotov was not specific in setting forth Soviet peace terms the Minister gained the impression that the Soviets would require a line slightly northwest of Viborg thence around Lake Ladoga to include the territory northeast of that lake which the Soviet armed forces have thus far been unable to occupy, Smmalso<sup>71</sup> Hango and the islands in the Gulf of Finland but that out of consideration for Norwegian and Swedish sensibilities the Soviet Government might not press its claim to any part of the Rybachii Peninsula<sup>72</sup> or Petsamo. He also gained the impression that the Soviets would not cede any territory to Finland in return for the foregoing concessions on the grounds that they would not make the same concessions to an independent Finnish government that they were prepared to make to the Kuusinen government. Insofar as concerns the Aland Islands the Minister said that Molotov had intimated that the Soviet Union would not be averse to these islands remaining in *status quo* or even these being transferred to Sweden.

He said that at no time during the conversation was Kuusinen's name mentioned and that therefore he was by no means certain but that once negotiations began an attempt might be made by the Soviets to insist upon a Kuusinen government or the inclusion of Kuusinen in the Finnish Government and that he was convinced the Finns would not agree to any such condition.

He stated that Molotov had clearly implied that at the present stage the Soviet Government does not desire any intermediary or mediation by a third power.

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<sup>70</sup> Latter not printed.

<sup>71</sup> Apparently garbled; perhaps Sortavala was intended.

<sup>72</sup> Fisherman's Peninsula; Kalastajasaarento.

The Minister stated that in his opinion it would be necessary for Tanner and perhaps Mannerheim to leave Finland at least temporarily if the negotiations are to succeed.

The Minister concluded that the apparent willingness of the Soviet Government to consider peace at the present time has been induced in part by the unfavorable reaction in the United States to the attack on Finland and particularly the President's last speech.<sup>73</sup>

As a result of his talk with Molotov last night the Minister believes that the Soviet Government is now feeling its way carefully with a desire to bring the Finnish conflict to an end on such terms as will fully safeguard Soviet prestige, but he does not think that the Soviet Government has yet entirely determined on its course of action.

While it is impossible at this time to evaluate with any degree of accuracy the sincerity of the Soviet willingness to negotiate a settlement with an independent Finnish Government, the opening of informal discussions is in itself of considerable significance. The obvious explanation is that the Soviet Government having doubts as to the possibility of obtaining a final military decision over Finland beyond the advent of the thaw which will render military operations virtually impossible for a period of from 1 to 2 months, necessitating the maintenance of a force believed to be approximately 1,000,000 men under arms on the Finnish front with the consequent drain on Soviet internal economy, complicated by the possibility of serious developments in the Black Sea area,<sup>74</sup> is interested in ascertaining the exact terms which the Finnish Government would be prepared to accept at the present time.

STEINHARDT

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760D.61/1223 : Telegram

*The Minister in Sweden (Sterling) to the Secretary of State*

STOCKHOLM, March 7, 1940—6 p. m.

[Received March 7—4: 18 p. m.]

114. Have just seen Erkko. He gave me the following under promise of absolute secrecy.

In the past few weeks approaches have been made by the Soviet Government to Finland for peace negotiations but pending the possibility of obtaining effective help from Sweden and later from the

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<sup>73</sup> Speech by President Roosevelt to the American Youth Congress at Washington on February 10, 1940, wherein he remarked that American sympathy was about 98 percent with the Finns; for text, see Samuel I. Rosenman (compiler), *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, vol. ix, pp. 85, 92.

<sup>74</sup> For correspondence concerning Soviet activities in the Balkans and the seizure of Bessarabia, see pp. 444 ff.

Allies, the Russian terms which were very drastic had been rejected. As time went on and all hope abandoned for direct military aid from Sweden and latterly from the Allies because of Sweden's refusal to permit the transit of troops, together with the increasingly critical military situation, the Finnish Government had reconsidered its attitude and had suggested a truce while negotiations could be carried on. This was refused by the Soviets. Yesterday the Finnish Government decided that no relief being in sight it should accept the Russian invitation to send envoys to Moscow. They arrived here late last night and flew to Moscow this morning. They include Tanner<sup>75</sup> and Paasikivi<sup>76</sup> among others.

Erkko said that he could not divulge the exact details of the Russian demands so far formulated but they were generally as severe as those of last November and included Hango. The Finnish Government felt it was better to submit to even drastic demands than to have Finland wiped off the map. Hitler's attitude he had ascertained was entirely negative in this crisis; he was even stating that Finland deserved what she was getting.

Erkko was very despondent. He was bitter at Sweden's attitude not only for failing to come to Finland's aid but for using strong pressure on Finland to make terms at almost any price. He realized the position of President Roosevelt regarding any further *démarche* to the Soviet Government but wondered if there were not some means whereby Russian demands could be softened. Repeat to Paris.

STERLING

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760D.61/1227: Telegram

*The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State*

GRANKULLA (HELSINKI), March 7, 1940—6 p. m.

[Received 9:10 p. m.]

132. At 4:30 this afternoon I received through the Legation at Stockholm the following telegram from Ambassador Steinhardt dated March 7, 10 a. m.

"I think my friends are now ready to do business at a very high price. Would your associates be interested even though the price seems high to me and if so can you give me an idea of how high they would be willing to go?"

At 5 p. m. this afternoon, I brought foregoing message to the attention of the Minister of Foreign Affairs. He informed me the

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<sup>75</sup> For the subsequent correction that Risto H. Ryti, and not Väinö A. Tanner, was a member of the Finnish delegation going to Moscow, see the Minister's telegram No. 115, March 8, 11 a. m., p. 301.

<sup>76</sup> Juho Kusti Paasikivi, Minister without Portfolio in the Finnish Cabinet from December 1, 1939.

Russians were demanding not only Hango but also the cities of Viborg and Sortavala, cession of which last two would make Finland indefensible. He then authorized me to inform you that Finnish Government would be prepared to consider cession of territory on Karelian Isthmus along the line Suvanto to Koivisto<sup>77</sup> as well as the port of Hango but could not accept Russian demand for cession of territory north of Lake Ladoga. In strict confidence he said however Finnish Government might be prepared to make greater concessions without defining what these might be.

Minister for Foreign Affairs then added that he "would be thankful if the Government of the United States could find means to urge the Soviet Government not to make excessive demands so that a quick peace could be reached".

Tanner said the only alternative to peace at this time would be an appeal by Finland to the Allied Governments for their intervention which appeal he was sure would be heeded by them but such intervention would immediately involve this country and possibly the other northern states in the war of the great powers. Finland had asked Scandinavian Governments first whether they would send substantial forces of their own to help Finland and secondly whether they would permit passage of Allied Forces through their territories. To both inquiries the answer of the Scandinavians had been negative. In reply to my inquiry Tanner said that the Allies were confident they could make their intervention effective notwithstanding and he added in reply to further inquiry that the Russians knew this to be the fact, feeling that [Finland] was willing, however, to sacrifice itself for the sake of peace in this corner of the world.

I am sending no direct reply to Ambassador Steinhardt's telegram and would ask the Department to acknowledge its receipt to him on my behalf.

SCHOENFELD

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760D.61/1228b : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the Soviet Union  
(Steinhardt)*<sup>78</sup>

WASHINGTON, March 7, 1940—9 p. m.

150. Erkkö has informed Sterling at Stockholm that the Finnish government has accepted Russian invitation to send envoys to Moscow and that a delegation including Tanner and Paasikivi flew from Stockholm to Moscow early this morning. It is believed that the Russian terms are drastic.

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<sup>77</sup> Björkö.

<sup>78</sup> Substance of this telegram transmitted on the same date to the Minister in Sweden as No. 44, and to the Minister in Finland as No. 81.

Kindly arrange to see Molotov immediately, putting the conference on as personal a basis as possible. Please state to him that this government has no purpose of intervening in the negotiations between Finland and the Soviet Union, but the American people are vividly interested. Our public opinion would be deeply impressed were the Soviet government to take a generous attitude towards Finland.

In your discretion you might further intimate that you are informed that there has been increasing popular demand here for measures affecting economic relations with certain areas, and that some of such movements would be slowed down, depending on the degree of moderation and generosity arrived at in the Finnish settlement.

The substance of this telegram has been transmitted to Stockholm and Helsinki.

HULL

760D.61/1225 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, March 8, 1940—11 a. m.

[Received March 8—7 a. m.]

253. Department's 150, March 7, 9 p. m. It occurs to me that an invitation to the Finnish delegates to stay with me at Spaso House<sup>79</sup> during their sojourn in Moscow might hold out distinct advantages. It may be however that they have already made other arrangements in which event instructions to them from Helsinki would be necessary. I am endeavoring to obtain an immediate appointment with Molotov in conformity with the Department's above-numbered telegram.

STEINHARDT

760D.61/1229 : Telegram

*The Minister in Sweden (Sterling) to the Secretary of State*

STOCKHOLM, March 8, 1940—11 a.m.

[Received March 8—10:35 a. m.]

115. I had a further conversation with Erkko this morning in which I conveyed the substance of your 44, March 7, 9 p. m.;<sup>80</sup> he was deeply appreciative.

He brought out several points of interest:

(1) Contrary to current rumors, the Swedish Government has not acted as intermediary in the negotiations except to transmit a month ago an informal message from the Soviet Government that the latter was ready to receive proposals from Finland. As it was learned

<sup>79</sup> The Ambassador's residence in Moscow.

<sup>80</sup> See footnote 78, p. 300.



that Russia still had in mind her original demands no reply was made by Finland to this approach. Since then Sweden has taken no part in the Russo-Finnish conversations but nevertheless exerting strong pressure on the Finnish Government through the Swedish Minister at Helsinki<sup>81</sup> to come to terms.

(2) The Allies have notified the Finnish Government that it must decide before March 12 whether or not it will accept the Russian terms; otherwise after that date Allied assistance to Finland will stop.

(3) As mentioned in my 114 of yesterday, Hitler is assuming an antagonistic attitude toward Finland, claiming Finland is showing no gratitude for Germany's help in Finland's civil war of 1918. Goering on whom Finland had built hopes was taking his orders from higher up.

(4) The Finnish delegation at Moscow is meeting Molotov at 4:00 this afternoon. It appears that Ryti and not Tanner is on delegation. Repeated to Moscow.

STERLING

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760D.61/1225 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the Soviet Union  
(Steinhardt)*

WASHINGTON, March 8, 1940—11 a. m.

151. Your 253, March 8, 11 a. m. We believe it inadvisable for the Finnish delegates to stay with you. You may, however, in your discretion call upon them and render them such courtesies as may seem appropriate. We feel that in such contacts as you may have with them you should take care to avoid creating the impression that they are obtaining advice from you, in view of Russian assertions that their real grievance against Finland was the use of Finland by non-Baltic powers in a manner disliked by Russia.

HULL

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760D.61/1233 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary  
of State*

Moscow, March 8, 1940—2 p. m.  
[Received March 8—11:40 a. m.]

255. A Swedish plane arrived yesterday evening bearing Ryti, Paasikivi, General Wallin,<sup>82</sup> Wuomanen,<sup>83</sup> two minor Finnish officials, and a

<sup>81</sup> S. E. G. Sahlin.

<sup>82</sup> Gen. Rudolf Walden is the person meant.

<sup>83</sup> Väinö Voionmaa is intended.

secretary. The omission of Tanner from the delegation is in my opinion wise.

The visit has been veiled in the utmost secrecy, the delegates having been provided with Swedish passports bearing fictitious names, and the plane having landed at an obscure airport. The presence of the delegation in Moscow is in consequence thus far known only to the Kremlin, the Swedish Legation and this Embassy.

I have just had a talk with the Swedish Minister who has not yet seen any of the delegates. He assured me that notwithstanding press despatches to the contrary the Germans have had no connection of any kind with the negotiations leading to the presence in Moscow of the Finnish delegation. He also said that the suggestion of an immediate armistice has thus far not met with the approval of Kremlin which apparently wished first to explore the possibility of a final peace.

The Minister intimated very clearly that he and his Government hoped for the cooperation of the United States in strengthening the position of the Finnish delegates during the negotiations. He stated that he believed that once the presence of the Finnish delegation in Moscow became known it would be helpful if the interests of the United States in the successful outcome of the negotiations were to be publicly disclosed as this would have a material effect on the Soviet position since it is common knowledge that the Soviet Government is seriously concerned about its relations with the United States<sup>84</sup> particularly in respect of purchases in the United States.

STEINHARDT

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760D.61/1241 : Telegram

*The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State*

GRANKULLA (HELSINKI), March 8, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received 5:44 p. m.]

133. I spoke to the Minister for Foreign Affairs this afternoon in the sense of your telegram No. 81, March 7.<sup>85</sup> He expressed deep appreciation of your action especially when I pointed out that your *démarche* at Moscow had doubtless been decided upon before you could have received my telegram No. 132 of yesterday and had therefore not been motivated by his requests of yesterday but was spontaneous.

Tanner told me that the military position was unchanged and that Finnish Government had requested additional British bombing planes which had been promised and which if now available would have made defense of Viborg much easier.

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<sup>84</sup> For correspondence concerning difficulties in relations between the United States and the Soviet Union, and efforts for their alleviation, see vol. III, pp. 244 ff.

<sup>85</sup> See footnote 78, p. 300.

I mentioned the rumor that Soviet Government had served an ultimatum requiring answer to its demands before tonight and he explained that probable foundation for this story was the fact that the Russians had threatened on February 28 to increase their demands if those then made were not accepted by March 1. At the request of the Finnish Government for more time the Russians had, however, desisted from this requirement.

The negotiations had been conducted throughout with the aid of the Swedish Government and had taken place both through Swedish Legation at Moscow and Soviet Legation at Stockholm. I inquired whether the report was true that former President Svinhufvud<sup>86</sup> and Minister Paasikivi were in Stockholm at the present time. Tanner said the former had probably gone to Germany where he is highly regarded, but if so, he had done so without any mission on behalf of the Finnish Government. As for Paasikivi, the Minister for Foreign Affairs told me under the promise of absolute secrecy that he was now in Moscow and in negotiation with Molotov. When I asked his opinion as to the prospect of successful outcome of the negotiations Tanner merely referred to this fact.

I inquired whether the Russians had made any allusion during the current negotiations to the continuance of Tanner himself and of Field Marshal Mannerheim in the Finnish political world and he said they had made no reference to domestic political matters in Finland. Answering my query as to the Soviet view of the relation of the Terijoki régime to the present situation Tanner said with a smile that much more important personalities than Kuusinen had been liquidated in Russia when deemed expedient.

I also asked Tanner whether the Germans had brought active pressure to bear on Finland recently, and he answered in the negative saying that report just received from Finnish Legation at Berlin regarding Sven Hedin's latest conversation with Hitler<sup>87</sup> had been marked chiefly by the latter's ranting about Finland's alleged unfriendliness to Germany which could therefore take no interest in this country. Tanner said that nevertheless Germany had throughout taken a sufficient guarantee. Regarding the Swedes he said their great fear was of an Allied passage through their country and this accounted for their intensive activity to bring about present negotiations.

SCHOENFELD

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<sup>86</sup> Pehr Evind Svinhufvud had been President of Finland between February 16, 1931, and February 15, 1937.

<sup>87</sup> Sven Hedin, Swedish explorer, acquaintance of Hitler. For memorandum of this conversation, March 4, regarding the possibility of German mediation in the Finnish-Soviet war, see *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, series D, vol. VIII, p. 862.

760D.61/1242 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, March 8, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received 9 p. m.]

258. Department's 150, March 7, 9 p. m. I have just returned from a conference of an hour and a half with Molotov for the purpose of conveying to him the substance of the Department's telegram under reference. He was effusively cordial and expressed great appreciation for the friendly interest now and heretofore shown by the President and the United States Government in the restoration of peace between Finland and the Soviet Union. He said that by reason of that interest he was now prepared to "communicate" to me the terms on which the Soviet Government would be prepared to conclude peace with Finland which are as follows:

(1) Hango and the islands immediately surrounding the peninsula on a long term lease;

(2) The Karelian Isthmus, including Viborg and the Bay of Viborg;

(3) The northwest shore of Lake Ladoga including Sortavala and thence northeast along the railroad to the present frontier.

He then said "these are the main points" and stopped.

I thereupon inquired concerning the Rybachii Peninsula and Petsamo. He laughed and said, "We are interested but not insistent," and added "Rybachii is of secondary importance." I asked him what territory his Government proposed to give the Finns in exchange. He replied "After a war we cannot give any territory in exchange." He added, "There must be no delay in the negotiations; they must not be dragged out as they were the last time."

He then told me that when his Government had been asked through Stockholm whether it would receive a Finnish delegation the Soviet Government had made it a condition that the Finns must be prepared to cede Hango and the Karelian Isthmus.

I asked him whether the Soviet Government expected to dictate the composition of the Finnish government. First he avoided a direct answer, but when I pressed him and reminded him of his statement to me that the Soviet Government did not desire to affect or impair the independence of Finland in the slightest degree (see my telegram No. 734, October 12, 4 p. m.<sup>88</sup>), and that the American public would not regard a Finnish government dictated by Moscow as consistent with national independence as understood in the United States he hesitated a moment and then said, "The Soviet Union is not

<sup>88</sup> *Foreign Relations, 1939, vol. 1, p. 968.*

interested in the composition of the Finnish government." I then pressed for a definite statement by inquiring, "Do I then understand that the Finns are free to have any government they choose?" He replied, "Yes, they may have their own government. We are not interested."

After a further general discussion our conference concluded with a renewed expression on his part of appreciation for the interest of the President and the American Government.<sup>89</sup> He said he would ask me to come to see him if any serious difficulties developed in the course of the negotiations.

I received the impression this afternoon for the first time that the Soviet Government is really desirous of negotiating peace with Finland; but I am by no means convinced that in the course of the negotiations the Soviet may not endeavor to go beyond the terms outlined to me, particularly in respect of the composition of the Finnish government. In this connection the publication this morning of the article by Kuusinen (referred to in my telegram 256, March 8, 3 [5] p. m.<sup>90</sup>), demanding the removal of the present Finnish Government, including Ryti, who is now in Moscow as one of the Finnish delegates, may be significant.

I gained the impression that Molotov wishes the terms so specifically outlined by him to me conveyed to the Finnish Government in Helsinki, doubtless by reason of the alleged failure of Tanner, during the previous negotiations, to avail himself of the full limit of the concessions concerning Hango which he had been authorized to make by his Government.

STEINHARDT

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760D.61/1252 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, March 9, 1940—noon.

[Received 1:44 p. m.]

264. The French Chargé d'Affaires<sup>91</sup> called to see me this morning and told me in the strictest confidence that he had received instructions from his Government to endeavor to make contact with Ryti in Moscow and to invite his attention to a recent offer by Daladier

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<sup>89</sup> As reported in despatch No. 1746, April 26, from the Minister in Finland, the Prime Minister of Finland later on declared that "this *démarche* of the United States was the only influence which had served to moderate the Russian terms." (760D.61/1433)

<sup>90</sup> Not printed.

<sup>91</sup> Jean Payart.

to the Finnish Minister in Paris,<sup>92</sup> the substance of which was that if the Finns would continue the war with the Soviets and not make peace Great Britain and France would furnish Finland with all of the assistance that was necessary to maintain a successful defense including troops as well as planes, cannons and munitions. I asked the Chargé whether it was his understanding that this means that the British and French were prepared to send an expeditionary force of regular troops to Finland. He said he assumed it must mean this as it was obvious that the Finns could not defend themselves indefinitely without a substantial contingent of foreign troops and that it was his understanding that the offer had been unconditional and contemplated such assistance as might be needed to maintain the Finnish defense successfully. The Chargé d'Affaires stated that he was in quite a quandary as to how to make contact with Ryti as he said that he assumed the Soviet authorities would not disclose his whereabouts or permit him to have access to Ryti.

STEINHARDT

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760D.61/1253 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, March 9, 1940—9 p. m.  
[Received March 9—8:55 p. m.]

266. Department's 151, March 8, 11 a. m. Pursuant to the authorization contained in the Department's instruction under reference I called upon the Finnish delegation this afternoon. They gave me a detailed account of their meeting from 7:30 to 10:30 last night at the Kremlin with Molotov, Zhdanov,<sup>93</sup> and General Vasilov.<sup>94</sup> They said that the attitude of the Russians had been polite but [reserved?] and that the following terms had been submitted to them.

(1) Hango and the islands immediately surrounding the peninsula on a long term lease.

(2) The proposed frontier on the Karelia Isthmus to start at a point near the town of Ristsalama at the mouth of the Bay of Viborg, running thence northeasterly crossing the main line of the Leningrad-Helsinki railway near the town of Nurmi; thence north of Sortavala, paralleling the Viborg-Sortavala railway at a distance of approximately 15 kilometers to the northeast of the railway; thence to the

<sup>92</sup> Harri Holma.

<sup>93</sup> 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.

<sup>94</sup> Brigade Commander (sometimes called Brigadier General) Alexander Mikhailovich Vasilevsky is the person intended.

northeast of Lake Janisjarvi; and thence northeast to the present frontier, intersecting the same approximately midway between latitudes 62 and 63 degrees; this being the Russian frontier, more or less, at the time of Peter the Great.

(3) The western portion of the Rybachii Peninsula at present under Finnish sovereignty.

(4) A strip of territory approximately 75 kilometers long and 20 to 25 kilometers wide due west of Kandalaksha, so as to withdraw the present Finnish frontier from its proximity to the Murmansk-Lenin-grad railway line.

No conditions were imposed by the Russians in respect of the composition of the Finnish government, nor was any reference made to Kuusinen; nor were other demands of any kind presented, such as for a mutual assistance pact or other political commitments; nor was any reference made to the non-fortification of the new frontier.

Mr. Ryti informed me that he did not have full plenipotentiary powers and that in consequence the terms presented had been referred by the delegation to Helsinki for instructions.

No meeting has been arranged for today but a further meeting is expected tomorrow.

I gained the impression that the terms presented were somewhat less drastic than the Finnish delegates had anticipated and that they are at present preoccupied with three main considerations: (a) that the acceptance of terms considerably more severe than those proposed by the Soviets at the time of the breakdown of the negotiations in November would meet with popular disapproval in Finland; (b) that the Soviet Government may add to the demands already made as the negotiations progress; and, (c) an attempt to persuade the Soviet Government to abandon its demand for the Rybachii Peninsula, the strip of land west of Kandalaksha and to agree to a frontier on the Karelian Isthmus which will not require the surrender of the entire shore of the Bay of Viborg and will run approximately 10 kilometers southeast of the line proposed. They also stated that they were seriously concerned over the loss of the mouth of the Saima Canal which empties into the Bay of Viborg north of Viborg.

The delegates were of the opinion that the presence of Zhdanov and Vasilevsky and the absence of Stalin might mean that the terms presented were those of the military and not necessarily Stalin's final reply and they were hopeful of being able to obtain at least some modification at tomorrow's meeting. They stated that there had been some discussion of an armistice but that he [Ryti] doubted the Soviet Government would agree to an armistice until the Finnish Government had committed itself to acceptance of the terms submitted.

STEINHARDT

760D.61/1256 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, March 11, 1940—4 a. m.

[Received March 11—12: 34 a. m.]

268. My 266, March 9, 9 p. m. The Swedish Minister, whom I met at the theater tonight,<sup>95</sup> informed me in strict confidence that the Finnish delegation had again seen Molotov, Zhdanov and General Vasilevsky for 2 hours last night<sup>96</sup> but had failed to obtain any modification of the Soviet [demands] which in addition to those [in] my telegram under reference included in the construction by Finland of a railroad across the waist of Finland from the Soviet border to the Gulf of Bothnia. A further meeting took place this morning<sup>97</sup> with the same Soviet representatives who were even more adamant. Stalin was not present at either meeting.

The Swedish Minister added that he understood the British and French are now preparing for active intervention in Finland and that Great Britain and France, as reported by our Legation in Stockholm, have set the deadline for Finnish acceptance or rejection of the Soviet terms at March 12. He stated in this connection that the Soviet representatives, who presumably had been informed by the Finns of the prospect of Anglo-French intervention, had professed to regard it as a bluff.

The Minister told me that he had telegraphed his Government at 4 p. m. today requesting authorization to call on Molotov tomorrow morning and to inform him that: (a) it had been his understanding, and that of his Government on the basis of a written memorandum from the Soviet Government at the time the visit of the Finnish delegates was arranged, that aside from Hango, the Karelian Isthmus and the shore of Lake Ladoga, no other major demand would be presented; (b) in the opinion of the Swedish Government the British and French were not bluffing; (c) while the Swedish Government had gone on record as being opposed to the [transit] of English and French troops to Finland, public opinion in Sweden was rising to the point where the replacement of the present Government, headed by one by Sandler<sup>98</sup> which would permit such transit, could not be excluded.

STEINHARDT

<sup>95</sup> i. e., March 10.<sup>96</sup> i. e., March 9.<sup>97</sup> i. e., March 10.<sup>98</sup> Rickard J. Sandler, a former Minister for Foreign Affairs.



760D.61/1288 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, March 11, 1940—6 p. m.

[Received 9:33 p. m.]

621. My 468, February 21, 10 a. m., and 590, March 8, 8 p. m.,<sup>99</sup> Svinhufvud, former President of Finland, has been staying at the Finnish Legation here since his arrival in Berlin 3 days ago and although he failed in his effort to see the Chancellor, has conversed with other German officials. He is now leaving for Rome and has communicated to me through the Finnish Minister the following impressions derived from his discussions in Berlin:

1. Objections are not being raised by Germany to the departure for Finland of increased numbers of volunteers from Sweden and it is possible that a similar accommodating attitude on the part of the German Government towards the transit through Sweden of British and French volunteers in limited number might be expected. Furthermore no objections are being raised by Germany to the shipment to Finland via Sweden of additional Allied war material including airplanes.

2. Sweden need not have feared a German attack even if it had participated openly in the war and Germans disclaim having threatened Sweden in this respect.

3. Germany might reluctantly admit action by the British and the French at Petsamo and Murmansk as such steps might result in a rupture of relations between the Soviets and the Allies and furthermore the German Government would not be inclined to risk the unpopularity of a war against Finland on the sole basis of an Anglo-French attack on Murmansk.

4. Allied help to Finland which would involve the establishment of England and France in the northern part of Scandinavia or the use of Norwegian ports to land Allied troops would certainly meet with German opposition which might take the form of air attacks on Finland or an ultimatum to Sweden.

5. Although the Soviet-Finnish conflict and its possible consequences are sufficiently disturbing to the Germans to warrant a possible willingness to facilitate a peace, the highest authorities in Germany with a view to Soviet-German relations profess indifference as to the future fate of Finland. This apparent indifference might change, however, in the event that Finland might maintain its stand and that through overcautious aid to Finland a conflict in Scandinavia might be precipitated. Germany, it is said, owing to its dependence

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<sup>99</sup> Neither printed.

upon Russia for supplies is not in a position to alter Russian demands on Finland, but there seems to be an understanding of the important argument that if Finland on the basis of the concessions demanded should now make peace with the Soviets without adequate guarantees the latter would later reopen the conflict with Finland and accordingly there is some indication that a form of guarantee by Germany of Finnish integrity following a peace might be forthcoming.

Repeated to Moscow.<sup>1</sup>

KIRK

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760D.61/1288: Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the Soviet Union  
(Steinhardt)*

WASHINGTON, March 11, 1940—midnight.

160. Reference Berlin's 621, March 11, 6 p. m. In the absence of any known authoritative sources for the impressions of Svinhufvud as given through the Finnish Legation in Berlin and in the lack of any indication from the Finnish Government as to the character of his mission, it is believed that it would be inadvisable to convey to the Finnish delegation the substance of his conversations in Berlin.

HULL

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760D.61/1300: Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary  
of State*

Moscow, March 12, 1940—1 p. m.

[Received 1:22 p. m.]

278. For the President and the Secretary only. The Swedish Minister has just informed me that despite a further effort on his part yesterday afternoon at an interview with Molotov to obtain some modification of the Soviet terms as outlined in my 266, March 9, 9 p. m., he had been unsuccessful and that a similar effort by the Finnish delegates at a further conference with the same three Soviet representatives had also failed. Accordingly the Finnish delegates have been instructed by their Government to accept the Soviet terms and they have done so. They are at present discussing matters of detail and are awaiting full powers to sign. The Soviet Government has again refused an armistice until the terms of peace have been

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<sup>1</sup> The Chargé stated in his telegram No. 622, March 11, 7 p. m., that he had informed the Embassy in Moscow of this conversation at Svinhufvud's request, but only for "information and such action as may be deemed appropriate." (760D.61/1289)

signed. The Swedish Minister anticipates that this will take place tomorrow or the next day.

The Minister requested that the foregoing be held in the strictest confidence.

STEINHARDT

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760D.61/1301 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, March 12, 1940—2 p. m.

[Received 2:30 p. m.]

277. My telegram No. 266, March 9, 9 p. m. The German Embassy in Moscow, although avoiding any direct participation in the Finnish-Soviet negotiations, nevertheless is apparently being kept fully informed of their progress by the Soviet Government. A member of that Embassy, who is fully conversant with the terms presented to the Finnish delegation, has stated in strict confidence that the delay in concluding the negotiations has been occasioned by the demand of the Soviet Government for inclusion within the territory to be ceded to it on the Karelian Isthmus of the important power and industrial center of Imatra northeast of Viborg. The Finns have been endeavoring to obtain a modification of the Soviet demand on this point inasmuch as the Imatra power station serves all of Southern Finland and its loss would be a serious blow to Finnish national economy. My informant said that the fact that Stalin had up to yesterday not taken part in the discussions may indicate that the Soviet Government would be prepared to make a concession, but he was strongly of the opinion that with this possible exception no other modification in Soviet terms was to be anticipated.

My informant was frank in admitting that the German Government is desirous of seeing the Soviet-Finnish conflict terminated on almost any terms and advanced the opinion that the Finns would do well to accept since he professed to regard the prospect of effective British or French assistance as illusory. He expressed doubt however which he was careful to characterize as a personal opinion that Germany would take direct action against Sweden in the event that the Swedish Government conceded transit to French and British troops to Finland but stated that since the Soviet Union and Germany would in such an event be allies Germany would send airplanes and submarines to Murmansk. He added he thought that if the present negotiations are successful the Soviet Government might attempt to solve the awkward problem of its commitments to the Kuusinen government by creating an autonomous Finnish or Karelian People's

Republic within the Soviet Union comprising the area ceded by Finland and the area "ceded" by the Soviet Union under the treaty of December 3 [ø], 1939, with Kuusinen as its head.<sup>2</sup>

STEINHARDT

860D.51/437 : Telegram

*The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State*

GRANKULLA (HELSINKI), March 12, 1940.

[Received March 13—1:55 a. m.]

142. My despatch 1668, January 10 last.<sup>3</sup> I have received from Minister for Foreign Affairs note dated today transmitting guarantee of Finnish Government covering obligations of Finnish-American Trading Corporation together with extract from Cabinet council meeting of March 8th authorizing guarantee and note addressed to the Secretary of State. Guarantee reads as follows:

*"Guarantee:* The Finnish Government hereby unconditionally guarantees the payment of obligations heretofore or hereafter entered into by the Finnish-American Trading Corporation in favour of the Export-Import Bank of Washington and/or the Reconstruction Finance Corporation up to a total principal amount of \$30,000,000, therein included the obligations the payment of which has already been guaranteed by the Finnish Government up to the amount of \$10,000,000, together with interest thereon.<sup>4</sup> Helsinki this 9th day of March 1940. For and on behalf of the Finnish Government (signed) Mauno Pekkala, Minister of Finance, J. W. Minni, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Finance."

Note to the Secretary of State is dated March 12, 1940, numbered 14309 and reads as follows:

"Excellency, I have the honour hereby to inform Your Excellency that Mauno Pekkala as Minister of Finance and Mr. J. W. Minni as Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Finance had full legal authority to execute on behalf of the Finnish Government the enclosed instrument dated March 9, 1940, guaranteeing the payment of obligations heretofore or hereafter entered into by the Finnish-American Trading Corporation in favour of the Export-Import Bank of Washington and for the Reconstruction Finance Corporation up

<sup>2</sup> The area on the Karelian Isthmus, which Finland ceded in the peace treaty of March 12, 1940, was incorporated on March 31, 1940, into the existing Karelian Autonomous Republic and the whole became the Karelo-Finnish Soviet Socialist Republic. (See telegram No. 342, April 1, 1 p. m., from the Chargé in the Soviet Union, p. 324.) Otto W. Kuusinen became president of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the Karelo-Finnish S. S. R., and on August 7, 1940, also a vice president of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

<sup>3</sup> Not printed.

<sup>4</sup> For the guarantee previously given for \$10,000,000, see telegram No. 436, December 14, 1939, 1 p. m., from the Minister in Finland, *Foreign Relations*, 1939, vol. I, p. 1029.

to a total principal amount of \$30,000,000, together with interest thereon, and that the said guaranty as executed constitutes a binding and valid obligation of the Finnish Government.

I should be very much obliged to you if through your good offices the Export-Import Bank and the Reconstruction Finance Corporation be advised of the above statement.

Accept etc. (signed) Vaino Tanner, Minister for Foreign Affairs."

I shall forward originals of two documents quoted above and of the Cabinet minutes by the next pouch.

SCHOENFELD

760D.61/1305 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, March 13, 1940—2 a. m.

[Received March 12—9:55 p. m.]

281. The foreign correspondents have just been furnished the substance of a communiqué about to be released announcing the signature of a treaty of peace between the Soviet Union and Finland on substantially the same terms already reported by me. The treaty is to be ratified within 3 days and instruments of ratification are to be exchanged in Moscow. Hostilities are to cease on March 13th at noon and the Soviet troops are to occupy the new frontiers on March 15 at 10 a. m. I will telegraph the full text of the communiqué as soon as available.

STEINHARDT

760D.6111/41 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, March 13, 1940—noon.

[Received 2:20 p. m.]

283. My 281, March 13, 2 a. m. The texts of the peace treaty and of a protocol annexed thereto<sup>5</sup> are published in *Pravda* today. The following is a brief summary of their contents. Full texts, I understand, have been sent abroad by Tass.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Signed at Moscow on March 12, 1940; for texts, see Finland, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, *The Finnish Blue Book* (Philadelphia, 1940), p. 115, or the sequel publication, *Finland Reveals Her Secret Documents on Soviet Policy, March 1940—June 1941* (New York, 1941), p. 35; or the translation from the Russian original from *Pravda* in Department of State *Bulletin*, April 27, 1940, p. 453.

<sup>6</sup> Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union, official communications agency of the Soviet Government.

Preamble refers to the desire of both countries to terminate hostilities and guarantee mutual security, including that of the City of Murmansk and the Murmansk Railway.

Article I provided for the termination of hostilities in accordance with the attached protocol.

Article II establishes the new boundary line between the Soviet Union and Finland in accordance with which there will be included in the territory of the Soviet Union "the entire Karelian Isthmus to the city of Viborg and the Gulf of Viborg, the islands therein, the western and northern shores of Lake Ladoga, with the cities of Keksholm, Sortavala, Suojärvi, a number of islands in the Finnish Gulf, the territory to the east of Merkjärvi, with the city of Kuolajärvi, a portion of the Rybachii and Srednii Peninsulas", in accordance with an attached map.

Article III provides that both contracting parties shall bind themselves to refrain from any attack on the other and from participating in any coalition directed against the other.

Article IV provides for the leasing by the Finnish Republic for 30 years, for an annual rental of 8,000,000 finnmaks, the peninsula of Hango, its surrounding sea area within a radius of 5 miles to the south and 3 miles to the north and west, as well as a number of islands in the vicinity for the creation of a naval base; and accords to the Soviet Union the right to maintain there at its own expense the necessary land and air forces. The Finnish Government within 10 days of the entry into force of the treaty agrees to evacuate its troops from and turn over to the Soviet Union the peninsula of Hango and the islands.

Article No. V provides that the Soviet Union shall withdraw its troops from the Petsamo *oblast*, which shall be voluntarily turned over to Finland in accordance with the peace treaty of 1920;<sup>7</sup> and Finland also in accordance with the peace treaty of 1920, shall not maintain in the waters of the Arctic Ocean any naval vessels in excess of 100 tons with the exception of 15 naval and other armed vessels whose individual tonnage shall not exceed 400 and will not maintain submarines or military aviation in those waters. Finland likewise undertakes not to establish any naval bases in that area.

Article No. VI provides for the free transit of goods between the Soviet Union and Norway and that these be "freed from examination, customs duties, transit or other charges or any control with the exception of those normally provided by international practice for the regulation of transit communications." Likewise citizens of the Soviet Union may have free passage to and from Norway on the basis

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<sup>7</sup> Signed at Dorpat (Tartu, Yuryev) on October 14, 1920; for text, see League of Nations Treaty Series, vol. III, p. 6.

of passports issued by the appropriate Soviet authorities and Soviet "unarmed aviation" shall be granted free transit across the Petsamo region between the Soviet Union and Norway.

Article No. VII grants the Soviet Union the right of transit of goods between the Soviet Union and Sweden, [and for] the development of this transit [along the] shortest railway route the Soviet Union and Finland consider it essential to construct, each on its own territory if possible during 1940, a railway line connecting Kandalaksha and Kemijärvi.

Article No. VIII provides for economic conversations and the conclusion of a trade agreement between the two countries.

Article No. IX provides for the entry of the treaty into force on the date of its signature and for exchange of ratifications within 10 days (not 3 as was reported last night) in the city of Moscow.

The protocol attached to the treaty provides for the cessation of hostilities at 12 noon March 13 Leningrad time and provides detailed schedules for movements of troops in stages in various regions from 10 o'clock March 15 to March 26, 1940. The evacuation of Petsamo by the Red Army is to be completed by April 10th. In addition Article No. VI places responsibility on the military commanders of both armies to prevent destruction of properties such as power stations, bridges, etc., in regions to be evacuated.

The treaty and protocol were signed by Molotov, Zhdanov and Vasilevski for the Soviet Union, by Ryti, Paasikivi, Walden and Woinonaa [*Voionmaa*] for Finland.

No further details in regard to the exact location of the new frontier are contained in the treaty or protocol but according to a rough map also [in] *Pravda* today the line appears to run from 25 to 30 kilometers to the north and parallel to the Viborg-Sortavala railway from the Gulf of Finland to Lake Ladoga.

The leading editorial in *Pravda* today on the signature of the peace treaty is relatively restrained in tone and seeks to emphasize, citing Molotov's radio speech<sup>8</sup> to that effect, that the only aim of the Soviet operations was a guarantee of security for the Soviet Union and in particular Leningrad which the editorial states is fully assured by the present treaty. The editorial contains the customary assertion that the negotiations last fall failed due to the machinations of "certain European states" who were desirous of extending the war to that corner of Europe and directing it against the Soviet Union. In this connection the editorial writes that the Anglo-French imperial-

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<sup>8</sup> See telegram No. 965, November 30, 1939, 1 a. m., from the Chargé in the Soviet Union, *Foreign Relations, The Soviet Union, 1933-1939*, p. 797.

ist circles had incited Finland "as they formerly had Poland and other states" to war with the Soviet Union by promises of help, which turned out to be illusory. In conclusion there is a statement that the Soviet people have achieved that which they wished and peace now reigns on the frontiers of the Soviet Union. The editorial made no mention of Kuusinen or the People's Government of Finland nor of the personalities of the present Finnish Government.

STEINHARDT

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760D.61/1313 : Telegram

*The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State*

GRANKULLA (HELSINKI), March 13, 1940—4 p. m

[Received March 13—10:20 a. m.]

143. Minister for Foreign Affairs has just completed radio announcement in Finnish and Swedish, announcing conclusion of peace at Moscow effective 11:00 this morning;<sup>9</sup> outlined general terms, details not yet available pending return Finnish delegation, but substantially establishing same frontier treaty of Nystad 1721;<sup>10</sup> also cession of Hango Peninsula, Finnish portion Fisherman's Peninsula, Petsamo. Minister gave reasons Government's decision made peace this time failure Scandinavian States lend effective military aid and their refusal permit passage Allied troops, hence Government deemed best accept Russian terms notwithstanding losses territory since result continued struggle [was] certain while army now undefeated. Minister said unity, strength, industry Finnish people which had been exemplary during hostilities would assure reconstruction since political integrity maintained though territory amputated, Kuusinen régime being cast aside. Past now to be forgotten, people looking to future which will determine whether Government's policy right or wrong.

SCHOENFELD

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[The text of a statement by President Roosevelt on the Soviet-Finnish situation, released to the press by the White House on March 13, 1940, is printed in Department of State *Bulletin*, March 16, 1940, page 295.]

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<sup>9</sup> A proclamation by the Finnish Government, published in the press on March 14, 1940, informed the people that hostilities ceased on the preceding day.

<sup>10</sup> Treaty of peace between Russia and Sweden signed at Nystadt on August 30, 1721; for text see Jean Dumont, *Corps universel diplomatique du droit des gens*; . . . (Amsterdam, 1726-1731), vol. VIII, part 2, p. 36.



860D.51/439 : Telegram

*The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State*

GRANKULLA (HELSINKI), March 15, 1940—1 p. m.  
 [Received March 15—12:55 p. m.]

150. Acting Director of the Bank of Finland<sup>11</sup> told me last night that in addition to financial needs arising out of resettlement of people evacuated from ceded areas and general reconstruction, Finnish Government must contemplate heavy increase in armament within period of a year. He inquired whether credit recently granted by Export-Import Bank could be used for acquisition of armament now that Finland is at peace. I said I doubted that these funds could be so used but suggested that inquiry be made in Washington.

When I suggested in conversation recently with German Minister that great development might be anticipated in Finnish military preparedness as result of present situation he expressed the view that day of small nations situated within orbit of great powers was past and that supposed justification for their social, political and economic independence was merely an illusory relic of the era of liberalism. He thought that since cooperation between Russia and Germany was henceforth to be permanent the entire Baltic area must remain within their sphere of influence implying that small states in this area could be a factor of equilibrium only in the event of renewed rivalry between Germany and Russia which he did not expect.

SCHOENFELD

758.60D11/8 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, March 20, 1940—noon.  
 [Received 12:48 p. m.]

315. A Tass denial published in the Soviet press this morning refers to reports in the foreign press alleging that Finland, Sweden and Norway are continuing negotiations for the conclusion of a "so-called defensive alliance" for the military protection of the frontiers of Finland and alleging that Soviet Union has no objection to such a defensive alliance. The denial states that "Tass is empowered to declare that these reports concerning the position of the Soviet Union are not in accordance with the facts since, as is evident from the notorious anti-Soviet speech of the President of the Norwegian Storting, Mr. Hambro, on March 14, any such alliance would be directed against the

<sup>11</sup> Jukka (Johan) W. Rangell.

Soviet Union and would be in direct contradiction to the treaty of peace concluded between the Soviet Union and Finland on March 12."

I am informed by the Swedish Minister that he went to see Molotov at the latter's request day before yesterday concerning the reports of a defensive pact between Norway, Sweden, and Finland, and that Molotov had inquired as to the truth of these reports, to which the Minister had replied that Norway might be threatened by England and Sweden by Germany and that was the reason for the consideration which was being given to the possibility of a defensive alliance between the northern countries. Molotov then stated that the Soviet Government considered that any such alliance would be directed against the Soviet Union, to which the Minister blandly replied that this was ridiculous, inasmuch as there was no threat from the Soviet Union, which had just terminated a war against Finland.

The Tass announcement published today makes the Soviet attitude quite clear concerning the formation of any such northern bloc to include Finland and demonstrates that the Soviet Government through the medium of article III of the Treaty of Peace intends to exert some influence on the conduct of Finnish foreign relations.<sup>12</sup>

STEINHARDT

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760D.6111/81 : Telegram

*The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State*

HELSINKI, March 25, 1940—4 p. m.  
[Received March 25—1:50 p. m.]

162. With evacuation tomorrow of final zone of areas ceded to Russia, except in undefined Salla sector and pending definitive delimitation of frontiers as well as evacuation by Russians of Petsamo due April 10, the first stage of new situation following conclusion of peace at Moscow March 12 will be complete. Outstanding impression of this period is spirit of calm resolution not essentially different from spirit in which Finns conducted hostilities. It may be expected that the ensuing long period of reconstruction [will be marked?] by exactly the same spirit.

Reserving appraisal of economic consequences of the peace for a special report<sup>13</sup> as directed in Department's No. 97, March 22,<sup>14</sup> it may

<sup>12</sup> The Ambassador in the Soviet Union sent to the Department of State, in his telegram No. 316, March 20, 1 p. m., an appraisal of the probable lines of the foreign policy of the Soviet Union following the end of the war with Finland; see vol. III, p. 188.

<sup>13</sup> Not printed.

<sup>14</sup> Not printed; this telegram requested information on the extent of reconstruction needed in Finland, and the economic importance of the ceded regions (860D.50/83).

be mentioned that authoritative monetary estimates of losses amount to more than 30 billions of finnmaks aside from cost of industrial and other reconstruction, resettlement and rehabilitation of evacuees and the standing difficulties of maintaining and restoring vital export trade during and after the war between the Allies and Germany.

It has been indicated that the Cabinet will be reorganized immediately after Easter holidays and that it will be a coalition government dedicated primarily to concentration of effort upon reconstruction of the country in accordance with the wish of all social and political groups regardless of former party differences.<sup>15</sup> It is now evident that Finnish people share [the] Ryti Cabinet's conviction that acceptance of Russian peace terms was wise because it was inevitable. It is also apparent from all utterances public and private that this acceptance of the inevitable by no means signifies supine resignation or abandonment of the hope that political fortune will eventually favor Finnish interests. Disposition loyally to abide by the peace treaty is clearly accompanied by conviction of its coercive nature and consequent impermanence.

In these circumstances principal developments of the measurable future in Finland seem to include: (1) maintenance and greatly increased expansion of the country's military resources notwithstanding newly created strategic obstacles; (2) measures designed with a view to physical and moral welfare of the Finnish people; (3) extreme exertion to restore and expand agricultural and industrial capacity of the country; (4) maintenance of maximum national unity; (5) vigilant foreign policy substantially along the lines thus far followed, soundness of which is not thought to be in doubt and apparent failure of which is considered mainly attributable to momentary combination of adverse and overwhelming factors.

SCHOENFELD

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758.60D11/12 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, March 26, 1940—7 p. m.  
[Received 7:08 p. m.]

330. The Swedish Minister told me this afternoon that he had seen Molotov yesterday and had discussed with him the proposed Norwegian-Swedish-Finnish defensive alliance. He said that Molotov had expressed opposition to such an alliance on the grounds that it

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<sup>15</sup> The Cabinet of Prime Minister Risto H. Ryti was reorganized as a national government on March 27.

could only be directed against the Soviet Union and had inveighed against Hambro's recent utterances. The Minister said that he had endeavored to persuade Molotov that the proposed alliance was not in conflict with article III of the Soviet-Finnish peace treaty and that it was exclusively intended to insure the security of the three countries concerned "as much against England as the Soviet Union." He said that Paasikivi had subsequently seen Molotov and that somewhat to his surprise Molotov in his talk with Paasikivi had raised no objection to the proposed alliance nor made any reference thereto.

The Minister stated that it is contemplated that diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and Finland shall be resumed in the immediate future and that the present Finnish Minister to Washington is under consideration for the post of Minister to Moscow but that his selection is by no means certain. He also expressed the opinion based on statements made to him by Paasikivi that Tanner cannot remain as Foreign Minister <sup>16</sup> and that Paasikivi may succeed him and added that he anticipated that the new Finnish government would be an all-party reconstruction government. He said that in the discussions between Paasikivi and the Soviet authorities no trade questions had as yet been taken up nor any matters affecting the political field, but only details concerning the new frontier populations, railroads, prisoners, reciprocal removal of mines, and similar problems.

I inquired of the Minister whether the Swedish Government had been requested to give or had voluntarily given to the Finnish Government an engagement of any kind to enter into a defensive alliance in return for the conclusion of peace. He replied that while there had been no such "engagement" he personally considered that Hansson and the present Swedish Government were under a "moral obligation", that this was generally understood in Swedish governmental circles, and that a failure to carry out this moral obligation might result in a change in the Swedish Government. He said that at the present time the Norwegian Government was considerably less in favor of the proposed alliance than the Swedish Government and that the Finnish Government had been pressing for the alliance.

Despite the statement of the Swedish Minister that the Finnish Minister is taking the lead in pressing for the conclusion of this alliance, I am inclined to doubt, in view of the present position of that country vis-à-vis the Soviet Union and in particular of article III of the Soviet-Finnish peace treaty, that Finland would be able to enter into any such alliance unless the Soviet Government, perceiving some advantage therefrom withdraws objection. Although up to the

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<sup>16</sup> Rolf J. Witting replaced Väinö A. Tanner as Foreign Minister in the Cabinet reorganization of March 27.

present the Soviet Government has both publicly and privately chosen to regard the proposed alliance as directed against the Soviet Union, Molotov's failure to take up the question with Paasikivi may indicate a possibility that this attitude will not be maintained.

STEINHARDT

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860D.00/878 : Telegram

*The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State*

HELSINKI, March 28, 1940—1 p. m.

[Received 3:15 p. m.]

165. Prime Minister Ryti told me today that principal task of his reorganized Cabinet would, of course, be reconstruction and rehabilitation requiring large expenditures for which not only foreign help but an internal capital levy would be necessary. There would necessarily be considerable reduction in the standard of living and the Government must try to prevent such reduction to a level where social unrest would threaten Bolshevism which though the Russians had failed in their effort to impose it on the Finnish people might in that event become a real danger.

The Prime Minister said there had been not far from 60,000 casualties during the hostilities including some 18,000 killed and approximately the same number seriously wounded. Caring for dependents of the dead and for the incapacitated would involve heavy expense. There was also problem of increasing domestic production of consumption goods in order to reduce volume of such imports besides the problem of the reorganization of export industries. At my request he promised to provide me with statement showing estimated cost of the program which he said had not yet been worked out.

Ryti asked me particularly to convey to you his appreciation of your *démarche* at Moscow just before his first conversation with the Soviet authorities which he said had been very valuable. He thought it had induced the Soviet Government to desist from their proposed mutual assistance pact which had at first been included in the Russian terms. Neither the British, the French, nor the Swedish diplomatic representatives at Moscow had the slightest influence on the Russians, nor had the Germans, though they claimed to have been helpful, exercised such influence as they might have. He said that only the action of our Ambassador had been effective in moderating Russian demands.

Answering my inquiry regarding proposed defensive alliance with Sweden and Norway, the Prime Minister said that he regretted the public announcement made on the subject by Tanner on March 13

which had caused needless difficulties, but he was optimistic about the result of the negotiations. Swedish military authorities strongly favored the plan and Ryti said he had recently received their preliminary military scheme. This called for organization of Finnish defense line along the new lake frontier which had been found by the general staff here to be less unfavorable than was generally thought. The Swedes would take care of the northern regions. Ryti expected no further encroachment by the Russians for at least 6 months as the gains they had achieved had been very costly, but much would depend on the course of the war between the powers. Molotov had told him at Moscow that the Soviet Government was very anxious to keep out of the war. Meanwhile demobilization of the Finnish Army would proceed gradually and by careful selection in the light of the needs of the national economy, and the youngest classes were being called up to relieve economically more valuable men and to keep the forces up to strength.

After seeing the Prime Minister I had a conversation with Tanner who is now Minister of Public Welfare. He said he expected to be obliged to make many calls upon us for help and I answered that I was confident there would be every disposition on our part to render all possible assistance.

SCHOENFELD

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758.60D11/13 : Telegram

*The Minister in Sweden (Sterling) to the Secretary of State*

STOCKHOLM, March 28, 1940—3 p. m.

[Received March 28—1 : 30 p. m.]

152. Moscow informed the Finnish, Swedish, and Norwegian Governments yesterday that in its interpretation of the Finnish-Soviet peace terms it would consider the proposed Nordic defensive alliance as an unneutral act and if consummated the Soviet Government must change its attitude towards the three countries.

This information came from Erkko who, after consultation with the Crown Prince and Günther today, does not believe that Sweden will force the issue.

STERLING

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[For remarks concerning Finland in Molotov's speech before the Sixth Session of the Supreme Council of the Soviet Union on March 29, 1940, see telegram No. 337, March 29, from the Chargé in the Soviet Union, volume III, page 191.]

861.00 Supreme Soviet/29 : Telegram

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

Moscow, April 1, 1940—1 p. m.  
 [Received April 1—9 : 50 a. m.]

342. At the joint session of both Houses yesterday the Supreme Soviet adopted a law introduced by Zhdanov to transform the Karelian Autonomous Republic into a constituent republic under the name of the Karelo-Finnish Soviet Socialist Republic, thereby raising the number of constituent republics to 12. The new republic will include the territory of the former Autonomous Karelian Republic and the territory ceded by Finland under the treaty of peace, with the exception of a small strip in the immediate vicinity of Leningrad. In explaining the change of name Zhdanov pointed out that certain of the regions obtained from Finland which will form part of the new republic are "purely Finnish".

THURSTON

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[Secretary of State Hull, in his memorandum of April 2, of a conversation with the Ambassador of the Soviet Union, Konstantin Alexandrovich Umansky, declared that the Soviet Union had "plunged into fighting with Finland to the surprise of all of us;" gave no definite answer when the moral embargo would end, except to say that "we do not know when his country may embark upon another war;" and stated that the United States Government possessed "the most satisfactory evidence of Russian bombing of civilian populations." For text of the memorandum of this conversation, dated April 2, see volume III, page 266.]

758.60D11/16 : Telegram

*The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State*

HELSINKI, April 2, 1940—11 a. m.  
 [Received 1 : 30 p. m.]

170. In my first conversation yesterday with new Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr. Witting told me that negotiations regarding defensive alliance with Sweden and Norway were not likely to lead to positive result for the present. It would first be necessary greatly to strengthen Norwegian military organization which was very weak as well as to bring Swedish military forces to higher level of efficiency including more extensive training which had been rather neglected, there being too many men in Sweden lacking in military training.

He informed me that delimitation of new frontier with Russia would take about 3 months. Finnish plenipotentiaries now at Moscow were meanwhile discussing numerous questions arising out of the

peace settlement. The Soviet Government had suggested that conversations regarding these matters be held at Viborg but Finnish Government preferred to take them up at Moscow. Exchange of regular diplomatic representatives would be effected in the near future.

The Minister expressed appreciation of the assistance received from the United States during hostilities and the hope that it would continue during the period of reconstruction.

SCHOENFELD

758.60D11/17 : Telegram

*The Minister in Sweden (Sterling) to the Secretary of State*

STOCKHOLM, April 4, 1940—noon.

[Received April 4—9 : 53 a. m.]

164. Erkko, who has just returned from Helsinki, told me today strictly confidentially that the Finnish Government will not press the Swedish and Norwegian Governments for an open defense alliance but that the matter will be thoroughly explored. As little as possible will be said about it openly but it is hoped that practically the same effect may be brought about through an unwritten, unpublicized gentlemen's agreement. An official of the Swedish Foreign Office implied yesterday that the Government is clearly opposed to an open alliance since the Soviet views were made known officially.

STERLING

760D.6111/92 : Telegram

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

Moscow, April 6, 1940—9 a. m.

[Received April 6—7 : 45 a. m.]

355. The Swedish Minister informed me last evening that negotiations between the Finnish and the Soviet representatives with respect to post-war adjustments are proceeding satisfactorily and in an amicable atmosphere and that Paasikivi probably will return to Helsinki next Tuesday.<sup>17</sup> Diplomatic relations between the two countries will be reestablished in the near future and it is understood that the Soviet Minister now in Riga will be appointed to Helsinki.<sup>18</sup>

The Minister is of the opinion that the evacuation of ceded territory and its occupation by the Soviets is being carried out without undue difficulties and that the joint Finnish-Soviet commission establishing the new boundary line is operating in conformity with the requirements of natural and economic factors.

<sup>17</sup> April 9.

<sup>18</sup> Ivan S. Zotov arrived in Helsinki on April 6 and presented his credentials as the Soviet Minister in Finland on May 23. Dr. Juho Kusti Paasikivi was appointed Finnish Minister in the Soviet Union on April 7.



Mr. Assarsson had no knowledge of any expansion of the Soviet demands upon Finland, rumors of which have been circulated here, especially in connection with an alleged effort to acquire the nickel deposits in the Petsamo zone.

THURSTON

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760D.61/1386 : Telegram

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

Moscow, April 8, 1940—1 p. m.

[Received April 8—8:20 a. m.]

359. Embassy's telegram 136, February 4, noon.<sup>19</sup> A circular note from the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs announces that in view of the conclusion of a treaty of peace between the Soviet Union and the Finnish Republic and the cessation of military operations between them "the blockade of the coast of Finland and the waters adjacent to it, announced in the Commissariat's notes of December 7, 1939, and February 3, 1940, has been discontinued."<sup>20</sup>

THURSTON

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860D.51/445 : Telegram

*The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State*

HELSINKI, April 10, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received April 10—1:08 p. m.]

186. Tanner, Minister of Supply, told me today that much larger credits than those now available to Finland in the United States would be required in 2 or 3 months for essential food supplies and industrial raw materials in order to carry this country through next winter. Alluding to recent soundings by the Finnish Minister at Washington regarding possible loan of \$100,000,000 he said that this amount in addition to money already loaned<sup>21</sup> would be the minimum required.

SCHOENFELD

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<sup>19</sup> Not printed.

<sup>20</sup> The Soviet Union had declared a blockade of the entire Bothnian coast of Finland and a part of the coast of the Gulf of Finland. The Finns considered this blockade as contrary to law, because the Soviet Union insisted that it was not at war with Finland, and because the Soviet Union was incapable of maintaining an effective blockade in accordance with the principle laid down in the Declaration of Paris of April 16, 1856. For text of the Declaration, see *British and Foreign State Papers*, vol. XLVI, p. 26, or Sir Edward Hertslet, *The Map of Europe by Treaty* (London, 1875), vol. II, p. 1282.

<sup>21</sup> Money already loaned through the Export-Import Bank of Washington amounted to \$30,000,000. Of this, \$10,000,000 was represented by the loan announced on December 10, 1939, and \$20,000,000 additional, following the approval on March 2, 1940, of the act increasing the lending authority of the Export-Import Bank (54 Stat. 38).

760D.6115/48 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, April 13, 1940—3 p. m.

[Received April 13—2:45 p. m.]

379. The Moscow newspapers publish the text of an act signed at Petsamo on April 9 by representatives of the Red Army and of the Finnish Army, acting in accordance with articles VI and VII of the Protocol appended to the peace treaty between the Soviet Union and Finland, signed March 12, effecting the transfer to Finnish authorities of Petsamo and the port of Liinahamari with all buildings and equipment appertaining to municipal economy and local industry.

STEINHARDT

740.0011 European War 1939/2278 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*[Extract] <sup>22</sup>

Moscow, April 16, 1940—7 p. m.

[Received 8:33 p. m.]

392.

(5) The Minister <sup>23</sup> said that in view of persistent rumors that the Soviet Union had taken advantage of the present situation to make new demands on Finland he had asked Paasikivi whether there was any truth to these reports and that Paasikivi had replied categorically in the negative stating that all matters connected with the demarcation of the new boundary line between Finland and the Soviet Union as well as all other matters awaiting settlement between the two countries were progressing entirely satisfactorily and that he had no reason to anticipate any new demands upon Finland by the Soviet Union. Paasikivi pointed out to him that the return of Petsamo to Finland, the removal of mines and the steps which are being taken daily towards restoring normal relations between the two countries were inconsistent with any present intention on the part of the Soviet Union to make new demands of Finland.

(6) The Minister said that the Swedish Government had requested an indemnity of Swedish kroner 49,000 of the Soviet Government for the aerial attack of Pajala during the Finnish war. After some

<sup>22</sup> Another portion of this telegram is printed on p. 550.

<sup>23</sup> Per Vilhelm Gustaf Assarsson, Swedish Minister in the Soviet Union.

bargaining the Soviet Government agreed to pay 40,000 kroner and has instructed the Soviet Minister in Stockholm to effect the payment of that amount.

STEINHARDT

760D.61/1397: Telegram

*The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State*

HELSINKI, April 17, 1940—noon.

[Received 12:43 p. m.]

200. In reply to inquiry, Minister for Foreign Affairs informed me this morning that fortification and garrison established in the Åland Islands during and previous to recent hostilities with Soviet Russia were being maintained by virtue of article VII of the Geneva Convention of 1921,<sup>24</sup> but without raising the issue with the signatories. In view of probability that the Russians would be given facilities for setting up a base on the Estonian Island of Osmussaar opposite Hango, the Minister did not anticipate that the Russians would raise objection to such maintenance unless it should turn out that they had designs against Sweden of which there were no signs at present. In response to intimation as to the possibility of increased German interest in the Åland group,<sup>25</sup> the Minister was noncommittal.

SCHOENFELD

760D.6115/50: Telegram

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

Moscow, April 30, 1940—noon.

[Received April 30—10:54 a. m.]

478. *Pravda* today announces the signature April 29 in Moscow by Molotov and Paasikivi of a protocol delineating the frontier between the Soviet Union and Finland<sup>26</sup> in accordance with article 2 of the peace treaty of March 12, 1940.

THURSTON

<sup>24</sup> Convention relating to the Nonfortification and Neutralization of the Åland Islands, signed at Geneva on October 20, 1921; for text, see League of Nations Treaty Series, vol. ix, p. 213.

<sup>25</sup> See telegram No. 577, June 1, noon, from the Minister in Sweden, p. 554.

<sup>26</sup> The Ambassador in the Soviet Union reported in telegram No. 1353, October 16, 5 p. m., that the demarcation of the land and sea frontiers over a distance of 705 kilometers had been completed by the placement of 1,036 land and 8 sea frontier posts (760D.6115/56). The Minister in Finland, however, advised that the Finnish Government did not expect that the actual boundary protocol would be signed until November 5 (760D.6115/57). See also telegram No. 460, November 6, 1 p. m., from the Minister in Finland, p. 353.

861.77/4418

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

No. 454

Moscow, May 6, 1940.

[Received May 29.]

SIR: I have the honor to refer to the Embassy's despatch No. 371, of March 16, 1940,<sup>27</sup> transmitting the text of the treaty of peace between the Soviet Union and Finland which was concluded on March 12, 1940, and to inform the Department that the Moscow press of May 3 published a brief Tass despatch from Kandalaksha which reported that the construction of the 160 kilometer railway between Kandalaksha and Kuolajarvi was completed on April 30, thus connecting Kuolajarvi with the Murmansk railway line.

The construction of this line is in accordance with Article 7 of the peace treaty referred to, by which the two countries agreed that each would construct, "if possible during 1940, on its own territory a railway uniting the city of Kandalaksha with the city of Kemijärvi".<sup>28</sup> The section mentioned in the Tass news item represents, of course, the Soviet portion of the line.<sup>29</sup> The rapidity with which this section is stated to have been completed leads to the inference that the construction may be only temporary in character, particularly when climatic conditions in the region, which is north of the Arctic Circle, are taken into account.

Respectfully yours,

WALTER THURSTON

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[An option was afforded Finland to postpone payments on its debts to the United States by Public Resolution No. 84, approved on June 15, 1940 (54 Stat. 398). Finland was informed of this action in a note of June 22, 1940, from Secretary of State Hull to the Finnish Minister, Hjalmar J. Procopé. The option was accepted by Finland for the payments due on December 15, 1940, in a note of November

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<sup>27</sup> Not printed.

<sup>28</sup> The Soviet explanation of the economic purpose of this railroad construction was that it would provide transit through Finland linking Murmansk and other northern Soviet towns by the shortest route with the Baltic ports and with Sweden, and would provide an outlet for Russian goods on the Atlantic. According to *Izvestiya*, March 24, 1940, a part of the Kola Peninsula, the most important Soviet export to Sweden, would go by this route.

<sup>29</sup> The Minister in Finland stated in his telegram No. 215, May 3, 4 p. m., that the Minister for Foreign Affairs declared that the Finnish section of the line from the Soviet terminus to Kemijärvi "would be proceeded with as provided in the peace treaty with the Soviet Union, which had undertaken to provide the steel rail and that the work on the Finnish portion would cost Finland about 100,000,000 marks." (740.0011 European War 1939/2628)

20, 1940, from the Finnish Minister to the Secretary of State. The texts of these documents are printed in Department of State *Bulletin*, December 7, 1940, pages 501-503.]

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740.0011 European War 1939/3761 : Telegram

*The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State*

HELSINKI, June 13, 1940—8 a. m.

[Received 3:06 p. m.]

261. The Prime Minister told me this afternoon that notwithstanding Molotov's emphatic statement to him of intention of Soviet Union to keep out of the present war, important military leaders in Russia have lately expressed the conviction that the Soviet Union will be at war with Germany within a year. He believed present conversations between Lithuania and the Soviet Government<sup>30</sup> were definitely related to this conviction. In reply to my inquiry as to how eventual conflict between Russia and Germany might affect Finland, the Prime Minister told me he had instructed Finnish diplomatic representatives positively not to enter upon any discussion on that topic under any circumstances. He mentioned in this relation existence of a supposedly official German map, of which I have no doubt Department is informed, greatly extending to the eastward the territory of Finland, but gave me to understand that Finnish Government is refraining scrupulously from intimating any political ambitions in any quarter.

SCHOENFELD

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660D.6131/39 : Telegram

*The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State*

HELSINKI, June 17, 1940—2 p. m.

[Received June 17—12:30 p. m.]

271. My telegram No. 260, June 12.<sup>31</sup> Minister of Foreign Affairs informed me today that there is no truth in rumor recently circulated here that trade agreement negotiations with the Russians had broken down.<sup>32</sup> On the contrary he said they were nearly completed and as previously reported would be substantially on a clearing basis. Among other things Finnish shipyards would build large number of small ships for river and harbor use for the Russians using steel to

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<sup>30</sup> For correspondence on the occupation of the Baltic States and their incorporation into the Soviet Union, see pp. 357 ff.

<sup>31</sup> Not printed.

<sup>32</sup> A Finnish trade delegation had arrived in Moscow on May 25, 1940.

be obtained if possible from Czechoslovakia and from the United States. The negotiations with the Germans were also making good progress and the German negotiators were showing very considerate spirit.

SCHOENFELD

760D.61/1437: Telegram

*The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State*

HELSINKI, June 17, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received 4:44 p. m.]

273. My telegram No. 261, June 13, and despatch No. 1753, May 9.<sup>33</sup> Minister for Foreign Affairs informed me this morning that Finnish Government would be obliged to pay some compensation to the Soviet Government for industrial equipment removed from plants in ceded areas contrary to treaty of peace in cases where such equipment could not conveniently be restored. He did not specify amount of compensation which will probably not be known until the Joint Commission dealing with these matters completes its work. He made it plain that Finland is not in a position to refuse even unreasonable demands in this respect but gave me the impression that the Russians were not showing unreasonable attitude.

He is apparently persuaded that for the present Soviet Government is not placing Finland in the same category with south Baltic States where he said frankly Soviet policy is based upon preparation for defense against Germany.

SCHOENFELD

660D.6131/42: Telegram

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

Moscow, June 29, 1940—10 a. m.

[Received 3 p. m.]

772. Embassy's 585, May 26, 11 a. m.<sup>34</sup> *Pravda* publishes a Tass communiqué this morning announcing the signature yesterday of a trade agreement and a payments agreement between the Soviet Union and Finland.<sup>35</sup> The communiqué states that the trade agreement provides for the reciprocal application of the most-favored-nation principle and that a special appendix regulates the legal status of the Soviet trade mission in Finland; that the protocol to the trade agree-

<sup>33</sup> Despatch not printed.

<sup>34</sup> Not printed.

<sup>35</sup> Ratifications were exchanged at Helsinki on August 12.

ment concerning trade turnover fixes the total value of this during the first year of its validity at 7,500,000 United States dollars for each party, or an aggregated turnover between the two countries of \$15,000,000; that Finland will supply to the Soviet Union tugboats, lighters, electrical equipment, copper wire, leather, technical paper, butter, meat and other goods, and that the Soviet Union will supply Finland with wheat, rye, petroleum products, manganese ore, cotton, tobacco and other goods. The communiqué concludes that the agreements were signed by Mikoyan<sup>36</sup> for the Soviet Union and by Kotilainen,<sup>37</sup> Finnish Minister for Trade, and Paasikivi for Finland.

Repeated to Helsinki.

THURSTON

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860D.6359 International Nickel Co./7: Telegram

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

Moscow, July 6, 1940—3 p. m.

[Received 5:32 p. m.]

822. Embassy's telegram 779, June 29; Embassy's 790, July 2, 3 p. m.<sup>38</sup> I have been informed by the Swedish Minister that on June 23 the Finnish Minister was invited to call at the Kremlin where he was notified by Molotov that the Soviet Government desired to acquire the Petsamo nickel mines. When the Finnish Minister pointed out that these mines are Canadian-owned Molotov stated that of course he was aware of that fact but that the Finnish Government undoubtedly would find it possible to arrange matters.

On June 28 Molotov again summoned the Finnish Minister and after inquiring why no answer has been made to his representations regarding the nickel mines, informed him that the Soviet Government was preoccupied over the status of the Åland Islands. He stated, however, that it did not contemplate occupying them but that it must require that all fortifications erected thereon by the Finnish Government be razed at once and that a "Soviet Consulate" be established at Mariehamn.

It is Mr. Assarsson's impression that while the Finnish Government has accepted the new Soviet demands with respect to the Åland Islands the status of the nickel mines is as yet undetermined.

Repeated to Helsinki.

THURSTON

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<sup>36</sup> Anastas Ivanovich Mikoyan, People's Commissar for Foreign Trade of the Soviet Union.

<sup>37</sup> Väinö Aleksanteri Kotilainen, Finnish Minister for Commerce and Industry.

<sup>38</sup> Neither printed.

760D.61/1450 : Telegram

*The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State*

HELSINKI, July 8, 1940—1 p. m.

[Received 3 : 30 p. m.]

305. Minister for Foreign Affairs informed me today that recent representations of the Soviet Government regarding the Åland Islands had presented the alternatives of complete neutralization and return to the status of the Geneva Convention of 1921 or a joint militarization by Finland and the Russian Soviet Government. Since the second alternative would have caused concern both in Sweden and in Germany, the Finnish Government had preferred the first. Accordingly Finnish garrison was being withdrawn and guns and other equipment removed while the few gun emplacements and unarmored casemates were being destroyed. The Minister said he was recommending to a Cabinet meeting today that the Government give its consent to the assignment of a Soviet Consul at Mariehamn as also requested by the Russians.

Repeated to Moscow and Stockholm.

SCHOENFELD

740.0011 European War 1939/4495 : Telegram

*The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State*

HELSINKI, July 8, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received July 8—1 : 55 p. m.]

308. Commenting on rapid absorption of the Baltic States by the Soviet Union now proceeding, the Minister for Foreign Affairs told me this morning that the relation of Finland to the Soviet Union had always been very different from that of those States and gave me to understand that the Finnish Government does not anticipate analogous developments here.

SCHOENFELD

760D.61/1477 : Telegram

*The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State*

HELSINKI, July 29, 1940—3 p. m.

[Received 3 : 35 p. m.]

327. Minister for Foreign Affairs informed me today that negotiations with the Russians for settlement of outstanding questions have been progressing successfully. Among questions settled the following are the principal ones :



1. The agreement regarding Åland Islands will place Soviet Union in position analogous to that of signatories of Geneva Convention of 1921, and the Soviet Consul to be appointed to reside in provincial capital<sup>39</sup> will have the right similar to that of local representative of any such signatory to assure himself by occasional personal inspection that provisions of that Convention are complied with in respect of demilitarization.

2. Agreement has been reached regarding railroad traffic over Finnish lines from junction points and to leased area at Hango. One Russian train consisting of 47 freight cars and 3 locomotives with equipment for leased area recently arrived here and was divided by the Finnish authorities into two trains owing to shortness of curves on local roads, this having given rise to unwarranted sensational reports.

3. There is agreement also regarding state and municipal and private property in Hango and elsewhere affected by the peace treaty of last March. Finland substantially accepted Russian view regarding restoration and compensation and will have to pay estimated amount of 200 million Finnish marks less undetermined credits to be settled in clearing.

The Minister expressed annoyance at reports by United Press correspondent at Stockholm regarding alleged ultimatum<sup>40</sup> to Finland last week and told me Finnish Minister at Washington would be instructed to bring this informally to the attention [of] the officials of press organization mentioned.

With reference to possible support by the Soviet authorities of a small dissident group in the Social Democratic Party here the Minister pointed out that such party splits were of long standing and their significance had been explained to the Kremlin. He seemed to attribute no great importance to this matter which is the subject of recent despatches to the Department.

Answering my query as to German and Swedish view of the agreement between Finland and the Soviet Union regarding the Åland Islands, the Minister told me that those two Governments had been apprised of it and made no comment or objection.

SCHOENFELD

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860D.6359 International Nickel Co./10 : Telegram

*The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State*

HELSINKI, July 29, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received July 29—3 : 03 p. m.]

328. The Minister of Foreign Affairs told me today that directors of the Petsamo Nickel Company had now agreed to deliver nickel ore

<sup>39</sup> Mariehamn.

<sup>40</sup> This report concerned the reputed presentation to Finland of Soviet demands in the nature of an ultimatum, which the Finnish News Bureau characterized as being without foundation.

from their mines to the Germans and the Russians until the end of the current year in the proportion of 60 and 40 percent respectively. While this arrangement was not palatable to the British Government it had acquiesced.

SCHOENFELD

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860D.00B/212 : Telegram

*The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State*

HELSINKI, July 31, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received 5 p. m.]

336. My telegram No. 329, yesterday<sup>41</sup> and recent despatches regarding Communist activity in Finland. The Prime Minister told me today that regardless of the value to be placed upon them assurances received by him from Molotov last March were to the effect that Soviet Government would not interfere in Finnish domestic politics. Only today a member of the Soviet Legation assured the Minister of Finance<sup>42</sup> that the Communist agitators would receive no support from Moscow. Ryti said there were approximately 8,000 known Communists in this country and the Government would deal firmly with any unlawful activity on their part. Further attempted disturbances might be expected but they would be abortive.

Though he had been somewhat uneasy in recent weeks regarding Russian attitude in pending questions this attitude had improved and was now satisfactory. He had reason to believe though there was no official confirmation of it that when the Soviet Government apprised the German Government of its intentions in the Baltic States Hitler personally insisted on a distinction being drawn between the status of those countries and Finland.

SCHOENFELD

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860D.51/454 : Telegram

*The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State*

HELSINKI, July 31, 1940—7 p. m.

[Received July 31—5:05 p. m.]

339. The Prime Minister informed me today that he was planning to instruct the Finnish Government [*Minister*] at Washington to take up again the possibility of a United States Government loan to Finland. Ryti said he understood that nothing could be done about this until after November next but it seemed possible that preliminary work might be accomplished in order that the matter could be

<sup>41</sup> Not printed.

<sup>42</sup> Mauno Pekkala.

handled expeditiously thereafter. The amount mentioned by him remains \$100,000,000 which has been under discussion since last year.

Ryti said that barring unforeseen contingencies the Finnish budget would be balanced by the latter part of next year and that already there had been a great improvement there being weeks when income and expenses were almost in balance. There could be no publication of figures for the present because they were still treated secretive [according?] to law but the situation was getting steadily better. Meanwhile supplies of all kinds both for subsistence and essential manufactures were coming along in satisfactory style. Unemployment was well under control, incomes rising and prices likewise under control in some cases even falling. Exports to European markets were reviving but they would represent little free exchange which remained dependent on access to overseas markets through the restricted facilities of Petsamo so long as the war in its present phase continued. He pointed out that the war damage compensation bill now awaiting third reading in Parliament would work out substantially in practice as originally rendered by the Government. The Prime Minister was cautiously confident about the financial situation of Finland.

SCHOENFELD

860D.77/86 : Telegram

*The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State*

HELSINKI, August 1, 1940—10 a. m.

[Received 2:05 p. m.]

340. The Prime Minister informed me yesterday that in pending railroad traffic agreement with the Soviet Union, Finnish Government would stipulate that each Russian train using Finnish lines to Hango would be in charge of Finnish engineer and conductor and that 24 hours' notice must be given of arrival of trains of which there should be no more than one in any 24 hours. It would also be stipulated that any troops so transported up to a specified total number should be unarmed.

Ryti added that the plan for special facilities for Russian transit had originally contemplated only commercial traffic corresponding to those granted Finland in certain Russian ports. The military scheme for traffic to Hango had emanated from the Soviets and though disagreeable to the Finnish Government the latter did not feel in view of the facilities lately granted by Sweden to the Germans over Swedish railroads<sup>43</sup> that it could refuse. The experimental train referred to

<sup>43</sup> The Swedish Riksdag accepted a German demand in a secret session on June 21, 1940, which became publicly known about July 5, allowing Germany to use Swedish railroads for the transportation of supplies and unarmed soldiers into Norway.

in my telegram number 327, July 29, was loaded chiefly with rails and material for construction of fortifications.

SCHOENFELD

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[For remarks regarding Finnish-Soviet relations by the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union, addressed to the Seventh Session of the Supreme Council of the Soviet Union on August 1, 1940, see paragraph 7 of telegram No. 945, August 1, midnight, from the Chargé in the Soviet Union, volume III, page 208.]

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860D.00B/214: Telegram

*The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State*

HELSINKI, August 3, 1940—1 p. m.

[Received 4:10 p. m.]

346. Reference telegram No. 951, August 2, from Embassy Moscow.<sup>44</sup> Minister for Foreign Affairs informed me this morning that he had discussed with Soviet Minister here effort of the dissident group of Social Democrats known as Society of Friends of the Soviet Union<sup>45</sup> to create difficulties and had pointed out that they had been threatening their opponents with dire retribution here and alleged supporters in the Soviet Union, including the threat of renewed bombing of Finnish towns and individual execution by the firing squad. He had suggested that no such activity would be tolerated in the Soviet Union and made it plain that it would not be permitted here.<sup>46</sup> The Minister for Foreign Affairs told me that of course any pretext would serve the Soviet authorities if they were disposed to force an issue, but I gained definite impression that Finnish Government is not disposed to compromise on the question of law and order within the country.

SCHOENFELD

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<sup>44</sup> Not printed.

<sup>45</sup> This society, sometimes referred to as the Society for Peace and Friendship between Finland and the Soviet Union, apparently was founded in May 1940 by Mauri Ryömä, a student, and Lauri Vilenius, a laborer. Both leaders were sentenced to jail on September 7, and the society itself was ordered dissolved by decree of the Municipal Court of Helsinki on December 23, 1940.

<sup>46</sup> On the next day, in his telegram No. 349, the Minister in Finland said that Prime Minister Ryti told him that it was known that considerable funds had been sent from the Soviet Union to the agitators responsible for recent disturbances in Finland. While these disorders had been insignificant, they were expected to cease entirely "in view of new police regulations prohibiting gatherings of more than 30 persons without permit and granting additional police powers in relation to public meetings." (860D.00B/215)

860D.00B/217 : Telegram

*The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State*

HELSINKI, August 7, 1940—1 p. m.

[Received 1:11 p. m.]

355. Following telegram has been sent [to] Embassy Moscow.

August 7, 1 p. m. Your 971<sup>47</sup> to the Department and previous telegrams. No evidence has come to my attention of action by the Finnish authorities justifying charges of persecution made in the Soviet press. I should appreciate your telegraphing me on the basis of your observation of developments leading up to the absorption of the Baltic States whether recent reports and comment in Soviet newspapers regarding Finnish affairs may be considered similar enough to those preceding annexation of those countries to warrant the belief that they reflect similar intentions with regard to Finland.

Repeated to Department as my No. 355.

SCHOENFELD

860D.00B/219 : Telegram

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

Moscow, August 8, 1940—1 p. m.

[Received 2:38 p. m.]

989. I have answered Schoenfeld's 355, August 7, 1 p. m., in the following terms:

"August 8, 1 p. m. Strictly confidential for the Minister. Your August 7, 1 p. m. In all instances of Soviet aggression since my arrival here last year, the ultimate decisive moves have been preceded by press campaigns of varying degrees of intensity and duration. On the basis of this observation alone, the present campaign against Finland should be regarded as ominous. In addition, however, military observers here (including the Finnish Military Attaché) have reported new troop movements towards Finland during the last few days, and it is estimated that some 25 Soviet divisions are now adjacent to that country.

Whether such action as Soviet Government may contemplate against Finland will take the form of limited demands for additional rights and facilities or political reorganization, or complete absorption as in the case of the Baltic States, can of course only be surmised. Regards.["]

THURSTON

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<sup>47</sup> In this telegram of August 6, 11 a. m., the Chargé in the Soviet Union had reported Soviet press comments on alleged persecution in Finland of the Society for Peace and Friendship between Finland and the Soviet Union and on hardships imposed on Finnish workers. (860D.00B/216)

760D.61/1487: Telegram

*The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State*

HELSINKI, August 13, 1940—noon.

[Received 3 p. m.]

368. Minister for Foreign Affairs informed me this morning that the Finnish Government has no advice either from Minister Paasikivi, who now is here on short leave, or from other sources that would tend to confirm numerous alarming rumors regarding Soviet intentions vis-à-vis Finland. He deprecated these rumors and said that he had endeavored to trace their origin with the result that he was inclined to think they were being put out chiefly from London.

Ratifications of trade agreement with the Soviet Government were exchanged here yesterday. The Finnish Commission dealing with restoration of and compensation for property in ceded areas reported yesterday that detailed agreement was approaching completion in perfectly tinted atmosphere. Railroad agreement was substantially complete, remaining differences arising only from purpose of Finnish Government clearly to specify privileges to be granted to the Russians for transit. Joint Boundary Delimitation Commission was carrying out its operations normally and was expected by next October to complete its work preliminary to detailed operations on the ground.<sup>48</sup>

Regarding activities of so-called special envoy of Friends of the Soviet Union here the principal agitators with one exception, the Minister for Foreign Affairs said, were individuals with a record for common crimes which was being made known to those concerned, presumably meaning the Soviet Government.

The Minister mentioned rumors of alleged mobilization here and said they were entirely without foundation.

SCHOENFELD

860D.00/885: Telegram

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

Moscow, August 17, 1940—11 a. m.

[Received August 17—9:50 a. m.]

1033. The Soviet press announced today without comment in a Tass despatch from Helsinki the reorganization of the Finnish Government noting particularly the elimination of Tanner as Minister of

<sup>48</sup> In a radio address on August 20, 1940, Prime Minister Ryti emphasized the Finnish desire for good relations with the Soviet Union, and referred to the number of problems which had been settled after the end of the war.

Supply. Reference in this connection is made to the Embassy's 909, July 25, 6 p. m.<sup>49</sup> which indicated that one of the reasons for the return of the Finnish Minister here to Helsinki was to attempt to bring about a reorganization of the Finnish Government and the exclusion of certain political figures, in particular Tanner, who were regarded by the Soviet Government as anti-Soviet. The Moscow press recently has refrained from the publication of any news items or comment hostile to the present Finnish Government or to alleged persecutions of the Finnish working class, a lull, however, which may only be temporary.

Repeated to Helsinki.

THURSTON

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740.0011 European War 1939/5177 : Telegram

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

Moscow, August 19, 1940—4 p. m.  
[Received August 19—3:25 p. m.]

1039. The Military Attaché<sup>50</sup> informs me that from reliable sources he has learned that there are no further movements of troops to the territories adjacent to Finland and that apparently the concentration of 30 divisions in that area reported in the Embassy's 1009, August 13, 10 a. m.<sup>49</sup> (20 divisions on the Finnish frontier and 10 in Estonia) have been completed. He also states that it is reported that there have been certain movements in the last few days into Soviet-occupied Poland and Lithuania. The extent of these movements however is not known.

It is believed that the movement of troops to the Soviet borders is designed to reinforce the border troops in order to cover any operation which the Soviet Government might undertake against Finland, the date of which, it is believed will depend in the first instance on the development of the German offensive against England.

Repeat to the War Department.

THURSTON

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760D.61/1497 : Telegram

*The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State*

HELSINKI, August 27, 1940—2 p. m.  
[Received 2:13 p. m.]

385. My telegram No. 305, July 8. Minister for Foreign Affairs informed me this morning that formulation of agreement with the

<sup>49</sup> Not printed.

<sup>50</sup> Maj. Ivan D. Yeaton.

Soviet Union regarding Åland Islands was not yet completed and that Finnish Government was hopeful of obtaining consent of the Russians to retention of the gun emplacements built there before and during the recent hostilities on the grounds that their demolition with explosives would cause renewed alarm in the Islands and undesirable speculation elsewhere. In the meantime withdrawal of all troops and military equipment from the Islands had been completed.

SCHOENFELD

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760D.61/1501

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State*

[WASHINGTON,] August 30, 1940.

The Minister of Finland came in without any particular business. In the course of some general remarks back and forth he indicated that his country was more or less fearful of further Russian aggression. I replied that I did not have sufficient substantial information up to date on which to predicate a positive statement on the subject; that, of course, I had heard some utterances in both Russia and Finland on the subject. He expressed a desire that this Government might quietly say a word on appropriate occasions to Russia that would be helpful. I replied generally that, of course, this Government was always interested and disposed to say so on appropriate occasions.

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760D.61/1503 : Telegram

*The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State*

HELSINKI, September 5, 1940—10 a. m.

[Received 2:45 p. m.]

394. My telegram No. 393, September 4, 7 p. m.<sup>51</sup> The Prime Minister also told me yesterday that, just as he had had reason to think during the hostilities last winter with the Soviet Union that definite agreement existed between the Russians and the Germans regarding concessions to be obtained by the former from Finland, so he now believed that the terms of the treaty ending the war in March represented complete fulfillment of the German engagement in the premises. This engagement having been fulfilled the German Government was now free to determine its policy in the north without this commitment to the Russians.

Ryti added that notwithstanding the present occupation of Norway by the Germans, increasing consideration was being given to revival

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<sup>51</sup> Not printed.



of the idea of a close alignment of Sweden, Finland and Norway which might even take the form of a federal union among them but excluding Denmark which was thought to be permanently under German control. Purpose of such union would be to preserve independence of the northern tier of countries. It was not practicable in present circumstances to permit these matters to become subject of official discussion between governments but they were being considered seriously in Swedish political and military circles.

Though the Prime Minister did not say so, it was obvious that similar consideration was being given them here. When I reminded the Prime Minister of former Foreign Minister Tanner's announcement last March of the plan for northern defensive alliance and the fate which befell it through Russian opposition Ryti repeated his regret that such public statement had been made. He attributed Tanner's action in his tenure of office at Moscow [*sic*] to the desire of an experienced politician to soften in the public mind the blow represented by the simultaneous announcement of the terms of peace.

Projecting the foregoing into a future not necessarily remote but involving possible rivalry between the Germans and the Russians either with reference to mineral deposits in this area or for other reasons, I surmise that if Finland is again attacked and resists, Finnish statesmen will decide on resistance partly because active support from Sweden is not thought to be excluded. Though seemingly without allies and without hope, like the Austrians after their defeat at Wagram,<sup>53</sup> Finland might indeed find that both allies and hope would be forthcoming.

SCHOENFELD

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760D.62/68 : Telegram

*The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State*

HELSINKI, September 11, 1940—noon.

[Received September 12—8:40 a. m.]

404. I believe tentatively but increasingly that there has been a notable change for the better from the Finnish point of view in the official attitude of Germany with regard to this country which in its turn has been making discreet but persistent efforts in recent months to cultivate German good will. Though the conclusion at the end of June of the German-Finnish trade and clearing agreement may signify no more than the fact that the Germans are seeking to strengthen commercial relations with any country accessible to them there seem to be certain directions in which they have shown especially friendly interest in Finland. Among evidences of improvement in the Ger-

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<sup>53</sup> The defeat of the Austrians by Napoleon I on July 5-6, 1809.

man attitude is participation under personal auspices of the Reich's sports leader of a German team in athletic meet held here last week—and with Swedish and Finnish teams. Minister of Foreign Affairs told me yesterday that this participation was due to personal decision of Hitler. A new German commercial information office has just been opened in Helsinki. The German high command has issued an invitation to a Finnish military delegation which has been accepted to visit the western battlefields. Finnish industrial and business leaders who have visited Germany unanimously report very accommodating spirit in which they have been received both in official circles and at recent commercial fairs, and reciprocal German delegations of businessmen particularly in the timber and paper trades and particularly in mineral and metallurgical fields are increasing in number.

I learn from the Minister for Foreign Affairs that the impression above described is shared by the Finnish Government. I am informed by Finns recently in Germany that numerous small attentions shown them there reflect marked German sympathy which is sometimes regarded as the measure of increasing disapproval in Germany of Russian policy. Such expressions of sympathy by Germans, I am informed, are usually accompanied by the caution that as official policy in Germany is entirely dependent on the Führer personally it cannot be predicted.

For their part governmental and business leaders in this country appear to have suppressed the anti-German feeling which was so noticeable following the Russian-German agreement of last August and the Russian attack on Finland. They seem to be returning to a policy of cooperation with the Germans while at the same time hoping eventually to resume former close relations with the British from whom at the present they are cut off. There seems to be no disposition to take an unrealistic view of the necessity for cultivating political, economic and so-called cultural relations with the Soviet Union but in present circumstances I should say there is increasing hope which may not be unfounded that Germany may find it expedient not again to sacrifice Finnish interests to the Russians.

SCHOENFELD

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860D.7761/9 : Telegram

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

Moscow, September 15, 1940.

[Received September 15—noon.]

1173. The press this morning reports the signature in Moscow on September 6th of a Soviet-Finnish agreement concerning railway

communications.<sup>54</sup> According to the brief announcement appearing in the press, the agreement provides for direct passenger and freight traffic between the Soviet Union and Finland, the right of transit through Finland for Soviet-Swedish trade, and for railway communication with the areas leased by the Soviet Union on the Hango Peninsula. Repeated to Helsinki.

THURSTON

760D.61/1513 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt)  
to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, September 18, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received September 19—12:50 a. m.]

1186. (1) The Swedish Minister informed me yesterday that he has been advised by the Finnish Minister that the recent Finnish-Soviet railway agreement does, as reported in the Embassy's 1173, September 15, provide that Soviet troops passing through Finland to Hango shall not be accompanied by their arms. This agreement is a modification of the original Soviet demands.

(2) With respect to the Soviet demands regarding the leasing of the Petsamo nickel mines reported in the Embassy's 822, July 6, Paasikivi informed Assarsson that the Soviets at one time proposed that 60 percent of the output of the nickel mines should be allocated to Germany; that an amount adequate to meet normal Finnish requirements should go to Finland; and that the balance should be taken by the Soviet Union. During the last few days however the Soviet Government has intimated to the Finnish Government that it is desired that no nickel shall go to Germany and that after satisfying legitimate Finnish demands all the nickel should be taken by the Soviet Union.

(3) As to the Åland Islands last discussed in the Embassy's telegram 909, July 25,<sup>55</sup> the Soviet Government has now proposed as an alternative to the required demolition of all fortifications that the Islands be jointly fortified by the Soviet Union and Finland. The Finnish Minister informed the Swedish Minister that it was his opinion that the Finnish Government would reject the alternative proposal. During the discussion of this question it is understood that Molotov replied to a suggestion by Paasikivi that the other powers interested in the Islands as a result of the convention of 1921 should

<sup>54</sup> Convention regarding Joint Goods Traffic by Rail between Finland and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, signed at Moscow on September 6, 1940; for official texts, see Finland, Treaty Series, 1940, No. 19, pp. 110-115.

<sup>55</sup> Not printed; but see telegram No. 327, July 29, 3 p. m., from the Minister in Finland, p. 333.

be consulted regarding their final status with a statement which disposed of the countries concerned with the exception of Sweden. Molotov said that Germany was "too far away to bother consulting"; that the Baltic States is essentially now a part of the Soviet Union and that England and France had no interest in the Baltic and in any event had no means of access thereto.

In respect to Sweden, Molotov told the Finnish Minister that the Soviet Government had no objection to the [*their?*] consultation with the Swedish Government or if the Finnish Government so desired, to Sweden being a party to the convention. In this connection the Swedish Minister informed me that he had already received advices to the effect that his Government did not wish to be a party to the new convention concerning the Åland Islands ostensibly on the grounds that since Sweden had always been the strongest advocate of demilitarization of the Islands it would be inconsistent with its previous position to take any part in the negotiations between Finland and the Soviet Union looking toward the demilitarization [*remilitarization?*] of the Islands. The Minister added that the real reason for Swedish reluctance to becoming involved in a question of the Åland Islands was a desire to avoid Swedish participation in Finnish-Soviet negotiations or relations. In conclusion the Minister confirmed the opinion previously expressed (see Embassy's 1152, September 11, 1 p. m.<sup>56</sup>) that there had recently been a distinct lessening of tension in Soviet-Finnish relations and that Paasikivi had told him a few days ago that for the first time in recent weeks he was beginning to discount the possibility of a Soviet move against Finland. Assarsson added that this lessening of tension had found its reflection in a more conciliatory and friendly attitude on the part of the Soviet Government towards Sweden and towards himself personally. The Minister added that Paasikivi attributed this lessening of tension in large measure to the elimination of Tanner from the Finnish Government since his presence there had been strongly resented by the Soviet Government which had regarded his retention as an anti-Soviet gesture on the part of Finland.

STEINHARDT

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860D.51/461

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Secretary of State  
(Berle)*

[WASHINGTON,] September 23, 1940.

The Finnish Minister came in to see me, at his request. He was unhappy at the fact that the Reconstruction Finance Corporation had declined to entertain their application for a loan. He advised that the

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<sup>56</sup> Not printed.

Swedes were prepared to waive the undrawn balance of their Export-Import Bank loan in favor of the Finns, if that would do any good.<sup>57</sup>

I told the Minister that the situation in the north Baltic was still highly obscure; we had to take account of the fact that Finland lay at the moment between two large forces, Germans in Norway, Russians on the opposite border; that we knew that the Germans were pressing for transit rights for their troops through Finland, and by consequence the whole situation hardly provided that foundation for a loan which was within our normal practice.<sup>58</sup> We have considered Export-Import Bank loans as primarily in the nature of commercial loans.

But, I said, this did not preclude the possibility of working out relief in some measure. I therefore repeated the suggestion I had previously made<sup>59</sup> to Mr. Mikkola<sup>60</sup> that they ask for a relief allocation.<sup>61</sup> I pointed out that they had an undrawn balance of nine million dollars arising out of a previous Export-Import Bank loan and that this would probably enable them to go forward with some of the immediate purchases they felt they needed—especially fats.

The Finnish Minister said they needed a good many agricultural materials, notably cotton—the clothing situation is extremely bad. He asked whether it would be in order for him to tackle the head of the Surplus Commodities Corporation and see what there was available. I told him I thought this could do no possible harm.

A. A. BERLE, JR.

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760D.61/1516 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, September 25, 1940—7 p. m.  
[Received September 26—12:57 a. m.]

1232. The Moscow press today contains no reference to Finland. The sudden recrudescence yesterday of anti-Finnish items in the press<sup>62</sup> after a month's silence on the subject may have been due to

<sup>57</sup> The unexpended balance of the Export-Import Bank credit to Sweden was about \$10,000,000.

<sup>58</sup> Mr. Berle had noted in a memorandum of September 13, 1940, that he already knew that "Mr. Jesse Jones' reaction to earlier intimations from the Finns has been that it would be highly unwise to make any such loan." (860D.51/463)

<sup>59</sup> This suggestion had originally been made on September 17.

<sup>60</sup> Erkki Mikkola, Commercial Counselor of the Finnish Legation.

<sup>61</sup> That is, an allocation from the President's relief fund.

<sup>62</sup> The Ambassador in the Soviet Union had noted in his telegram No. 1217, September 24, 2 p. m., that the Moscow press had published seven news items critical of conditions in Finland. There was also a short announcement of the opening of direct rail and passenger traffic on September 23, between Finland and the Soviet Union, in accordance with the agreement of September 6, 1940. (760D.61/1515)

Soviet knowledge of the Finnish agreement with Germany<sup>63</sup> announced on the British radio today to permit German troops to pass through Finland en route to Norway. Although the paper in question has not yet been received by the Embassy, I am informed by an American correspondent that a recent edition of a paper in Petrozavodsk, Soviet Karelia, contained a violent attack upon Finland, asserting that the Society for Friendship and Peace with the Soviet Union is only prevented from becoming an overwhelming mass movement in Finland by the terroristic and repressive actions of the Finnish Government.

Repeated to Helsinki.

STEINHARDT

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740.0011 European War 1939/5751 : Telegram

*The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State*

HELSINKI, September 26, 1940—1 p. m.

[Received September 27—1:52 a. m.]

416. My telegram No. 411, September 24.<sup>64</sup> Minister of Foreign Affairs informed me this morning that first official proposal to the Finnish Foreign Office on behalf of the German Government regarding desire of the latter to transport troops and material to northern Norway through Finnish territory was received on September 21. It was couched in friendly but definite terms and the Minister said it had since transpired that German transports had already then left German ports for Finnish ports in the Gulf of Bothnia. Exchange of notes was effected on the evening of September 22 and though lacking in precision the arrangement contemplates transport of only limited numbers of men and quantities of material. Finnish railway equipment would be used between Finnish ports and Rovaniemi, whence the Germans would employ their own motor transport and fuel.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs was fully cognizant of the difference between the arrangements made for Russian transport to their leased area at Hango and the facilities granted Germany as a belligerent. He said he expected today to receive a protest from the British Government through its Minister here.<sup>65</sup> However unpalatable this state of affairs necessarily was, the Finnish Government was not in a position to oppose the German demand especially in view of

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<sup>63</sup> The German-Finnish agreement for the transit of German troops through Finland to Norway was signed on September 22, 1940; it was announced in the Soviet press in a Tass despatch from Berlin on September 28. For text, see *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, series D, vol. XI, Doc. No. 86.

<sup>64</sup> Not printed.

<sup>65</sup> Gordon Vereker.

the precedent represented by the Swedish-German agreement regarding transit and on manner in which northern Finland is embraced by Soviet territory and German-controlled territory as a glance at the map reveals.

The Minister asked me to make the situation clear to you and to express the hope that the friendly interest of the United States in Finland would not be unfavorably affected by the latest developments. Witting intimated that there were signs of irritation in the Soviet Union over the German-Finnish transit arrangement and he attributed to this irritation the recently renewed publication in the Soviet press of articles critical of alleged conditions in Finland.

SCHOENFELD

760D.62/75 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, October 2, 1940—11 a. m.

[Received 2:25 p. m.]

1263. In connection with the recent German-Finnish agreement for the passage of German troops through Finland it is reported in diplomatic circles in Moscow that the German Government is considering a definite guaranty to Finland of its existing frontiers. I have thus far been unable to confirm the foregoing report but I understand that it is also in circulation in Finland and Sweden.

STEINHARDT

760D.62/76 : Telegram

*The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State*

HELSINKI, October 3, 1940—10 a. m.

[Received 12:50 p. m.]

419. My telegram No. 416, September 26. The Prime Minister informed me yesterday afternoon that the transit arrangement with the Germans contemplated the passage of some 5,000 (?) <sup>67</sup> auxiliary troops including air force, ground, quartermaster and labor forces and that the material to pass through Finland included 12 heavy anti-aircraft guns. The Germans had also ordered a large number of super-fabricated wooden buildings as well as a quantity of lumber estimated at 10,000 standards to be delivered from Finland for constructing barracks in northern Norway. It was the Prime Minister's original understanding that two German divisions would be transported through

<sup>67</sup> Query appears in the original.

southern Norway, Sweden and Narvik to the Tromso area but he was informed yesterday that four such divisions would be garrisoned in northern Norway.

The Prime Minister said that the German action was plainly a precautionary measure with reference to the Soviet Union and betokened no great degree of confidence in German-Soviet relations. When the Finnish Foreign Minister apprised the Soviet Minister here of the Finnish-German transit agreement the latter was apparently taken completely by surprise and his only question had been, "Was there a German ultimatum?"

It is apparent that the transit agreement is considered here as a measure of stabilization which though precarious is not unwelcome to Finnish opinion.

SCHOENFELD

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760D.61/1522 : Telegram

*The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State*

HELSINKI, October 3, 1940—noon.

[Received 5:03 p. m.]

421. My telegram No. 327, July 29th, first paragraph. Prime Minister Ryti informed me yesterday that negotiations were substantially concluded with the Soviet Union with a view to the latter's adherence in effect to the principles of the Geneva conference [*Convention?*] of 1921 regarding the Åland Islands. Agreement would be submitted shortly to the Finnish Diet. Though in earlier stages of the negotiations Molotov had been insistent upon an explicit stipulation imposing upon the Soviet Union and Finland jointly responsibility for defense of the islands contemplated in article VI of the convention and had subsequently modified this plan so as to include Sweden he had suddenly in the latest conversation with the Finnish Minister given up the idea of special rights for the Soviet Union. Ryti thought this change of position was not unconnected with the recent Finnish-German transit agreement.

Repeated to Moscow. Copy by mail to Stockholm.

SCHOENFELD

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760D.61/1521 : Telegram

*The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State*

HELSINKI, October 3, 1940—1 p. m.

[Received 4:42 p. m.]

422. My telegram No. 337, July 31,<sup>68</sup> and Moscow's telegram [No. 989], August 8, 1 p. m. The Prime Minister informed me yesterday

<sup>68</sup> Not printed.



that Finnish Government had no reason to think there had been any recent increase of Soviet forces in the vicinity of Finnish border but that there was greatly increased concentration of Russian troops in more southerly areas. He said the new defense line in Finland was incomparably superior to the so-called Mannerheim Line of last winter and though not complete was highly satisfactory to the military authorities. Available supplies of munitions had been augmented by receipt of equipment ordered from Germany prior to the hostilities with the Soviet Union and latest receipts included a hundred 37-millimeter antitank guns. The equipment and ammunition ordered from the United States had all been received. The Prime Minister said that the military supplies now available, though they had been costly, represented a form of insurance well worth-while.

SCHOENFELD

760D.61/1525 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the  
Secretary of State*

Moscow, October 9, 1940—11 a. m.

[Received 4 p. m.]

1314. The Finnish Minister yesterday informed me that the agreement reached between the Soviet and Finnish Governments in regard to the Åland Islands<sup>69</sup> in substance reaffirms their status as laid down in the 1921 convention. He also confirmed the information contained in the telegram No. 420, October 3, 11 a. m.<sup>70</sup> from the Legation at Helsinki adding, however, that at the Soviet request this division<sup>71</sup> was to prevail for only the first year of the agreement.

The Minister also informed me that the total number of German troops that have thus far passed through Finland under the recent German-Finnish transit agreement have been 2,000. He added that Molotov had inquired as to the purpose of this transit agreement and when informed that it merely provides for a limited number of German troops going and coming on leave to and from northern Norway, Molotov offered no criticism or further comment. The Minister stated that Finnish-German relations were correct but that he had no reason to believe that a German guaranty of Finland was desired by the Finnish Government or was in any way imminent. In respect of Soviet-Finnish relations the Minister confirmed the in-

<sup>69</sup> The Finnish Diet authorized the Government on October 8, 1940, to conclude the proposed convention. It was signed on October 11, and ratifications were exchanged at Helsinki on October 21. For text, see Finland, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Finland Reveals Her Secret Documents on Soviet Policy, March 1940—June 1941*, p. 65.

<sup>70</sup> Not printed.

<sup>71</sup> See telegram No. 328, July 29, 4 p. m., from the Minister in Finland, p. 334.

formation contained in my No. 1152, September 11, 1 p. m.<sup>72</sup> that during the past 6 weeks there had been a noticeable change for the better in the attitude of the Soviet Government in regard to Finland; that virtually all questions of any importance between the two countries had been settled and that recently on no less than two occasions Molotov had categorically assured him that the Soviet Union had no further claims on Finland.

STEINHARDT

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760D.61/1528 : Telegram

*The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State*

HELSINKI, October 10, 1940—2 p. m.

[Received 2:30 p. m.]

429. In response to my inquiry today as to the truth of rumors of new Russian demands on Finland in recent weeks with reference to possible naval bases at Abo and Vasa as well as regarding Hango, the Minister for Foreign Affairs told me this morning that there was no truth in the former rumors and that with reference to Hango the only possible foundation for such rumors might be the desire of the Russians for control of a small skerry in Lappvik Bay to facilitate communications there and regarding which there was no difficulty. The Minister for Foreign Affairs told me that there was no present tension in relations with the Soviet Union<sup>73</sup> and that progress was being made in the only remaining question involving compensation and restoration for property removed from the ceded areas.

Repeated to Moscow. Copy by mail to Stockholm.

SCHOENFELD

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760D.62/82 : Telegram

*The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State*

HELSINKI, November 1, 1940—noon.

[Received 3:45 p. m.]

452. The Minister of Foreign Affairs recently assured me that number of German troops passing through Finland under transit arrangement had been comparatively small and as I gathered had not exceeded number mentioned in my No. 419, October 3. He denied knowledge of any foundation for rumor recently current here that the

<sup>72</sup> Not printed.

<sup>73</sup> The Ambassador in the Soviet Union reported in telegram No. 1328, October 10, 6 p. m., that his Swedish colleague "had reason to believe that the recent relaxation in tension in Soviet-Finnish relations had been due to an indirect warning conveyed by the German Ambassador in Moscow to Molotov some weeks ago to the effect that it would be wise for the Soviet Union not to make any further demands on Finland." (860D.00/899)

Germans had undertaken at the instance of the Russians to waive their transit rights, it being implied in the rumor that the Germans had again abandoned Finland to the Soviet Union.

Though my British colleague in moments of depression has expressed opinion that the Germans and the Russians are in agreement not only regarding the Petsamo nickel mines, with reference to which he has lately been active, but also regarding the fate of Finland, in general, I see no reason to doubt that Prime Minister Ryti's view as reported in my telegram No. 394, September 5 still holds. British Minister credits the Finns with naive illusions regarding advantages to them from alleged existing rivalry between the Germans and the Russians, but in my opinion such illusions would be best described as hopes and the present Finnish Government is fully aware that it is subject to forces over which it has no control. This was confirmed to me last night by Erkko, former Foreign Minister, who reiterated the hope of every public man here for an early peace in the Anglo-German war and advocated action by our Government to that end at the first favorable opportunity. Erkko thought such an opportunity had been presented by failure of German air attack on Britain as well as by success of British evacuation of Dunkirk. He said the Germans are desperately anxious for peace and the situation reminded him of that between the Soviet Union and Finland last January when as Minister at Stockholm he received intimations from the Russians that if only they could have some degree of victory, this would be welcome as for settlement of the war and the sequel had so proved.

SCHOENFELD

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860D.6359 International Nickel Co./15 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, November 3, 1940—3 p. m.

[Received November 3—1:30 p. m.]

1475. My 1186, September 18, 4 p. m., and 1314, October 9, 11 a. m. I am reliably informed that several days ago Vishinsky<sup>74</sup> called the Finnish Minister and told him that the Soviet Government had now decided that it deserved the entire output of the Petsamo nickel mines and that it expected the Finnish Government to accede to this request and if not the Soviet Government would be forced to consider what measures it should adopt to obtain the output of the mines. Insofar as I am aware the Finnish Minister has not yet communicated to the Soviet Government the Finnish reply to the demand. In view of

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<sup>74</sup> Andrey Yanuaryevich Vyshinsky, Assistant People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union.

reports reaching Moscow from Helsinki that the Germans have no less than 15,000 troops north of Vasa and are said to be constructing headquarters there, the Soviet demand for the entire output of the nickel mines to the exclusion of Germany may be of special significance in its effect on Soviet-German relations unless the demand was presented following consultation and agreement with Germany.

STEINHARDT

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760D.61/1536 : Telegram

*The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State*

HELSINKI, November 6, 1940—1 p. m.

[Received November 6—12: 58 p. m.]

460. The Prime Minister told me today that with the signature yesterday of the boundary protocol at Imatra<sup>75</sup> between Finnish and Russian boundary commissions pending ratification shortly, a number of outstanding issues with the Soviet Union was being steadily reduced. Another difficulty had arisen in the form of Soviet protest against a number of books recently published in Finland regarding last winter's war, some of which the Soviet Government considered derogatory to the Red army. Some of these publications had been suppressed and the Prime Minister expressed the opinion that pending the termination of the general war there was no particular reason why publications of this type should be allowed to circulate.

SCHOENFELD

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740.0011 European War 1939/6592 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, November 9, 1940—2 p. m.

[Received 4: 43 p. m.]

1506. The Swedish Minister told me yesterday that recently the German Ambassador here has expressed to him concern regarding what he termed the somewhat defiant attitude which the Finnish Government is now adopting towards the Soviet Union apparently in the belief that Finland was assured of German support in the event of a Soviet attack. The Ambassador, according to Assarsson, said that it might become necessary for Germany to warn the Finns against provoking the Russians since Germany at the present time had no inten-

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<sup>75</sup> See telegram No. 478, April 30, noon, from the Chargé in the Soviet Union, and footnote 26, p. 328. In the exchange of notes of May 10, 1941, announcing the ratification of this protocol, the date of its signature is given as November 13, 1940.

tion of impairing its relations with the Soviet Union for the sake of Finland and would not offer any military assistance to Finland in the event of a Soviet attack. The German Ambassador then made the general statement that as long as the present war continued Germany could not afford to risk the possibility of a conflict with the Soviet Union.

As I have previously indicated, the maintenance and development of friendly relations with the Soviet Union has been the consistent policy of the German Ambassador and, as reported in my 1359, October 17, noon,<sup>77</sup> despite certain undercurrents of opposition to this policy during his recent visit to Berlin he was successful in obtaining the support of his Government for its continuance.

STEINHARDT

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760D.61/1538: Telegram

*The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State*

HELSINKI, November 14, 1940—1 p. m.

[Received 3:26 p. m.]

466. Minister for Foreign Affairs informed me today that he now expected pending matters with the Soviet Minister of Propaganda to be cleared up by the 20th of this month including ratification of boundary protocol and final formulation of agreements regarding restoration and compensation for property in the areas ceded to the Soviet Union last March which he said would cost the Finnish Government about 250 million Finnmarks.

In general, according to the Foreign Minister, relations with the Soviet Union had given the Finnish Government little concern for the past month or more except for the question of the nickel ore from Petsamo. The situation was now as follows: The British were prepared to give up their concession to the Finns for disposal in their discretion but in the hope that no nickel would go to Germany; the Russians want the concession and would be prepared to give the Germans 60 percent of the ore; the Germans who point out that in normal times their nickel requirements are obtainable from the American continent are interested in obtaining ore only for the duration of the present war. In response to my inquiry as to the Finnish position Witting made no definite answer and I assume he had in mind the suggestion of Prime Minister Ryti reported in my No. 461, November 6,<sup>78</sup> as to direct agreement between the Russians and other powers

<sup>77</sup> *Post*, p. 568.

<sup>78</sup> Not printed.

concerned. Meanwhile, I understand, Soderhjelm,<sup>79</sup> representing Petsamo company, is returning to Moscow very soon for further conversations.

SCHOENFELD

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860D.6359 International Nickel Company/19 : Telegram

*The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State*

HELSINKI, December 9, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received December 9—3:03 p. m.]

483. My telegram No. 466, November 14. Soderhjelm who has just returned from Moscow to continue discussion of Petsamo nickel situation on behalf of the company informed me last night that the Russians still demanded transfer of the concession to joint Finnish-Russian company, that the Germans are willing to acquiesce provided they get 60% of the output, that the British agree in principle to proposed transfer to Russian interests provided Germans get none of the output, and that Finnish Foreign Minister has given Germans assurance that their desires regarding output will be met. Russians are not prepared to make any commitment regarding supply of ore to Germans and Molotov says bluntly they want the concession. German generals in northern Norway express readiness to oppose Russian move on Petsamo nickel mine but Soderhjelm says that no one expects German Government to sanction any such action. Ramsay,<sup>80</sup> member of the board of the Petsamo Nickel Company, left Stockholm yesterday for Berlin to discuss with representatives of I. G. Farben Industrie how present concession can be preserved. Interest of this German company seems to coincide with that of British and American nickel enterprises and to be plainly at variance with interests of German Government. Soderhjelm says Ramsay still believes it may be possible to keep situation in suspense and to avoid an issue which is evidently the line of thought of Prime Minister Ryti as reported in my telegram No. 461, November 6.<sup>81</sup>

Soderhjelm is preparing detailed report for Stanley<sup>82</sup> of International Nickel of which he promises me a copy in about two weeks.

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<sup>79</sup> J. O. Soderhjelm, counsel for International Nickel Company of Canada, Ltd., at Helsinki.

<sup>80</sup> Henrik Ramsay, special Finnish delegate who also conducted negotiations in London with British interests concerned over the Soviet demands upon the Petsamo nickel mines concessions.

<sup>81</sup> Not printed.

<sup>82</sup> Robert Stanley, president of International Nickel Co., New York, N. Y.

He says situation changes almost daily and remains confusing which seems obvious from foregoing.

SCHOENFELD

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860D.00/906 : Telegram

*The Minister in Finland (Schoenfeld) to the Secretary of State*

HELSINKI, December 22, 1940.

[Received December 22—4:55 p. m.]

495. Minister [of] Defense, General Walden, who became Acting Prime Minister upon accession Ryti to Presidency Republic,<sup>83</sup> tendered Cabinet's resignation yesterday. President requesting them to remain office pending formation new government.<sup>84</sup>

SCHOENFELD

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860D.001/24 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, December 23, 1940—3 p. m.

[Received December 23—2:40 p. m.]

1769. My 1740, December 17, 1 p. m.<sup>85</sup> Although the Soviet press has refrained from any direct comment on the election of Ryti as President of Finland, today's newspapers reproduce what appears to be a full summary of the speech which he is said to have made yesterday including a quotation of the portion concerning the desire of the Finnish people to maintain friendly and good neighborly relations with the Soviet Union as well as with Germany and Sweden. While not conclusive the reproduction of Ryti's speech would appear to indicate that the Soviet Government is not displeased with the election of Ryti.

Repeated to Helsinki.

STEINHARDT

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<sup>83</sup> Risto H. Ryti was elected on December 19, 1940, as President of the Republic of Finland by 288 votes to 12 scattered or blank votes, following the resignation and sudden death of Kyösti Kallio. A message of sympathy from President Roosevelt on the death of Kallio is printed in Department of State *Bulletin*, December 28, 1940, p. 583.

<sup>84</sup> A reconstructed Council of State was appointed on January 3, 1941, with Jukka (Johan) W. Rangell, formerly Acting Governor of the Bank of Finland, as Prime Minister.

<sup>85</sup> Not printed.

## II. FORCIBLE OCCUPATION OF THE BALTIC STATES AND THEIR INCORPORATION INTO THE SOVIET UNION<sup>86</sup>

860P.00/257 : Telegram

*The Minister in Latvia (Wiley) to the Secretary of State*

RIGA, February 11, 1940—7 p. m.

[Received February 11—4:21 p. m.]

31. President Ulmanis<sup>87</sup> last night extended scheduled 20 minutes' radio broadcast into a 40 minutes' warning to the nation. He spoke of the blockade on Latvian economy and made strong appeal for frugality and industry. Finally he said "Should the grave, the critical moment come, then on an average one man from every country homestead would have to put on his uniform. In such an event you can calculate for yourselves that in Riga there are no storehouses filled with underwear and boots. Therefore, be advised to lay in at least two changes of shirts and other things; say, two towels and also a good pair of boots. . . .<sup>88</sup> If it were not serious I would not tell you this; and one more thing, the safest place for a year's supply of bread and other foods is the farmer's own barn and pantry."

The foregoing which contradicts the anti-hoarding measures of the Government has greatly alarmed public opinion.

In connection with the foregoing, rumors of further developments in the Baltic States are again current. Soviet Ministers in all three countries<sup>89</sup> have all been summoned to Moscow, as well as Torgpret representatives.<sup>90</sup> Estonian Minister in Moscow<sup>91</sup> has simultaneously returned to Tallinn. Reports are circulating that Moscow is demanding extensive concessions from Estonia along the Gulf of Finland and that a Soviet admiral is conducting negotiations to this end with Estonians in Narva. Significance is locally attached to the fact that Munters<sup>92</sup> has repeatedly seen President Ulmanis during the last few days.

I have only been able to learn that Estonian Foreign Minister<sup>93</sup> has written Estonian Minister in Riga<sup>94</sup> that the Soviet Union was making extensive demands but that Estonian Government was de-

<sup>86</sup> For previous correspondence regarding pressure by the Soviet Union upon the Baltic States to conclude pacts of mutual assistance, see *Foreign Relations, The Soviet Union, 1933-1939*, pp. 934 ff.

<sup>87</sup> Karlis Ulmanis, President of Latvia since *coup d'état* of May 15, 1934.

<sup>88</sup> Omission indicated in the original telegram.

<sup>89</sup> Kuzma Kondratyevich Nikitin, Soviet Minister in Estonia until June 1940; Ivan S. Zotov, Soviet Minister in Latvia until April 1940; Nikolay Georgevich Posdnyakov, Soviet Minister in Lithuania.

<sup>90</sup> Soviet trade representatives abroad.

<sup>91</sup> August Rei.

<sup>92</sup> Vilhelms Munters, Latvian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>93</sup> Ants Piip.

<sup>94</sup> Hans Rebane.



terminated to resist. This policy, he said, had the approval of General Laidoner, the Estonian Commander-in-Chief.

WILEY

760N.61/64 : Telegram

*The Minister in Latvia (Wiley) to the Secretary of State*

RIGA, February 12, 1940—1 p. m.

[Received February 12—9:32 a. m.]

34. My 31, February 11, 7 p. m. High Foreign Office official confirms that Soviet Government is pressing demands upon the three Baltic States. He states he is not aware how far these demands go in respect of Estonia but he does not take them too seriously as far as Latvia is concerned. He believes that the Soviet Union is merely trying to see what the traffic will bear, that no single demand is particularly important, and that the situation should not become dangerous for the present. Latvia and Estonia are united in their decision to resist further Soviet encroachment but he says Lithuania has yielded to the Soviet demands on one point, the admission of families of the Red Army garrisoned in that country. He states that the demand for the admission of wives and children is in violation of a formal assurance given personally by Stalin<sup>95</sup> who said "there will be no families." In conclusion, Foreign Office official stated that there were now very strained relations with the Soviet Minister who was supremely stupid and had been making himself "insupportable". He confirmed that the President's "fighting speech" was a warning to Russia, but intimated that the President considered the moment timely to close Latvian ranks in the face of foreign danger, which in the past had been unduly minimized by home propaganda for home consumption.

Finnish successes<sup>96</sup> seem to have considerably stiffened Latvian resistance to both the Soviet Union and Germany.

WILEY

760N.61/66 : Telegram

*The Minister in Estonia (Wiley)<sup>97</sup> to the Secretary of State*

TALLINN, February 13, 1940—5 p. m.

[Received 6:26 p. m.]

16. Lunched today with the Foreign Minister, Estonian Minister to Moscow who is now here, and two directors of the Foreign Office.

<sup>95</sup> 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.

<sup>96</sup> For correspondence on relations between Finland and the Soviet Union, see pp. 269 ff.

<sup>97</sup> John C. Wiley was Minister to both Estonia and Latvia, with residence in Riga.

They told Ambassador Steinhardt<sup>98</sup> and me (1) that there had been no approach to Estonia for mediation of Finnish-Soviet conflict; (2) that recalling of the Soviet Ministers to the Baltic States for conference in Moscow was not considered dangerous. It probably had to do with innumerable technical questions which require solution (one Foreign Office official in an aside said "probably our loyalty studied, too") and (3) that no political demands were being made by the Soviet Government. The Foreign Minister denied categorically that Lithuania had yielded in respect of admission of Red army families. Indeed, he said Latvia alone had weakened on this point. Foreign Minister stated that at present there was, on the whole, excellent collaboration between Baltic States.

My impression is that all three countries are standing fast on the limit of original concessions to Moscow and consider the moment opportune to make it clear that they will not yield further.

General Berkis, Latvian Commander-in-Chief, now here on official visit to General Laidoner.

WILEY

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760N.61/67 : Telegram

*The Minister in Estonia (Wiley) to the Secretary of State*

TALLINN, February 15, 1940—10 a. m.  
[Received February 15—7 a. m.]

18. My telegram No. 16, February 13, 5 p. m. In respect of press reports which have been current that the Soviet Union is formulating new and far-reaching political demands on the Baltic States, Ambassador Steinhardt and I have reached the conclusion from conversations with Foreign Ministers of Latvia and Estonia and with General Laidoner that no such demands have thus far been presented and that they consider it most unlikely there will be any change in their situation for the present.<sup>99</sup>

General Laidoner does not, however, dismiss the possibility that the Soviet Union may endeavor to have the Baltic States exercise united pressure on Finland should the Soviet Union subsequently seek to terminate hostilities.

WILEY

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<sup>98</sup> Laurence A. Steinhardt, American Ambassador to the Soviet Union.

<sup>99</sup> The Chargé in Lithuania, Bernard Gufler, reported in his despatch No. 769 (Diplomatic), March 21, 1940, that in a conversation with Ludwigs Seja, the Latvian Minister, the latter had stated that the Soviet Union had been demanding admission of nonmilitary auxiliary personnel, and wives and children of Soviet officers (760N.61/70).

861.00/11850 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, February 17, 1940—6 p. m.

[Received 7:35 p. m.]

185. I returned to Moscow today following 6 days in transit through Riga, Tallinn, Narva and Leningrad. As a result of my observations and conversations with well-informed persons during the past week I have gained the following impressions:

(1) While there are persistent rumors in Latvia and Estonia to the effect that the Soviet Government contemplates further control over those States, Wiley and I were assured by the Foreign Ministers of both countries that no important demands have recently been made of them by the Soviet Government and that they do not anticipate such demands. It was apparent to me nonetheless that Soviet influence in Latvia and Estonia is already very great, is steadily increasing, and that the Latvians and Estonians in general feel that the Soviet military forces which are everywhere in evidence, especially on the railways, constitute virtually an army of occupation.

(2) It is evident that the Swedish Government is actively engaged in the Baltic States in an endeavor to bring about action leading to the cessation of the Finnish-Soviet conflict. I believe that in these activities Sweden is at present acting independently of Germany and Estonia, both of which countries are likewise engaged in similar activities.

(3) There has been a decided improvement recently in conditions in Leningrad which I found to be far better than previous reports would indicate. Food conditions at the present time in that city do not appear to be worse than usual, transportation appears to be normal. I could detect no signs of tension or discontent. The shops appeared to be better stocked than those in Moscow. I saw no wounded or other signs of the war in progress but a few miles distant, aside from the blackout.

(4) On the journey from Tallinn to Leningrad, and especially after passing Narva, I observed large military concentrations which included abundant light field artillery and light and medium tanks, field kitchens, and troops of all categories including substantial bodies of ski troops. At one airfield near which the train stopped for some time, I observed abundant quantities of gasoline and approximately 30 large tri-motored bombers of modern design. I assume that these forces are being assembled in the neighborhood of Leningrad primarily as reserves for the offensive operations in progress on the Karelian Isthmus although it is possible that should the Gulf of

Finland freeze to a degree that would make such an operation practicable they might be utilized in an attempt to outflank the Mannerheim positions.

(5) With respect to the policy of the Soviet Government toward the Finnish conflict all of the persons with whom I spoke confirmed my impression that the Soviet Government has thus far not been responsive to attempts to bring the conflict to an end through mediation or otherwise although it is generally felt that should the present offensive fail the Soviet Government might thereafter be willing to give consideration to a negotiated settlement provided virtually all of its terms could be met. I observed a general belief that in that event the Soviet Government might be inclined to accept mediation on the part of Germany, Estonia, Sweden or the United States, or at least avail itself of the good offices of one of these countries. I am convinced, however, that until the Soviet Government has satisfied itself that it cannot achieve a decisive military victory it will not entertain any proposals for mediation and that as a result of its lack of success thus far it is now devoting much more serious attention to the technical measures necessary for the prosecution of the war and is now attaining a greater degree of proficiency in organization and attack than heretofore.

(6) I was particularly impressed by the noticeably bad condition of the Soviet railway system, especially by the deteriorated condition of the rolling stock which is in a far worse state than the roadbed. There appeared to be a grave shortage of locomotives and in addition to this ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> carrying capacity, a decidedly inefficient organization inasmuch as ~~there~~ <sup>there</sup> were thousands of freight cars lying idle on sidings. Judging by the chalked date markings on the sides and their appearance, most of these cars had been on such sidings for several weeks. The speed of the passenger trains on which I traveled was only a few miles an hour. The trip from Moscow to Riga required 42 hours. The second night the train was unlighted, without sleeping accommodations, and without food or even water throughout the whole trip.

STEINHARDT

7601.61/162 : Telegram

*The Chargé in Estonia (Leonard) to the Secretary of State*

TALLINN, April 13, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received April 13—2:19 p. m.]

48. According to information obtained informally and unofficially at the Foreign Office, Molotov<sup>1</sup> recently in a conversation with Estonian

<sup>1</sup> Vyacheslav Mikhailovich Molotov, People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union.

Minister asked for the island of Osmussaar and two Estonian Foreign Office representatives and one military officer have left for Moscow to negotiate. It is anticipated that the island will be leased to the Soviet Government in the hope of obtaining concessions in removing Soviet airbase at Kuusiko 100 kilometers south of Tallinn and to restrict garrison at Tallinn and possibly other concessions.

Am informed that the foregoing does not mean that the Soviets have further designs on Estonia but that they wish to consolidate their strategic position in the Baltic.

LEONARD

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860P.00/264 : Telegram

*The Minister in Latvia (Wiley) to the Secretary of State*

RIGA, April 30, 1940—10 a. m.

[Received April 30—5 : 25 a. m.]

86. There has recently been a sharp increase in anti-Government activities. Much revolutionary propaganda has circulated and posters have been put up calling on the people to rise on May 1st and overthrow the Government.

The Minister for Public Relations<sup>2</sup> in private conversation tells me that he foresees no situation which would go beyond a couple of hundred arrests. He says that 65% of the people are with the Government and professes to believe that Moscow is not behind subversive activities.

I understand that police precautions have been taken in anticipation of possible difficulties.

WILEY

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760M.61/98 : Telegram

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

Moscow, May 29, 1940—midnight.

[Received May 29—9 : 40 p. m.]

601. A Tass<sup>3</sup> communiqué issued tonight states that there have been several recent cases of the disappearance of men from Soviet military garrison established in Lithuania and that these disappearances were organized by persons acting in disguise for organs of the Lithuania Government for the purpose of extorting military information. Student interpreters are cited.

<sup>2</sup> A. Berzins.

<sup>3</sup> Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union, official communication agency of the Soviet Government.

The communiqué states that on May 25th (apparently following unsatisfactory conversations between the two Governments), Molotov notified the Lithuanian Minister at Moscow<sup>4</sup> that the Soviet Union considers the behavior of the Lithuanian Union to be provocative and fraught with grave consequences; demanded the immediate discontinuance of such provocative acts and the return of men still missing; and expressed the hope that Lithuania will follow the course suggested and not compel the Soviet Union to take other measures.

Repeated to Riga and Kaunas.

THURSTON

760M.61/99: Telegram

*The Minister in Latvia (Wiley) to the Secretary of State*

RIGA, May 30, 1940—5 p. m.

[Received 5:50 p. m.]

107. Moscow's No. 601, May 29, midnight. Competent official of Foreign Office professes to be at a loss to explain Soviet procedure towards Lithuania. Under existing treaties Soviet Government should be able to satisfy all desires in the Baltic area including increase of garrisons and bases without recourse to pressure. He described the situation as grave even if the Soviet complaints were fabricated. That the Soviet Union had made its quarrel with Lithuania public was a very bad sign.<sup>5</sup>

My Estonian colleague for whose opinions I have considerable respect considers the situation very dangerous for the Baltic States. He believes that the Soviet Union may be synchronizing the final development of its Baltic policy with events in the west. The Estonian Minister added that some of the incidents cited in the Tass communiqué were indeed based on fact.

However the Lithuanian Counsellor claims that the Soviet move has come as a complete surprise to his Government which is at an utter loss to explain its patriotic [*sic*] purpose.

The new Soviet Minister<sup>6</sup> is paying conspicuous lip service to Soviet friendship for Germany.

A special meeting of the Latvian Cabinet is now in protracted session with the President.

WILEY

<sup>4</sup>Ladas Natkevičius.

<sup>5</sup>In telegram No. 90, May 31, 3 p. m., the Minister in Lithuania, Owen J. C. Norem, stated that "the Lithuanian Foreign Office suggested that the matter be kept secret but the Russians preferred to publish the affair over the radio and in the press." The Minister gave as his personal opinion his belief that "Russia will not make any further move at this time but will reserve the present case for some action in the future should it seem feasible." (760M.61/100)

<sup>6</sup>Vladimir Konstantinovich Derevyansky, previously Soviet Minister in Finland, had presented his credentials on May 8, 1940.

740.0011 European War 1939/3447 : Telegram

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

Moscow, June 2, 1940—10 a. m.

[Received 12:07 p. m.]

609. Embassy's telegram No. 608, June 1, 5 p. m.<sup>7</sup> The source quoted in the final paragraph of the Embassy's telegram under reference stated yesterday (24 hours after the conversation reported) that the German Ambassador<sup>8</sup> had in the meantime seen Molotov and my informant now has the impression that the possibility of an immediate invasion of Lithuania has decreased. He attributed this chiefly to Soviet preoccupation with the situation in the Mediterranean and its desire to keep a maximum military force in the south undistracted by possible developments in the Baltic.

He recalled that in the Soviet-German agreement<sup>9</sup> reported in the Embassy's telegram 465, August 24, [1939] noon,<sup>10</sup> the Soviet Union had been given a free hand in the Baltic and that Germany would not regard a Soviet invasion of Lithuania as in any way directed against itself.

THURSTON

760I.61/168 : Telegram

*The Minister in Estonia (Wiley) to the Secretary of State*

TALLINN, June 3, 1940—6 p. m.

[Received June 3—2:40 p. m.]

57. The source mentioned in my telegram 45 of March 30,<sup>11</sup> has informed me that General Loktionov<sup>12</sup> (see paragraph No. 4 of the same) arrives today by air. The visit has been foreseen for some time and it is believed that only technical matters will be discussed. Though he has been taken aback by recent *Pravda* attack on Estonia<sup>13</sup> (see telegram No. 55)<sup>14</sup> and much concerned by Soviet-Lithuanian developments, he can only describe Estonian relations with the Soviet Union as having so far followed a most satisfactory course. Negotiations have gone smoothly and in return for Estonian concessions,

<sup>7</sup> *Post*, p. 470.

<sup>8</sup> Friedrich Werner, Count von der Schulenburg.

<sup>9</sup> Treaty of Nonaggression between Germany and the Soviet Union, with secret additional protocol, signed at Moscow on August 23, 1939; for text, see Department of State, *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, series D, vol. VII, pp. 245-247.

<sup>10</sup> *Foreign Relations, 1939*, vol. I, p. 342.

<sup>11</sup> Not printed; the source mentioned was "G-2", Maj. George B. Huthsteiner, American Military Attaché in Latvia and Estonia.

<sup>12</sup> Col. Gen. of Aviation Alexander Dmitriyevich Loktionov, People's Assistant Commissar for Defence of the Soviet Union.

<sup>13</sup> In issue of May 28, 1940, entitled "Political Sentiments in Estonia."

<sup>14</sup> May 31, 3 p. m., not printed.

including use of the island of Osmussaar, the Soviet Air Force has given up the two fields nearest Tallinn and the Red Army is evacuating Haapsalu. The thorny question of payments arising out of mutual assistance pact with Russia<sup>15</sup> had also been substantially settled. Moreover, a protocol providing for Soviet armaments for the Estonian Army which was concluded some time ago is working smoothly. The first Soviet delivery took place May 1st and the second will follow within a few days.

Informant denied that Russian troops were being moved westward. On the contrary, the movement was towards the Black Sea area. The best Soviet pilots in Estonia, veterans of the Finnish war, were being sent there, as well as some of the planes based here. He said talk of a reversal of Soviet policy towards Germany was nonsense.<sup>16</sup>

He added that anti-German sentiment in Estonia was preoccupying the authorities. Crew members of German vessels had been assaulted and there was constant danger of incidents with the large number of Germans who were constantly traveling mysteriously around the Baltic States.

WILEY

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760N.61/74 : Telegram

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

Moscow, June 4, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received 4: 34 p. m.]

620. . . . who has heretofore proved to be well-informed regarding Baltic matters and disposed to discuss them frankly, informed me this morning that he is not inclined to fear any general Soviet military action against the Baltic States at this time.

. . . stated that as far as Estonian-Soviet relations are concerned, there has been no unfavorable development and that normal negotiations continue with respect to the numerous problems arising out of the presence of Soviet forces in Estonia—such as the use of Estonian telephone and telegraph services and highways and railways. He stated that the publication of the Tass despatch reported in the Embassy's telegram No. 592 of May 28, noon,<sup>17</sup> was interpreted in Estonia as conveying an official Soviet admonition but that it has not been followed up by any other action.

With respect to the current visit to Moscow of the Latvian Minister

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<sup>15</sup> Signed at Moscow on September 28, 1939. A translation of the text of this treaty is printed in Department of State *Bulletin*, November 11, 1939, p. 543; also in League of Nations Treaty Series, vol. cxcviii, p. 227.

<sup>16</sup> For correspondence on wartime cooperation between Germany and the Soviet Union, see pp. 539 ff.

<sup>17</sup> Not printed.



of War,<sup>17a</sup> he stated that he had no reason to ascribe to it any particular, much less any ominous, significance and that he is inclined to regard it as being of much the same nature as the visit made some months ago (Embassy's telegram No. 1041, December 18 [8], 11 a. m.<sup>18</sup>) by General Laidoner.

. . . stated that he is less certain with respect to Lithuania and that the incident to which the Tass communiqué, cited in the Embassy's telegram 601 of May 29, midnight, referred is not yet closed. In common with others who have sought an explanation of the Soviet action in this instance, he believes it to be not improbable that the Soviet Government is becoming somewhat apprehensive over the prospect of an early German victory in the current war and that it may be seeking to bring about a situation under cover of which it can strengthen the Lithuanian frontier against Germany.

. . . requested that the facts be kept secret in view of the harm which might befall his country should they become known.

THURSTON

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740.0011 European War 1939/3597 : Telegram

*The Minister in Latvia (Wiley) to the Secretary of State*

RIGA, June 7, 1940—noon.

[Received 1:08 p. m.]

115. The Military Attaché has just arrived in Riga from Kaunas. In Kovno,<sup>19</sup> Lithuanian General Staff circles frankly foresee new Soviet demands of a sweeping nature. The German, Latvian and Estonian Military Attachés told Huthsteiner that the incidents alleged by the Soviet Government had been fabricated. All regarded the situation as grave. The German Military Attaché made the prediction that new Soviet demands on Lithuania would involve not only an increase of the Soviet armed forces but a great measure of control over Lithuanian domestic affairs. Of course, he went on, similar demands would be made on the other Baltic States. The German Military Attaché added that it was now clear that Germany had been guilty of a damnable blunder in evacuating the German Balts.

On his return from Kaunas, Huthsteiner met the German Military Attaché to Helsinki and Tallinn who until recently was accredited here also. He forecast that by September 1st the Baltic States would cease to exist.

Major Huthsteiner's impression is that the German General Staff expect the Russians to take over this area and that for the present Germany will not make serious objection.

<sup>17a</sup> Gen. K. Berkis.

<sup>18</sup> *Foreign Relations, The Soviet Union, 1933-1939*, p. 980.

<sup>19</sup> Kaunas.

The Major's German informants confirm the entry of Italy in the war in the near future.<sup>20</sup> Hostilities they say will be over by September 1st and England will have to swallow bitter terms of peace.

Please inform War.

WILEY

760M.61/105 : Telegram

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

Moscow, June 8, 1940—noon.

[Received 4:20 p. m.]

647. Minister Norem's 94, June 5, 2 a. m.<sup>21</sup> The Soviet press announces the arrival at Moscow yesterday of the Lithuanian Prime Minister, Mr. Merkys, accompanied by General Reklaitis<sup>22</sup> and an official of the Lithuanian Ministry for Foreign Affairs. It states that the visitors were met by an Assistant President of the Soviet of People's Commissars of the Soviet Union, by Dekanozov, an Assistant People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, and other Soviet civil and military officials, and that the station platform was decorated with Soviet and Lithuanian flags and that Merkys, the Lithuanian Minister at Moscow, and the Soviet Minister at Kaunas were received [yesterday?] by Molotov.

I was introduced last night to the Soviet Minister at Tallinn, whose presence in Moscow at this time may indicate that Baltic problems in general are under discussion. The Latvian Minister,<sup>23</sup> however, whom I also saw last night, confirmed the statement reported in the Embassy's 620, June 4, 4 p. m., that the visit to Moscow of the Latvian Minister of War has no particular significance.

THURSTON

760P.61/129 : Telegram

*The Minister in Latvia (Wiley) to the Secretary of State*

RIGA, June 10, 1940—6 p. m.

[Received June 10—4:30 p. m.]

118. A new wave of rumors of impending Sovietization has swept Riga. Even responsible Latvian circles share the anxiety. The Foreign Minister however, insists that so far as he knows these rumors are entirely without foundation; that Berkis, Latvian Minister of

<sup>20</sup> For correspondence regarding efforts made by the United States to keep Italy from entering the war against the Allies, see vol. II, pp. 685 ff.

<sup>21</sup> Not printed.

<sup>22</sup> Presumably Gen. Stasys Rastikis, Commander in Chief of the Lithuanian Army.

<sup>23</sup> Frīcis Kociņš.

War now in the Soviet Union, has reported nothing of an alarming nature and that the Soviet incident with Lithuania does not appear to have created a dangerous situation.<sup>25</sup>

WILEY

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740.0011 European War 1939/3821 : Telegram

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

Moscow, June 15, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received June 15—3:07 p. m.]

681. I have just been informed by the Associated Press correspondent that an official communiqué was issued a few minutes ago by the Soviet Government stating that an ultimatum addressed by it to the Lithuanian Government had been accepted by the latter this morning at 9 o'clock, one hour before its time limit expired.

The communiqué which is not yet available to the Embassy is somewhat lengthy. I understand that its principal points are that the former Lithuanian Minister of Interior<sup>26</sup> and head of the Political Police Department<sup>27</sup> must be brought to trial in connection with the Soviet protest, (Embassy's telegram 601, May 29, 12 midnight) that the number of Soviet troops in Lithuania must be increased and that the Lithuanian Government must be reorganized.

Repeated [to] Kaunas and Riga.

THURSTON

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740.0011 European War 1939/3839 : Telegram

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

KAUNAS, June 15, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received 8:40 p. m.]

107. Russian armored divisions crossed the Lithuanian border at several points at 2 p. m. today following Moscow rejection of Rastikis' appointment. Demands said to include a favorable government with possible Communist inclusion, the trial of former Lithuanian Minister of the Interior and of the Director of Security, increased garrisons and free movement of troops. The Lithuanian Government accepted and Soviet Minister and Assistant Soviet Commissar

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<sup>25</sup> The Minister reported in a later telegram, No. 122, June 14, 3 p. m., that it was generally understood that General Berkis had "signed a protocol extending the scope of Latvian-Soviet military cooperation." (760P.61/132) The original pact of mutual assistance between Latvia and the Soviet Union had been signed at Moscow on October 5, 1939. A translation of the text of this treaty is printed in Department of State *Bulletin*, November 11, 1939, p. 542; or League of Nations Treaty Series, vol. cxcviii, p. 385.

<sup>26</sup> K. Skucas, removed from his office on June 13, 1940.

<sup>27</sup> A. Povilaitis, Director of the Department of State Security since 1932, removed from his office on June 13, 1940.

for Foreign Affairs<sup>28</sup> left Moscow by plane at noon. Lithuanian Government awaits their arrival before making further proposals. Attitude here of officials one of great tension and apprehension.

NOREM

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740.0011 European War 1939/3827 : Telegram

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

Moscow, June 15, 1940—6 p. m.  
[Received June 15—3:10 p. m.]

682. Embassy's telegram 681, June 15, 4 p. m. I am informed that in connection with the Soviet ultimatum to Lithuania it was also charged that subsequent to the conclusion of the Soviet-Lithuanian Pact of Mutual Assistance,<sup>29</sup> Lithuania entered into a military alliance with Latvia and Estonia aimed against the Soviet Union.

Repeated to Riga and Kaunas.

THURSTON

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740.0011 European War 1939/3831 : Telegram

*The Chargé in Estonia (Leonard) to the Secretary of State*

TALLINN, June 16, 1940—11 a. m.  
[Received 8:04 p. m.]

62. I have just learned from a reliable official source that Estonia was confronted today by demands from the Soviet Union to permit Soviet troops to march into Estonia tomorrow, namely on June 17. The Government of Estonia is now in conference and it is believed it will accede to Soviet demands. I have also been informed that similar demands have been made on Latvia.

LEONARD

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740.0011 European War 1939/3837 : Telegram

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

KAUNAS, June 16, 1940—1 p. m.  
[Received 2:05 p. m.]

111. President Smetona together with various officials and civilians fled to Germany last evening.<sup>30</sup> This morning the Lithuanian Gov-

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<sup>28</sup> Vladimir Georgevich Dekanozov.

<sup>29</sup> Signed at Moscow on October 10, 1939. An English translation of this "Treaty on the Transfer of the City of Vilno and Vilno Province to the Lithuanian Republic and on Mutual Assistance between the Soviet Union and Lithuania" is printed in Department of State *Bulletin*, December 16, 1939, p. 705.

<sup>30</sup> President Antanas Smetona, together with several members of the Government, crossed the frontier into Germany at Eydtkuhnen (Eydtkau) without German visas and were interned by German authorities at Angerburg in East Prussia.

ernment officially proclaimed his post vacant and asked Prime Minister Merkys to act *ad interim*. Mr. Bizauskas, Vice Prime Minister, is carrying on negotiations with the Soviet representatives. They met at midnight and this morning at 10 a. m. The Soviet representatives asked new instructions when told of President's fleeing. No definite conclusions have been reached since the Russians declare the provisions of the ultimatum are not as yet fulfilled. The two men named by the Soviets, former Minister of Interior Skucas and former Director of State Security, having fled, voluntarily gave themselves up and are now returning to Kaunas. Soviet informant declared that the new government must be completely pro-Russian. All strategic points are occupied by Soviet troops. Demands include free access routes from the Soviet Union to Lithuania and sufficient army reinforcements to be stationed at all important points to insure against incidents directed against the Russian troops.

Repeated to Moscow.

NOREM

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740.0011 European War 1939/3817 : Telegram

*The Minister in Latvia (Wiley) to the Secretary of State*

RIGA, June 16, 1940—1 p. m.

[Received 2:25 p. m.]

126. This morning's press published a Latvian telegraph agency version of the incident reported in my 125, June 15, 9 p. m.,<sup>31</sup> as follows:

"At early dawn on Sunday<sup>32</sup> the frontier post at Maslenki on the Latvian-Soviet border was found destroyed by fire. The corpses of two frontier guards and that of one woman were found on the spot as well as one woman and a 14-year-old boy seriously wounded. Moreover, 11 frontier guards and several local inhabitants have disappeared. A special commission of investigation headed by General Bolstein of the frontier general brigade has proceeded to the locality in order to investigate this sinister affair.["]

In the Government organ *Rīts* the foregoing statement was inconspicuously published on page 15.

The Latvia Telegraph Agency also replied to the Soviet allegation that shortly after the conclusion of the mutual aid pact between Lithuania and the U. S. S. R., Lithuania had become secretly allied to Latvia and Estonia converting the so-called Baltic Entente<sup>33</sup> into a military pact directed against the Soviet Union.

<sup>31</sup> Not printed.

<sup>32</sup> June 15.

<sup>33</sup> Treaty of Good Understanding and Cooperation signed at Geneva by Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania on September 12, 1934; for text, see League of Nations Treaty Series, vol. CLIV, p. 95.

In the *Rits* this morning the Agency announced that it had been authorized to explain that Lithuania had not joined the Latvian-Estonian military alliance, concluded November 1923<sup>34</sup> and that no other military pact existed between the Baltic States.

The fact that the situation is grave in Latvia as well as Lithuania may be deduced from indications that the Ministry of War has been busily burning its confidential files for the last two days. Officials of the Government are inaccessible to the Diplomatic Corps and the only firsthand information from an authoritative source comes through the British Military Attaché who by chance encountered General Berkis, the Minister of War, at the entrance of his Ministry. The latter, though most reticent, admitted that there had been frontier incidents other than the one made public, that Soviet troops were massed on the Latvian frontier, and that new Soviet demands were expected.

The Swedish Military Attaché states that five anti-aircraft batteries have been set up in Riga and that extra ammunition has been issued to the troops. The consensus, however, does not foresee Latvian opposition to Soviet forces should they occupy the country.

Please inform War Department. Repeated to Moscow.

WILEY

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740.0011 European War 1939/3831 : Telegram

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

KAUNAS, June 16, 1940—8 p. m.

[Received 11:50 p. m.]

112. The Acting President of Lithuania, Merkys, announced in a short talk at 4 p. m. today that all necessary steps are being taken to form new government. He urged the people to accept the fact of the military occupation and to return to their normal work. One director of the Lithuanian Foreign Office has been in close touch with our Mission and stated this evening that nothing new was obtainable [at] 8 p. m. this evening although indications are that the results are sad for Lithuania. Evening sessions seem advisable and we may expect some announcements tomorrow morning. Talks are being conducted by Merkys, Bizauskas and certain Cabinet members for Lithuania and Dekanozov, Assistant Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Posdnyakov, Soviet Minister to Lithuania, and various advisers acting for Russia.

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<sup>34</sup> Signed at Tallinn on November 1, 1923; for text, see League of Nations Treaty Series, vol. XXIII, p. 83; it was supplemented by a new treaty signed at Riga on February 17, 1934, *ibid.*, vol. CL, p. 105.

One report says that a Russian Commissar may replace Lithuanian Cabinet.

Repeated to Moscow.

NOREM

740.0011 European War 1939/3830 : Telegram

*The Chargé in Estonia (Leonard) to the Secretary of State*

TALLINN, June 16, 1940—midnight.

[Received June 16—9:14 p. m.]

63. Supplementing my telegram No. 62,<sup>34a</sup> I have now been informed from official source that the Estonian Government has just accepted the Soviet's demands and that additional troops will be stationed in Estonia and at bases not previously occupied. Further, the Government has resigned and the President of Estonia<sup>35</sup> will form a new government.

I have been informed from another reliable source that this morning's Estonian regular traffic airplane while en route from Tallinn to Helsinki was shot at by a submarine of unknown nationality but missed its mark and further that evidence points to the shooting down of the Finnish plane 2 days ago on which clerk Antheil was lost.<sup>36</sup>

Repeated to Riga.

LEONARD

740.0011 European War 1939/3846 : Telegram

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

Moscow, June 17, 1940—2 a. m.

[Received June 16—11:17 p. m.]

684. At 1 o'clock this morning it was announced over the Moscow radio by Tass that ultimatums were presented to Estonia and Latvia and accepted by them today<sup>37</sup> demanding the reorganization of their Governments and the admission into their territories of additional Soviet forces.

<sup>34a</sup> June 16, 11 a. m., p. 369.

<sup>35</sup> Konstantin Päts.

<sup>36</sup> Henry William Antheil, Jr., a clerk in the American Legation in Finland, was travelling as a courier on an airplane of the Finnish Aero Company which exploded in midair at 2:06 p. m., June 14, 1940, soon after leaving Tallinn for Helsinki. There was suspicion that the disaster was caused by fire from a Soviet submarine or, more likely, from Soviet pursuit planes which were observed in the area. For information on this incident, see *Finland Reveals Her Secret Documents on Soviet Policy, March 1940-June 1941* (New York, 1941), pp. 32, 49-50.

<sup>37</sup> June 16 is intended.

It is otherwise reported that such forces have already crossed the Latvian border.

Repeated to Riga.

THURSTON

740.0011 European War 1939/3845 : Telegram

*The Minister in Latvia (Wiley) to the Secretary of State*

RIGA, June 17, 1940—10 a. m.

[Received June 17—7 a. m.]

129. My 128, June 17, 2 a. m.<sup>38</sup> Am officially informed Soviet troops are crossing border at many points and will occupy Rezekne, Krustpils, Daugavpils,<sup>39</sup> Jelgava,<sup>40</sup> Riga. It is expected they will enter capital this afternoon. Government has resigned but it is expected Ulmanis will remain as State President.

WILEY

740.0011 European War 1939/3874 : Telegram

*The Chargé in Estonia (Leonard) to the Secretary of State*

TALLINN, June 17, 1940—11 a. m.

[Received 12:08 p. m.]

64. Following up telegrams Nos. 62 and 63. I have been confidentially informed that a new Estonian government will not be formed until after conferences with and approval of Soviet authorities. Soviet troops crossed the Estonian Russian border early this morning. Also troops by sea are arriving. I am also informed that Tallinn, Pärnu, Tartu<sup>41</sup> and Valga and possibly other places eventually will be occupied.

I have learned confidentially that the "demands" of yesterday were telegraphed through the Estonian Minister at Moscow about the middle of the afternoon and required reply by midnight of the same day.

I have also been informed that flying and steamship services with Finland and Sweden are temporarily suspended and during at least next 2 days vessels destined for Tallinn will be diverted to Paldiski.<sup>42</sup>

Repeated to Riga.

LEONARD

<sup>38</sup> Not printed.

<sup>39</sup> Dvinsk.

<sup>40</sup> Mitau.

<sup>41</sup> Dorpat, Yuryev.

<sup>42</sup> Baltiski, Baltic port.



740.0011 European War 1939/3876 : Telegram

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

Moscow, June 17, 1940—11 a. m.

[Received 1:08 p. m.]

687. The Soviet move against Estonia and Latvia appears to have been made without preliminary discussion with the Governments of those countries and almost without warning. In view of the reference to Estonia and Latvia made in the Soviet ultimatum to Lithuania I called yesterday afternoon at 2 p. m. on the informant (name in my 620, June 4). He assured me categorically that the Soviet charge that Lithuania had entered into a military pact with Estonia and Latvia is completely unfounded and said that he was at a loss to account for the unexpected action of the Soviet Government in making the assertion, adding that no discussions on the subject had taken place between the Soviet Government and the Estonian and Latvian Governments. He added that the public presentation of the charge in question opened the door for action of any kind but assured me that there [was no?] evidence that immediate action was contemplated. I assume, therefore, that the Soviet ultimatum must have been presented between the time of my interview and the announcement of it at 1 o'clock this morning.

THURSTON

740.0011 European War 1939/3931 : Telegram

*The Minister in Latvia (Wiley) to the Secretary of State*

RIGA, June 18, 1940—noon.

[Received June 18—11:08 a. m.]

134. The following are the principal highlights of the Soviet occupation of Riga yesterday: probably over 200 Soviet tanks came into the city. They looked like good, serviceable but old models. The enlisted men made good impression. Not much air force has been in evidence.

Popular manifestations of joy over the Soviet entry rapidly produced clashes between the Latvian police and the working class population. A few of the former were casualties and there was a fair amount of shooting around the city including many bursts of machine-gun fire. Rumors allege that there were some civilians killed and many wounded.

At 3 p. m. all communication with the outside world was suspended. The President spoke briefly [by] radio calling on the population to remain quiet. The Minister of the Interior <sup>42a</sup> proclaimed a curfew from 10 to 4 and forbade the population to assemble in groups of over four.

<sup>42a</sup> Kornelijs Veitmanis.

The Foreign Minister was taken completely by surprise by the Soviet ultimatum, the German Legation also and still more curious was the Soviet Legation. The Soviet Minister, his wife and staff, were at their villa in the country and heard the news for the first time at 4 p. m. the 16th. They rushed to their dismantled residence in Riga without even a change of clothes and slept on sofas for the night.

This morning outside communications were restored and the city seems quiet and life normal. The former Government continues to function administratively and presumably *pourparlers* are going on with Soviet representatives for the formation of a new government.

There seems to be good cooperation between the Latvian Army and police and the Red Army.

WILEY

740.0011 European War 1939/3963 : Telegram

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

KAUNAS, June 18, 1940—2 p. m.

[Received 2:43 p. m.]

119. Occupation movements continue with Soviet units being moved towards German border. Estimated number of Russian troops 300,000. Populace remains quietly at work. Banks report normal turnover. Rumors of German concentrations seem well substantiated. Jewish inhabitants moving away from western cities.

Repeated to Moscow.

NOREM

860M.00/439 : Telegram

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

KAUNAS, June 19, 1940—10 a. m.

[Received 5:35 p. m.]

122. I have the honor to report that last evening the new Prime Minister of Lithuania<sup>43</sup> delivered a radio address in which after thoroughly denouncing the perfidy of the dictatorial regime of Smetona culminating in a disgraceful flight he said,

“The new forces as yet untried will work for the full benefit of all the people.

In matters of foreign policy the new government will continue to maintain normal relations and especially will establish really sincere and friendly relations with the Soviet Union in full accordance with the pact. The new government will protect the rights of the people, increase cultural level, and improve the financial situation.

<sup>43</sup> Justas Paleckis.

The most urgent problem will be to change the political regime which was directed against the best interests of the people. For this reason we shall abolish the present Seimas,<sup>44</sup> the censor's office, and the state and municipal elections carried out in a deceptive manner thanks to Mr. Skucas.

We shall release from prison all political prisoners who fought for freedom and abolish all unions and parties which enjoyed preferential status. We shall give serious attention to all national problems and remove chauvinism.

Since serious attention is necessary with regard to health, we have created a new Ministry of Health. Education of the masses shall receive serious attention. The government approves the warm welcome given Soviet troops and announces that all assistance will be granted to make their stay a pleasant one."

He closed with a plea for full cooperation.

NOREM

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740.0011 European War 1939/3981 : Telegram

*The Chargé in Estonia (Leonard) to the Secretary of State*

TALLINN, June 19, 1940—11 a. m.

[Received June 19—10:08 a. m.]

66. Supplementing my telegram No. 64,<sup>44a</sup> the places mentioned therein have now been occupied and in addition Viljandi, Paide and Mõisaküla. The entry of the troops has taken place without untoward incidents.

The Estonian civil guards have been unarmed but not disbanded. Inhabitants have been warned not to appear unnecessarily on the streets at night but no curfew rule enforced. Cafés and other public places must close by 11 p. m.

Dwellings and other places are being requisitioned in Tallinn and elsewhere. Army barracks have been taken over for Soviet troops and Soviet Military Attaché quartered elsewhere, and I have been informed confidentially today that Soviets have asked for the Estonian General Staff Offices.

There arrived this morning in Tallinn the civil head of the Leningrad District, Zhdanov,<sup>45</sup> and I have just learned confidentially that he is now conferring with the President of Estonia about forming a new government.

LEONARD

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<sup>44</sup> Legislative body of the Lithuanian Government.

<sup>44a</sup> June 17, 11 a.m., p. 373.

<sup>45</sup> Andrey Alexandrovich Zhdanov, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Leningrad oblast, and holder of other party and government positions.

740.0011 European War 1939/4000 : Telegram

*The Minister in Latvia (Wiley) to the Secretary of State*

RIGA, June 19, 1940—1 p. m.

[Received 1:05 p. m.]

133. Vyshinski,<sup>46</sup> Vice Chairman of Sovnarkom, arrived yesterday. Last evening he visited President Ulmanis and presumably is here to set up a new government.

The Riga press yesterday announced that the behaviour of the population had made a bad impression on the Soviet troops and that the Red Command had requested the Latvian authorities to prevent further obstruction of their troop movements. This morning the Soviet Legation denies that any such request was made. The Red Command, the Legation states, was perfectly satisfied with the cordial welcome and greetings of the populace.

An official announcement forbids the circulation of rubles and the bank moratorium continues.

Conjectures regarding the future are pessimistic. It is possible that the new governments of the Baltic States will be so constituted that *Anschluss* with the U. S. S. R. can be voted in due course in an endeavor to forestall any Hitlerian "new order" in Eastern Europe.

It might be well for the Department to foresee the possibility that the Soviet authorities might shortly assume charge of the diplomatic and consular representation of the Baltic States. (See Legation's 278 of October 23, 2 p. m., 1939.)<sup>47</sup> In such an event our entire establishment here might have to be liquidated on fairly short notice unless the Embassy in Moscow could obtain a special dispensation for the maintenance of a Consulate.

Soviet tanks and mechanized forces are here in much more substantial numbers than was first apparent. It is evident that the Foreign Minister was wrong when he recently assured me that Soviet military interest in Latvia was limited to that of an "advance post" only.

An efficient looking Soviet destroyer and a gunboat are moored alongside the President's Palace.

The city and as far as I know the countryside are quiet.

WILEY

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<sup>46</sup> Andrey Yanuaryevich Vyshinsky, Assistant People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union, and a Vice Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars (Sovnarkom).

<sup>47</sup> Not printed.

740.0011 European War 1939/4013 : Telegram

*The Minister in Latvia (Wiley) to the Secretary of State*

RIGA, June 19, 1940— 4 p. m.

[Received 9:15 p. m.]

135. The source of the following is confidential but excellent:

The Soviet forces entered Estonia in much more warlike formation than in Lithuania or Latvia, giving impression that they expected, perhaps even desired, trouble. It is clear that Soviet policy attaches very special importance to Estonia. This is emphasized by the fact that Maris Coudert,<sup>48</sup> commanding the Leningrad area, met General Laidoner at Narva 2 days ago and is now in Tallinn and that Zhdanov also arrived there today. He is now in conference with President Päts. The latter is proposing that a new government be formed under the Premiership of Rei, Estonian Minister in Moscow. The fact that Zhdanov was selected to come to Estonia has been interpreted in Tallinn as an extremely bad sign. In all the Baltic negotiations in Moscow last September Zhdanov was the most difficult of all the Soviet leaders and is regarded as the principal Soviet "fire eater". However, on his arrival in Tallinn he appeared to be in very good humor and the Estonian Government is beginning to hope that the Soviet attitude of the last 2 days which has been extremely exacting may now be moderating. My informant, however, is not sanguine and foresees the possibility that after the setting up of new governments in the Baltic States the Soviet Union will insist on plebiscites which if held under Soviet bayonets might readily be perverted into a legalistical incorporation of these sooner or later into the Soviet Union. He also foresees the possibility that the Soviet Union may insist on the elimination of foreign diplomatic and consular representatives from the Baltic States.

The informant went on that according to most reliable information the Kremlin is in a state of acute anxiety and confusion over foreign political developments. Stalin's policy was premised on a long and exhausting war. With the collapse of France this policy too has collapsed. Hitler's recent statement that he did not desire the destruction of the British Empire literally caused panic in the Soviet mind. Acute fear has revived that the problems of Western Europe will be solved at the expense of Russia. To be the only major power on the Continent which might be opposed to the Axis is of course not a comforting thought.

The reference to the *Revue Baltique* cited by Molotov in the Soviet protest the informant said was explained by the article contributed

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<sup>48</sup> Apparent garble; probably intended for Army General Kyrill Afanasyevich Meretskov, Commander of the Leningrad Military District.

by the Lithuanian Premier Merkys to the first (and only) number. It appeared February last and was forwarded to the Department from Tallinn.

The informant stated that the plane carrying Antheil was most probably shot down not by a submarine (see No. 63 of June 16, midnight, from Tallinn) but by two pursuit planes which were seen prior to the event escorting the plane in question one on each side. The witness was a veteran, entirely responsible Estonian pilot. The Estonians think that the Soviet authorities wished to do away with La Bonne's<sup>49</sup> despatches reporting his conversations in Moscow which were going forward with two French couriers in the plane in question. The Soviets they think were fearful lest the despatches in question fall into German hands.

WILEY

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860I.00/427: Telegram

*The Chargé in Estonia (Leonard) to the Secretary of State*

TALLINN, June 22, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received 5:25 p. m.]

70. Supplementing my telegrams Nos. 68 and 69.<sup>50</sup> The announcement of the new government has pacified the situation and everything appears normal again. The members of the former government and higher military officials have their freedom.

Two members of the new government, the Minister of the Interior and the Minister for Social Affairs, are considered communistic, otherwise members are socialists or nationalists. The new Prime Minister<sup>51</sup> has announced that the government will shortly make a declaration of its policy which is expected to be similar to that already made in Latvia.

LEONARD

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740.0011 European War 1939/4093: Telegram

*The Chargé in Estonia (Leonard) to the Secretary of State*

TALLINN, June 23, 1940—noon.

[Received 12:40 p. m.]

71. Policy of the new government announced, being similar to that previously announced in Latvia,<sup>52</sup> emphasis being placed on friendly

<sup>49</sup> Erik Labonne, new French Ambassador in the Soviet Union, who had an interview with Molotov on June 16.

<sup>50</sup> Neither printed.

<sup>51</sup> Johannes Vares, a writer known as Barbarus.

<sup>52</sup> A new Latvian Cabinet had been formed on June 20, with Augusts Kirchensteins as Prime Minister and interim Foreign Minister. He was described as being "an active member of the Latvian Society for the Study of Soviet Culture."

relations with the Soviet Union and carrying out of the Soviet-Estonian mutual assistance pact in the interests of the common people, and to "support and maintain normal relations with all countries" on which will be based the independence and protection of Estonia.

New elections for Parliament are announced and reforms in local governments, as well as assurance of rights of racial minorities, and emphasis is placed on improving labor conditions and the position of the working classes and intelligentsia.

LEONARD

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860P.00/279 : Telegram

*The Minister in Latvia (Wiley) to the Secretary of State*

RIGA, June 24, 1940—noon.

[Received June 24—10:05 a. m.]

151. Minister of Interior<sup>53</sup> addressed the nation last night by radio. He fulsomely lauded the Soviet Union and attacked the previous Ulmanis Government as reactionary and guilty of duplicity toward Russia. He promised a revision of existing laws and a purging with relentless persecution of the public services of their reactionary and evil elements particularly those who obstructed the carrying out of the mutual aid pact. The Minister also promised individual freedom and the protection of private property rights.

The implication is that of purges and public trials in the Moscow manner.

WILEY

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860P.00/284 : Telegram

*The Minister in Latvia (Wiley) to the Secretary of State*

RIGA, June 26, 1940—noon.

[Received 2:47 p. m.]

161. The new Prime Minister received me briefly at the Foreign Office where he presides *ad interim*.

He expressed his utter amazement at finding himself at the head of the government and complained that he had no preparation whatever for his official duties.

I expressed curiosity regarding the secret military pact of the Baltic States, the existence of which the Soviet Government had alleged and he had confirmed in his proclamation. He replied that he had been obliged by the Soviet Government to say what he had said. That he had no knowledge whatever of the matter. Probably Munters alone knew whether there had been a secret agreement. He added that in Latvia as elsewhere, there was a fifth column of pro-Germans.

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<sup>53</sup> Vilis Lācis.

I asked when the elections would take place. He answered that preparations were being hastened, but that it might take several months.

He went on that trade now [was] continuing normally. Exports to Russia would increase. There were ample reserves and Latvia had just been able to make a large shipment of grain to Denmark, where those important deliveries were expected. Germany was demanding that Latvian shipping enter into "circular trade in the Baltic".

Apropos of nothing, he closed our interview with vehement protestations of his pro-Ally sentiment. He impressed me as a Kerensky<sup>54</sup> in caricature with no trace of confidence in himself or the future of his country.

WILEY

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860P.00/283 : Telegram

*The Minister in Latvia (Wiley) to the Secretary of State*

RIGA, June 26, 1940—7 p. m.

[Received June 26—6 : 20 p. m.]

162. My 161, June 26, noon. In his conversation with other Chiefs of Mission this morning the Premier talked with almost alarming openness. He made *inter alia* the following remarks:

The situation of Latvia could be compared with that of the Mongol People's Republic. Several Cabinet posts remained vacant because no candidate acceptable to the Soviet authorities could be found. He expected to be in office about a month. All political parties would be allowed but in practice there would probably be only one. It would [not?] be called Communist since he understood that Moscow had another name for it—he thought it would be named Workers and Peasants Party. In discussing economic matters and trade agreements, he frankly told the Swiss Chargé that the future would be shaped by Soviet desires.

WILEY

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740.0011 European War 1939/4250 : Telegram

*The Minister in Latvia (Wiley) to the Secretary of State*

RIGA, June 28, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received 5 : 05 p. m.]

167. I have just had a long private interview with the person mentioned in my 97, May 16, 1 p. m.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Alexander Fedorovich Kerensky, Minister of Justice in the Russian Provisional Government, March–May 1917; Minister of War, May–September, and Prime Minister, July to the Bolshevik Revolution, November 7, 1917.

<sup>55</sup> Not printed.



The Soviet complaints against Latvia and Estonia were bogus fabrications. Last September Molotov specifically acquiesced in the continuance of the Latvian-Estonian alliance. On March 29 he publicly paid tribute to the excellence of Soviet relations with the Baltic States. On the eve of the Soviet ultimatum Molotov in two Tass interviews confirmed to General Berkis that the Soviet Union had no complaints against Latvia. Simultaneously, my informant queried General Loktionov in Riga both officially and off the record and was told that everything was in perfect order.

My informant confirmed the accuracy of my No. 146, June 22, 3 p. m.,<sup>56</sup> second paragraph, reporting threats against the President "who aged 10 years in 30 minutes". The informant does not believe that foreign diplomatic and consular representatives will be permitted to remain in Latvia for more than another month at the outside.

He anticipates public trials for himself and other leaders of the regime.

I queried him with regard to the future of German-Soviet relations. He said that a change in [the relationship?] between them was inevitable. If Germany now made a big colonial "grab" the conflict might be long deferred. If not, it might come very quickly.

WILEY

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740.0011 European War 1939/4276 : Telegram

*The Minister in Latvia (Wiley) to the Secretary of State*

RIGA, June 29, 1940—noon.

[Received June 29—10:28 a. m.]

168. I am very confidentially informed by a high dignitary of the Catholic Church that general mobilization will be ordered in Latvia on July 1st. He states that there is much concern in responsible Latvian circles that this measure is the prelude to a Soviet-German conflict. It also may mean the dispersal of a large part of the male population of Latvia throughout Russia under the pretense of training with modern military equipment.

Repeated to Berlin and Moscow.

WILEY

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740.0011 European War 1939/4332 : Telegram

*The Minister in Latvia (Wiley) to the Secretary of State*

RIGA, July 1, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received 4:35 p. m.]

171. The German Minister<sup>57</sup> tells me that after the Soviet ultimatum (of which his Government had given him 9 hours' advance

<sup>56</sup> Not printed.

<sup>57</sup> Hans Ulrich von Kotze.

notice) he was instructed not to have any contact with members of the previous regime and to refuse visas to all would-be Latvian political refugees who wished to flee to Germany for asylum (there have already been over 200). When the Diplomatic Corps has to leave, the German Legation will be the first to withdraw. All this he said represented his Government's desire to emphasize the good understanding existing between the Reich and the Soviet Union. He said that he had received an unconfirmed report from Kaunas this morning that Lithuania had already decided to petition for incorporation in the U. S. S. R. He doubted this story. Personally he thought the process would be slow. From what the Soviet Minister tells him Soviet policy desires to avoid violent measures in these countries as a demonstration of Russia's "peaceful mission of culture". The German Minister believes that popular elections will precede incorporation of the Baltic States in the Soviet Union and that such elections will require some time to prepare.

He thinks it is quite possible that the Soviet Union may in the meantime take over the conduct of foreign affairs. In any event the local Diplomatic Corps will have to leave sooner or later.

A local Communist who was befriended by his employer has assured him that he was in no danger and that Latvia would not be taken over for at least 6 months.

The new Commander-in-Chief received Major Huthsteiner this morning. The situation at first looked very black. He was now more hopeful of Latvia's retaining control over domestic and cultural affairs (it seems to me that this control is already lost) but he admitted that there was no hope of controlling foreign affairs.

WILEY

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740.0011 European War 1939/4380 : Telegram

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

KAUNAS, July 3, 1940—10 a. m.

[Received 11:45 a. m.]

136. I have the honor to report that the Lithuanian papers today carried the formal denouncement by Lithuania of 1934 Baltic Pact intended to further better understanding and cooperation between the three Baltic States. It is quite apparent that the suggestion for this move as well as for several other recent changes emanates from Moscow. The Russians would have it appear that the local Communists and sympathizers (which group is apparently increasing in size and fervor) are demanding change of their own free will. Last evening a large demonstration was held by the soldiers of the Lithuanian Army. Banners reading "Let us make Lithuania the thirteenth

republic in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics" illustrates the trend of thought.

Yesterday the German Minister, Dr. Zechlin, called at the Legation and said, among other things, that their estimate of the Russian troops in Lithuania was three and half army corps or approximately 160,000 men. Many of the troops that originally entered Lithuania had passed into Latvia and the figure for the three countries was 500,000. He said that for the time being they did not intend to repatriate the Germans from Lithuania. He added that relations between Germany and Russia were better since the Soviets had stabilized their move in Rumania.<sup>58</sup> I asked about reported concentration of Germans in East Prussia to which he replied that these were new troops on training maneuvers. He sought several times to ascertain my views on the coming elections and their effect upon world affairs, especially upon relations with Germany. I replied that we were almost out of touch with current American news excepting that which we received over the radio. As he has just returned from Berlin his interest in American developments may not be personal but rather a reflection of anxiety as to the possibility of a conflict with us.

NOREM

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860L.00/432 : Telegram

*The Chargé in Estonia (Leonard) to the Secretary of State*

TALLINN, July 5, 1940—noon.

[Received July 5—11:18 a. m.]

82. I have been informed confidentially that the visit of the Soviet official mentioned in my telegram No. 80<sup>59</sup> is in connection with the (1) extension of coast and island defenses and reorganization of the Estonian Army, (2) elections to be held for Parliament and (3) possible change in the person of the President of Estonia, probably after the elections.

Dates of elections not yet announced but will probably be held soon, after which radical political changes may be expected.

LEONARD

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124.60N/14 : Telegram

*The Minister in Latvia (Wiley) to the Secretary of State*

RIGA, July 5, 1940—3 p. m.

[Received July 5—12:20 a. m. (p. m.)]

181. My German colleague shares general consensus that foreign diplomatic representatives will shortly be obliged to leave Riga and

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<sup>58</sup> For correspondence concerning activities of the Soviet Union in the Balkans and the seizure of Bessarabia, see pp. 444 ff.

<sup>59</sup> Dated July 2, 5 p. m., not printed; it advised of the second visit of Andrey Alexandrovich Zhdanov to Tallinn, where his presence caused uneasiness (740.0011 E. W. 1939/4356).

Tallinn. He foresees that Germany may be able to retain a consular office somewhere in the Baltic States perhaps Libau<sup>60</sup> on basis of reciprocity since the Soviet Union is anxious to open an additional office in Germany. This suggests possibility that Department if it exercises pressure and should so desire might be able to retain a Consulate in one of the three States.

In view of the rapidity of events I would be [obliged?] if the Department could formulate general instructions covering future eventualities in Riga and Tallinn with special reference to disposition of staff, archives, codes, ciphers, Government property and leases.

WILEY

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124.60N/14 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Minister in Latvia (Wiley)*

WASHINGTON, July 9, 1940—7 p. m.

86. Your 181, July 5, 3 p. m. Department plans to maintain diplomatic missions in Riga, Tallinn and Kaunas as long as possible and hopes that if it becomes necessary to close missions to be able to keep consulates open. At this juncture of developments the Department cannot indicate which consulate it would retain in case permission is given to maintain only one.

In case of emergency you are authorized to destroy all confidential archives, ciphers and codes. It is hoped, however, that if offices have to be closed that time will be given for the proper packing, for shipment to the United States, of the archives.

Detailed instructions on all matters mentioned by you will be formulated as situation develops and clarifies.

HULL

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860I.00/434 : Telegram

*The Minister in Estonia (Wiley) to the Secretary of State*

TALLINN, July 11, 1940—1 p. m.

[Received July 11—10:30 a. m.]

88. I saw the new Foreign Minister<sup>61</sup> this morning. He said that the elections would take place "with the collaboration of the Communist Party". I inquired regarding the future status of Estonia. He replied that personally he did not foresee immediate *Anschluss* with the Soviet Union but could express no opinion with regard to the future.

WILEY

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<sup>60</sup> Liepāja; Libava.

<sup>61</sup> Nigol Andresen, in the Cabinet of Dr. Vares formed on June 22, 1940.

760M.61/137 : Telegram

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

KAUNAS, July 12, 1940.

[Received July 12—4 p. m.]

150. I have the honor to inform the Department that the new Sejm to be elected on July 14 will most likely ask for immediate inclusion of Lithuania into the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Mr. Seja told me confidentially that the Lithuanian Minister for Foreign Affairs had been so informed on his recent visit to Moscow.<sup>62</sup> The one list of candidates to be presented to the people includes laborers, farmers, soldiers, dancers, writers, and singers who have expressed radical views. The Minister of Finance resigned a few days ago and the Minister for Foreign Affairs is reported to have tendered his resignation for the second time.

NOREM

860P.00/290 : Telegram

*The Chargé in Latvia (Washington) to the Secretary of State*

RIGA, July 12, 1940—6 p. m.

[Received July 12—5:06 p. m.]

187. Legation's telegrams 178, July 5, 1 p. m. and 185, July 10, 11 a. m.<sup>63</sup> According to press announcements, 16 lists of candidates were submitted to the election commission within the period allowed by law but only five were accepted as corresponding to the requirements of the law. These five, one for each election district, are lists submitted by the Latvian Toilers bloc. An announcement of the commission states that ballots will be considered as invalid if the candidates' names are crossed out or new names are added.

Election propaganda emphasizes the necessity of everybody voting. The abstainers will be marked by the absence of the notations in their passports to the effect that they have cast ballots. The political directors who have been appointed for the Army tell the soldiers that it is their duty to vote with the workers.

The Toilers bloc has issued a list of slogans including one demanding the strengthening of friendship with the Soviet Union and another calling for "complete democratization of the Army."

An order of the Minister of the Interior "suggests" that all owners of immovable property procure Soviet flags for adorning their houses on future occasions.

WASHINGTON

<sup>62</sup> Vincas Kreve-Mickevičius, Lithuanian Minister for Foreign Affairs since June 17, 1940, had visited Moscow July 1-2.

<sup>63</sup> Neither printed.

860M.00/451

*The Lithuanian Minister (Zadeikis) to the Secretary of State*

No. 826

WASHINGTON, July 13, 1940.

SIR: Referring to my note of June 25, 1940<sup>64</sup> I have the honor to advise you further that, according to information available, H. E. Antanas Smetona, the President of Lithuania, before departing for abroad because of ill health, on June 15, 1940 officially requested Mr. Antanas Merkys, the Prime Minister, to substitute [for] him in the duties of the President, in accordance with Article 71 of the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania.

On June 16, 1940, Mr. Antanas Merkys as Acting President of the Republic was replaced by Mr. Justas Paleckis, the new Prime Minister.

While President Antanas Smetona still remained abroad, Mr. Paleckis' government, which came into existence as a result of the Soviet Union ultimatum of June 14, 1940, dismissed the Seimas (Parliament) as of July 1, 1940 and on July 6 decreed that new elections be held on July 14, 1940, disregarding the fact that the whole of Lithuania is pervaded with numerous divisions of foreign troops, which is another result of the previously mentioned Soviet ultimatum of June 14, 1940.

From the information available, it appears that the scheduled elections will be carried out exclusively under the aegis of the Communist party which was legalized recently for this and other purposes by the Paleckis government.

Grave doubt and concern arises regarding the possibility of free expression of the true will of the Lithuanian nation through the impending elections under such circumstances.

Accept [etc.]

P. ZADEIKIS

740.0011 European War 1939/4635: Telegram

*The Minister in Latvia (Wiley) to the Secretary of State*

RIGA, July 14, 1940—11 a. m.

[Received 2: 42 p. m.]

189. The person mentioned in despatch No. 630, January 19,<sup>65</sup> tells me that he has reliable information that the Soviet Government has decided on incorporating the Baltic States and that Molotov has said that the new Lithuanian Parliament will have only one question to decide namely *Anschluss*. The informant added that Russia would

<sup>64</sup> Not printed.<sup>65</sup> Despatch not printed; the reference is presumably to Henry A. Hobson, Commercial Secretary and Consul in the British Legation in Latvia.

probably initiate matters with Lithuania in order to study the German reaction.

He also told me that the new Latvian Government has been formed. It is made up of Latvian Communists who are shortly arriving from Russia. He suggested that it would be along the lines of the Terijoki government<sup>67</sup> which was to have been set up in Finland.

WILEY

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740.0011 European War 1939/4661 : Telegram

*The Minister in Latvia (Wiley) to the Secretary of State*

RIGA, July 15, 1940—1 p. m.

[Received 1:15 p. m.]

194. The source mentioned in my 171, July 1, 5 [4] p. m. tells me that the Latvian Government though professing optimism with regard to the future status of Latvia actually has no information whatsoever regarding Moscow's real plans. He made it clear that he too is uninformed with regard to Soviet policy and added that he was at a loss to explain the tactics of the Red army. For example after its withdrawal from the German-Lithuanian frontier, see my 156, June 25, 1 p. m.,<sup>68</sup> paragraph 2, it was again moved back to the frontier. My informant then confirmed that the Red army was hastily digging in along the Lithuanian border and the Dvina.

Though making it significantly apparent that mutual suspicion dominates German-Soviet relations<sup>69</sup> he is apparently sincere in disbelieving current reports of imminent conflict between them. He thought Hitler would not wish to invade Russia but would obtain *Lebensraum* at the expense of France "by readjusting the population of France and Germany on the basis of a common denominator per square kilometer". He made the reservation though that no forecast of future events beyond September 1 could be made.

He admitted that there had been big German troop movements eastward since a large number of divisions now superfluous were being demobilized for harvesting but vigorously denied that there was any massing of combat forces in East Prussia.

WILEY

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<sup>67</sup> The puppet, Communist Soviet government of the "Democratic Republic of Finland", set up on December 1, 1939, in the town of Terijoki under the nominal leadership of Otto W. Kuusinen.

<sup>68</sup> Not printed.

<sup>69</sup> For correspondence on wartime cooperation between Germany and the Soviet Union, see pp. 539 ff.

840.51 Frozen Credits/325½

*Memorandum by the Assistant Chief of the Division of European Affairs (Henderson)* <sup>70</sup>

[WASHINGTON,] July 15, 1940.

As you are aware, on one pretext or another the Soviet Government, by demands backed up with threats of force, has during the last six weeks forced the three Baltic countries of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania to permit the entrance of Soviet troops aggregating about 500,000 men. Under Soviet pressure the Governments in all three countries have been replaced by governments which are mere Soviet puppets. The President of Lithuania was successful in escaping to Germany; the President of Latvia appears to be a virtual if not an actual prisoner; the President of Estonia is also apparently without any power whatsoever.

Under Soviet pressure elections were ordered in these three countries for yesterday and today. It is clear from reports which reach us that these elections are merely a mockery. Only persons approved by the Soviet Government or the Communist International <sup>71</sup> are permitted to stand as candidates. It appears likely that following these so-called elections it will be arranged for these three republics to be merged into the Soviet Union. Whether these arrangements will be put into effect at once or whether the Soviet Government will be satisfied for some time to come with having the three countries under its actual control, although fictiously independent, remains to be seen.

On Saturday, July 13, shortly after noon, the Latvian Minister <sup>72</sup> presented the attached note <sup>73</sup> to Mr. Atherton <sup>74</sup> after having endeavored unsuccessfully to obtain an appointment with the Secretary or Under Secretary. In this note he points out that in view of the circumstances surrounding the holding of the elections in Latvia he "reserves the right not to recognize the results of the coming elections and the acts emanating therefrom". The Minister also states that in United States banks there are deposits of the Latvian State and of Latvian banks, corporations and private citizens, and that there are a number of Latvian ships in the waters of the western hemisphere. He asks that if attempts are made to alienate these deposits, vessels and

<sup>70</sup> Addressed to the Assistant Secretary of State, Adolf A. Berle, Jr., and to the Adviser on Political Relations, James Clement Dunn. A note written by the latter, at the beginning of the memorandum, reads: "I feel funds of all 3 of these countries should be blocked on same basis as those of countries occupied by Germany."

<sup>71</sup> The Communist (Third, Red) International, founded by the Bolsheviks at Moscow in March 1919.

<sup>72</sup> Alfred Bilmanis.

<sup>73</sup> Not printed.

<sup>74</sup> Ray Atherton, Acting Chief of the Division of European Affairs.



other Latvian property and interests in the United States, the American Government safeguard and secure the said deposits and property. It is understood that the Lithuanian Minister <sup>75</sup> has also prepared a note which he plans to hand to the Department within the next few days, if he has not already done so, in which he will point out the illegality of the elections in Lithuania. There is no Estonian Minister in this country. The only representative of that government in the United States is the Estonian Consul General in New York.<sup>76</sup>

The recent events in the Baltic States have raised a number of rather important questions. The note of the Latvian Minister merely serves to render these questions more active. Among these questions are the following:

1. Is the Government of the United States to apply certain standards of judgment and conduct to aggression by Germany and Japan which it will not apply to aggression by the Soviet Union. In other words, is the Government of the United States to follow one policy with respect to, say, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, and German-occupied Poland, and another policy with respect to Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, and Finland, which before the end of the year is likely to suffer the same fate as the other three Baltic States. Is the United States to continue to refuse to recognize the fruits of aggression regardless of who the aggressor may be, or for reasons of expediency to close its eyes to the fact that certain nations are committing aggression upon their neighbors. If our Government at this juncture desires to take no step which might arouse the displeasure of the Soviet Union it would possibly be wise for it to overlook the present Soviet aggressive acts in the Baltic States, as well as similar acts which will probably take place in Finland. On the other hand, our failure to recognize Soviet conquests just now, although not pleasant to the Soviet Government, may possibly place another card in our hands when, if ever, a conference regarding the future of Europe takes place.

2. Does the Government of the United States desire to take steps to restrain the export of funds in this country belonging to the States of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania, as it has done recently in the case of countries taken over by Germany. If no restriction on the export of these funds is laid down, it seems almost certain that they will pass into the Soviet Treasury. It is impossible at the present time to estimate the full amount. It seems likely that the assets of all three countries in the United States will not amount to much more than 12 or 13 million dollars. In this connection it will be observed that if the three countries in question are absorbed into the Soviet

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<sup>75</sup> Povilas Zadeikis.

<sup>76</sup> Johannes Kaiv, Acting Consul General, in charge of the Legation of Estonia.

Union, the United States will probably not receive one cent of the several million dollars which the governments of these three countries owe us. Furthermore, American interests in those three countries will probably be a total loss. It is estimated that these interests will not approximate more than two or three hundred thousand dollars, although it is difficult to obtain figures. It will be recalled that the Soviet Government announced some time ago that since the acts of nationalization of that part of Poland which has been annexed to the Soviet Union took place prior to the entry of that territory into the Soviet Union, the Soviet Government could not be held responsible for losses incurred as a result of those acts.<sup>77</sup> It is possible that in the interim before the incorporation of the three Baltic States into the Soviet Union, the new puppet governments of those States might denounce all public indebtedness and nationalize property, and that the Soviet Government, after their entry into the Soviet Union, will take the attitude that it is not responsible for the acts of such puppet governments.

At the suggestion of Mr. Berle, which I conveyed to Mr. Livesey<sup>78</sup> last week, Mr. Livesey has informally asked the Treasury to investigate the holdings of Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania in this country in American banks and to request the banks in which the holdings are extensive to inform the American Government, before any large withdrawals are permitted. It is probable that during the present week endeavors will be made by the Soviet Government to obtain possession of these funds. It is essential, therefore, that a decision with respect to them be made at once.<sup>79</sup>

3. Are vessels of the Baltic States in American harbors to be permitted to depart freely or are they to be held up like the vessels of a number of countries which have been taken over by Germany. For some time the ability of the Soviet Union to handle its foreign trade has been suffering because of the lack of ships. For the last several months the Soviet Embassy has been endeavoring to arrange for the charter of Latvian bottoms in order to transport material to

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<sup>77</sup> For text of the Soviet note of April 26, 1940, see telegram No. 502, May 8, 5 p. m., from the Chargé in the Soviet Union, vol. III, p. 197; the Department's reply was sent in telegram No. 276, May 16, 6 p. m., *ibid.*, p. 201.

<sup>78</sup> Frederick Livesey, Assistant Adviser on International Economic Affairs.

<sup>79</sup> In a note attached at this point, Mr. Henderson wrote: "Mr. Berle states that Treasury has decided to block the accounts of Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania in this country today July 15, 1940." For text of Executive Order No. 8484, by which this was accomplished, see 5 *Federal Register* 2586. The text of regulations of the Treasury Department, also issued on July 15, 1940, is printed *ibid.*, p. 2593. Although the assets of the Baltic States were frozen, disbursements from them were subsequently permitted to the extent necessary to support the continued operation of the Baltic diplomatic missions in the United States and in the several other countries which had likewise not recognized the Soviet occupation of these countries. Title to the assets remained in the name of the free governments of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, since the United States never recognized the legality of the Soviet occupation of the three states.

Vladivostok. Apparently the Soviet plan now is to force the Latvian Government and private owners to permit Soviet organizations to charter Latvian and other Baltic ships and to call these ships into Soviet ports where they are to be nationalized. Some of the Latvian ships are excellent and have a high rating in Lloyds, according to information received from our Legation at Riga. The Latvian Minister states that at the present time a Latvian vessel is in Baltimore taking on cargo for Vladivostok in pursuance of a recent Soviet charter. The Maritime Commission is undoubtedly in a much better position than this Department to decide whether it would be advantageous to the American Government to retain these vessels or to permit them to depart.<sup>80</sup>

L[OY] W. H[ENDERSON]

840.51 Frozen Credits/313 : Telegram

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

KAUNAS, July 17, 1940—9 a. m.

[Received 9:23 a. m.]

156. I have been confidentially informed that England may follow our example and freeze \$5,000,000 in gold deposited in London. The Russian Assistant Commissar for Foreign Affairs Dekanozov hurried on July 16 to Moscow for instructions following the announcement here of the freezing of Baltic credits in the United States.

Local banks did not quote a rate on the dollar at the opening of business this morning.

Copy to Moscow.

NOREM

860I.00/437 : Telegram

*The Chargé in Estonia (Leonard) to the Secretary of State*

TALLINN, July 17, 1940—11 a. m.

[Received July 17—8 a. m.]

92. Since there was no opposition as indicated in telegram No. 90 of July 14,<sup>81</sup> all the new government's candidates in the 80 Estonian districts were elected to Parliament. According to preliminary offi-

<sup>80</sup> For additional consideration of the subject of the sequestration of the gold and ships of the Baltic States in accordance with the policy of the United States in conferences held with the Ambassador of the Soviet Union by various members of the Department of State, especially by Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles, see the following documents in vol. III: Memorandum of July 27, p. 327; undated memorandum by Loy W. Henderson, p. 331; memorandum of August 1, p. 340; memorandum of August 7, p. 348; memorandum of August 12, p. 362; memorandum of August 15, p. 371; telegram No. 614, October 3, 2 p. m., to the Ambassador in the Soviet Union, p. 388; memorandum of October 31, p. 403; and memorandum of November 27, p. 413. See also telegram No. 1781, December 26, 8 p. m., from the Ambassador in the Soviet Union, *ibid.*, p. 438.

<sup>81</sup> Not printed.

cial announcement 81½ percent of all eligible voters cast their ballots of which 93 percent marked them in favor of the respective candidate. Election carried out without untoward incidents.

Very important. I have been confidentially informed from a reliable source that *Anschluss* is imminent, possibly in a few days, and that the three Baltic States will be joined to the Leningrad districts.

LEONARD

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123W644/582 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Minister in Latvia (Wiley)*

[Extract]

WASHINGTON, July 17, 1940—6 p. m.

90. Your 197, July 16, noon.<sup>82</sup> Please proceed to the Department for consultation as soon as possible either across Soviet Union or via Atlantic.

[Here follow travel instructions, not printed.]

Your suggestion as to whether, pending further developments, the offices in Riga and Tallinn should continue to function as Legations or Consulates would be appreciated. Department inclined to believe that if practicable it would be preferable for the moment not to take formal step of closing Legations.

We consider, however, that it would be easier for you as Chief of Mission to avoid the necessity for making any official calls upon the authorities of the new governments set up in consequence of the recent elections if you were in a position to announce that you have been called home for consultation and are leaving for Washington immediately. The diplomatic officers remaining should also avoid making official calls upon the new authorities until authorization is received to do so.

Any steps which might be necessary for the protection of American interests or property should be taken by appropriate officers in their consular capacity. Please instruct Leonard in this sense.

The contents of this telegram, with the exception of your instructions to proceed to Washington for consultation, are confidential.

HULL

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860M.00/452 : Telegram

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

KAUNAS, July 19, 1940—10 a. m.

[Received 7:38 p. m.]

158. The election results have been announced as one of 99% variety and indicates a total lack of true democratic expression. Indications

<sup>82</sup> Not printed.

point to complete absorption into the Soviet Union. The new Seimas is scheduled to meet on Sunday, July 21.<sup>83</sup>

The *Kulturverband* is completing its registration of all German-owned property. The actual transfer of some 36,000 of German blood and 400,000 mixed blood, many of whom joined the organization for protection, has been discussed in Berlin and local reports are to the effect that it will be effected within the next 5 weeks.

Former Government leaders Merkys and Urbsys<sup>84</sup> are reported to be in Moscow as "guests" of the Soviet Government.

The Argentine Consul has shipped his effects and plans to leave for Berlin in a few days.

NOREM

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860P.00/298 : Telegram

*The Minister in Latvia (Wiley) to the Secretary of State*

RIGA, July 19, 1940—3 p. m.

[Received 3 : 29 p. m.]

207. Yesterday the population was turned out *en masse* to celebrate the "victory" of the Toilers.<sup>85</sup> The proceedings were most orderly and well-organized with strategically placed groups of cheer leaders. The majority of the placards carried slogans demanding the incorporation of Latvia as the fourteenth Republic of the Union. Following a speech by the Prime Minister attacking the previous regime and praising that of the Soviets, a Communist speaker harangued the crowd, proclaiming the "unanimous demand of the Latvian workers, peasants, and intellectual toilers to incorporate Latvia into the great Fatherland". Vyshinski<sup>86</sup> also spoke calling on Latvians to turn their faces eastward.

The new Parliament is to meet at noon on Sunday. I have been officially invited to attend but shall be indisposed.

A Communist source believed reliable states that the new emphasis on *Anschluss* with the Soviet Union is the result of orders based on a decision reached in Moscow 2 days ago. Previously, local Communists did not believe that *Anschluss* would take place. They attribute this new development to an "international agreement", meaning, I suppose, Germany.

WILEY

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<sup>83</sup> This body met at noon on July 21 and "decided to petition the Soviet Union for incorporation into the Soviet Union as a republic with full status." (860M.00/453)

<sup>84</sup> Juozas Urbsys, former Lithuanian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>85</sup> Name of the political bloc which had put up the unopposed list of candidates in the election.

<sup>86</sup> Andrey Yanuaryevich Vyshinsky, in Latvia on special mission.

840.51 Frozen Credits/326 : Telegram

*The Minister in Latvia (Wiley) to the Secretary of State*RIGA, July 19, 1940—6 p. m.  
[Received July 19—3 : 33 p. m.]

209. Numerous inquiries have been made of this office regarding the operation of the freezing of Latvian assets in the United States. Because no pouches have been received for many weeks this office has no copies of laws, executive orders, and regulations which have been applied to the other countries whose assets have been frozen. It would be helpful for the Legation to have the answers to the following questions: (1) does the order apply to credit balances held by American commercial firms, as distinct from American banks, in favor of Latvian businessmen and companies; (2) do personal bank accounts in the United States become unfrozen as soon as the depositor crosses the frontier into a country whose assets are not frozen, as, for example, after my departure from Latvia; (3) is it possible for unfrozen credits on behalf of Latvian banks to be created in the United States with the proceeds of such transactions as the purchase of the Legation's official drafts?

WILEY

840.51 Frozen Credits/339 : Telegram

*The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Thurston) to the Secretary of State*Moscow, July 20, 1940—9 p. m.  
[Received 9 : 30 p. m.]

885. I was requested by Assistant Commissar Lozovski<sup>87</sup> to call at the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs this evening. Upon my arrival he stated that he had been directed to lodge a strong protest against the withholding from the Soviet State Bank by American banks of gold acquired by it from Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian banks. He then handed to me the following memorandum stating that an early reply is desired and commenting that the American action is illegal and serious. I stated that I would bring the memorandum of protest to the attention of my Government and advise him promptly of such reply as I might be instructed to make to it. With respect to his comment on the illegality of our acts I stated that while there is room for differences of opinion regarding such matters I could not accept his employment of the term "illegal" as my Government does not engage in illegal activities:

"The Government of the U. S. S. R. directs the attention of the Government of the United States to the actions of the Federal Reserve

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<sup>87</sup> Solomon Abramovich Lozovsky, an Assistant People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union.

Bank, New York, a bank which has permitted an arbitrary suspension of the transfer of gold belonging to the Soviet state to the State Bank of the U. S. S. R.

The above-mentioned gold was acquired by State Bank of the U. S. S. R. from the Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian banks on the basis of sale purchase agreements and was subject to transfer to the deposit of the State Bank of the U. S. S. R. by virtue of telegraphic orders of July 13, 1940 of the Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian banks, orders which are unconditionally binding upon the Federal Reserve Bank. Nevertheless, instead of immediately fulfilling the above-mentioned instructions of the banks of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia the Federal Reserve Bank after a completely unjustified delay of 3 days informed the State Bank of the U. S. S. R. by a telegram of July 16, 1940 that it was soliciting the permission of the Federal Treasury of the United States for transfer of the gold to the State Bank of the U. S. S. R. Along with this the Federal Reserve Bank referred to 'Executive Order No. 8484 of July 15, 1940' which prohibits operations involving property in which Latvia, Lithuania or Estonia or citizens of those countries, have an interest, from being conducted without permission.

No further communication concerning a change in the situation which has arisen of suspension of the transfer of the gold to the account of the State Bank of the U. S. S. R. have arrived from the Federal Reserve Bank up to the present time.

The Soviet Government considers the actions of the American institutions to be directed against the Soviet Union's realization of its legal property rights to the said gold as undermining the foundations of normal commercial relations and as contrary to the elementary principles of international law.

The Soviet Government in particular notes that:

1. The Federal Reserve Bank had no legal bases whatsoever for suspending the execution of the operations of transferring the gold to the State Bank of the U. S. S. R., operations with which the Bank was already commissioned on July 13, 1940 by the Banks of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. The references of the Federal Reserve Bank to the 'Executive Order No. 8484 of July 15, 1940' as a basis for non-fulfillment during the course of July 13th, 14th and 15th of the said instructions are absolutely unconvincing inasmuch as these instructions had already been received prior to the issue of the order.

2. With regard to the contents of 'Executive Order No. 8484,' contents cited in the communication of the Federal Reserve Bank, it is necessary to point out that neither this nor any other order can limit the rights of the U. S. S. R. to the receipt of the property which it has purchased or to the disposal of this property as property of a sovereign state which possesses immunity by virtue of its sovereignty.

On the basis of the foregoing the Soviet Government makes to the Government of the United States of America a determined protest against the violation by the aforesaid institutions of the United States of America of the interests of the Soviet Union and of the latter's legal right to the gold purchased from the banks of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia for an appropriate equivalent.

The Soviet Government expects an immediate transfer of the gold which it has purchased from the Banks of Lithuania, Latvia and

Estonia to the State Bank of the U. S. S. R. and charges the Government of the United States of America with all responsibility for the losses inflicted upon the U. S. S. R. by the actions of the American institution."

THURSTON

840.51 Frozen Credits/340: Telegram

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

KAUNAS, July 21, 1940—9 a. m.

[Received 12: 10 p. m.]

164. I have the honor to report that in answer to an urgent request made at 10:30 p. m. last evening by the provisional Foreign Minister, I called upon him [*her*] to receive the formal protest against the freezing of credits. Miss Aveten Aite after declining interpreter and, after translating the letter (full translation follows in gray<sup>88</sup>), added very quietly: "Please disregard all of our protests. We do not act independently any more. We appreciate what Washington is doing more than we dare tell. People are listening and I cannot say any more." I concluded that she had expressed the exact sentiments of all who count for the good of Lithuania and for the other two Baltic countries as well. While the Lithuanians would prefer to have their investments held safe until better times return, the Bolsheviks apparently are much annoyed and a trifle perplexed. They desire so earnestly to make the whole business of the transfer seem spontaneous on the part of these poor people. The freezing decree may possibly affect their instructions to the Seimas meeting today. . . . called informally also and explained that "advisers" in the Foreign Office could not understand our inability to accept the invitation to attend today's meeting of the Seimas. He himself expressed deep appreciation of our Government's understanding and treatment of the whole procedure. He added that the powers that be are considering the continuance of the three small countries as protectorates in order to better solve outstanding problems. Soviet control and direction is now almost complete. The text of the note presented is as follows:

The Lithuanian Government was greatly surprised when it learned that on July 15th, 1940 the Government of the United States of America issued an order No. 8484 by which all operations pertaining to the property of the Lithuanian State and citizens are prohibited without a permit.

On the basis of this order the Federal Reserve Bank of New York has up to this time not acted upon the request of the Lithuanian Bank of July 13th, 1940, to transfer to the account of the State Bank of the Soviet Union the gold which the Lithuanian Bank purchased from that Bank.

<sup>88</sup> Code designation.



In depositing its capital with an American bank the Lithuanian Government showed confidence in the credit institutions of the United States of America. The Executive Order of the Government of July 15th, 1940 greatly injures Lithuania's rights and interests and likewise causes great losses to the Lithuanian Bank.

The Lithuanian Government is forced to express its categorical protest against this illegal and baseless order of the Government of the United States of America which limits its rights to property which as property of a sovereign state enjoys immunity.

All responsibility for losses which may accrue to Lithuanian interests in connection with Executive Order No. 8484 of July 15th, 1940 will fall upon the Government of the United States of America.

The Lithuanian Government express, however, a strong conviction that the United States Government will annul the order of July 15th and assure that the gold which the Lithuanian Bank sold for an appropriate equivalent to the State Bank of the Soviet Union will be transferred to the latter.

NOREM

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840.51 Frozen Credits/336 : Telegram

*The Chargé in Estonia (Leonard) to the Secretary of State*

TALLINN, July 21, 1940—10 a. m.

[Received July 21—9:50 a. m.]

96. Last midnight I called at the Estonian Foreign Office at the request of the Minister for Foreign Affairs Andresen when he informed me orally that his Government had been greatly embarrassed by the order of the President of the United States on July 15 freezing the gold deposits held by Estonia in the United States, which gold holdings had been purchased from the Estonian Central bank by the Gosbank<sup>89</sup> of the Soviet Union, and in forbidding transactions without appropriate license in which the Republic of Estonia and its citizens were interested. The Foreign Minister then stated that his Government had decided to make a categorical protest against this Executive order, indicated as number 8485 [8484] of July 15 last, and he asked me to convey this protest as soon as possible to my Government, and it was added that the Government of Estonia placed the entire responsibility for losses thereby incurred to the interests of Estonia upon the Government of the United States and that the Estonian Government was convinced that the United States Government would immediately take steps to cancel or modify the order so that the transfer of the gold to the Gosbank would be ensured and the interests of Estonia in that respect are admissible.

After conveying the above orally to me the Foreign Minister handed me a note written in the Estonian language, a translation

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<sup>89</sup> State Bank.

of which confirms the above and also states that in making the categorical protests against "an unlawful arrangement" it points out that this "arrangement" restricts the rights and assets of the sovereign state of Estonia. Further, that in placing its assets in American banks, the Government of Estonia did so in full confidence in American credit institutions and that Estonia considers that execution of the order of July 15 aforementioned grossly violates Estonian rights and interests and causes great loss to its central bank.

LEONARD

860I.00/443 : Telegram

*The Chargé in Estonia (Leonard) to the Secretary of State*

TALLINN, July 21, 1940—5 p. m.  
[Received July 21—4:17 p. m.]

97. The new Estonian Parliament convened today at noon and after election of officers decided to place on the agenda the following subjects: (1) Sovietization of Estonia; (2) *Anschluss* with the U. S. S. R.; (3) nationalization of land in Estonia; and (4) nationalization of large industries and banks.

The above points have not yet been placed before Parliament, but will be taken up at tonight's session or tomorrow.<sup>90</sup>

The most prevailing opinion which I learned upon visiting Parliament today is that Estonia will be incorporated as a so-called Soviet Republic.

LEONARD

860P.00/303 : Telegram

*The Minister in Latvia (Wiley) to the Secretary of State*

RIGA, July 23, 1940—10 a. m.  
[Received July 23—7:28 a. m.]

217. Saeima yesterday nationalized banks, transportation, large industrial and commercial enterprises and limited private utilization of land to maximum of 30 hectares. No compulsory collectivization. The lat remains as currency. It was said that if changed in the future the full equivalent would be paid.

WILEY

<sup>90</sup> The Chargé in Estonia advised in his telegram No. 99, July 22, 5 p. m., that the Estonian Parliament had accepted a resolution for incorporation into the Soviet Union at 2:15 p. m., of that day, but that the third and fourth points mentioned in his telegram No. 97, July 21, 5 p.m., had not yet been acted upon (860I.00/445).

860I.00/446: Telegram

*The Chargé in Estonia (Leonard) to the Secretary of State*

TALLINN, July 23, 1940—11 a. m.

[Received 11:25 a. m.]

100. The text of the declaration of entry of the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic into the Union with the U. S. S. R. was read to Parliament by the Foreign Minister and passed 2:11 p. m. yesterday. The text as reported in today's press follows:

"To request that the Supreme Soviet of the U. S. S. R. receive the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic as a union republic into membership with the U. S. S. R. on the same basis with the U. S. S. R. as the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, the White Russian Soviet Socialist Republic, and other union republics.

Long live Soviet Estonia.  
Long live the U. S. S. R."

LEONARD

860I.00/447

*The Acting Consul General of Estonia in Charge of Legation (Kaiv) to the Secretary of State*

NEW YORK, July 23, 1940.

[Received July 24.]

SIR: As stated in my *Note verbale* dated July 17th, 1940,<sup>91</sup> Estonia has been invaded by the troops of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and my country is at present under military occupation. Grossly violating the rules of International Law and existing treaties, the aggressor has been endeavoring, nevertheless, to camouflage its acts by the cover of apparent legality. But the fact of invasion persists, as persists the fact of occupation by armed forces.

In such a state it is impossible for the Estonian people to exercise its free will as regards the Government of the country, and it is evident at the same time that it has been made impossible for the Estonian institutions to function in accordance with the Constitution and Law for the benefit of the Estonian people.

Under pressure and threats by the aggressor's authorities the newly-established puppet Government has had to act as dictated from Moscow.

The so-called elections of the Estonian Chamber of Deputies were conducted by this Government on the 14th and 15th instant.

As shows the latest information, no means were left to the Estonian people to express its will at these elections. It is anything else, but not elections in the sense of the Estonian Constitution. It has been a most cynical usurpation of the free will of the people.

<sup>91</sup> Not printed.

According to the press news, this newly-elected Chamber of Deputies has voted for joining the U. S. S. R. as one of the Soviet Republics. As I had no official confirmation of these reports, I cabled yesterday to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Tallinn asking for information. Last night I received a cabled reply of which a translation is enclosed herewith.<sup>92</sup>

On this occasion I would point out that according to the Estonian Constitution Estonia is an independent and sovereign Republic wherein the supreme power of the State is held by the people (Art. 1). Consequently the union with any other country can be decided only in the way set for the amendment of the Constitution, as foreseen in Chapter XIV of the Constitution. That has not been the case.

Being appointed by the former constitutional Government as senior Representative in this country, I regard the above-mentioned elections as nul and void, as well as all acts passed by this unconstitutionally elected Chamber of Deputies, in particular the decision about the union with the U. S. S. R.

For the reasons stated above as well as in my *Note verbale* of the 17th instant, I have the honor to request through you, Mr. Secretary, the United States Government 1) to withhold recognition of the union of Estonia with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and 2) to allow me to continue my duties in the United States as Acting Consul General in charge of Legation duly appointed by the constitutional Government of Estonia.

Accept [etc.]

J. KAIV

*Press Release Issued by the Department of State on July 23, 1940*<sup>93</sup>

#### STATEMENT BY THE ACTING SECRETARY OF STATE

During these past few days the devious processes whereunder the political independence and territorial integrity of the three small Baltic Republics—Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania—were to be deliberately annihilated by one of their more powerful neighbors, have been rapidly drawing to their conclusion.

From the day when the peoples of these Republics first gained their independent and democratic form of government the people of the United States have watched their admirable progress in self-government with deep and sympathetic interest.

The policy of this Government is universally known. The people of the United States are opposed to predatory activities no matter whether they are carried on by the use of force or by the threat of force.

<sup>92</sup> Not printed.

<sup>93</sup> Reprinted from Department of State *Bulletin*, July 27, 1940, p. 48.

They are likewise opposed to any form of intervention on the part of one State, however powerful, in the domestic concerns of any other sovereign state, however weak.

These principles constitute the very foundations upon which the existing relationship between the 21 sovereign republics of the New World rests.

The United States will continue to stand by these principles, because of the conviction of the American people that unless the doctrine in which these principles are inherent once again governs the relations between nations, the rule of reason, of justice, and of law—in other words, the basis of modern civilization itself—cannot be preserved.

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860I.00/449 : Telegram

*The Chargé in Estonia (Leonard) to the Secretary of State*

TALLINN, July 24, 1940—9 a. m.

[Received 12:10 p. m.]

101. Nationalization as indicated in points 3 and 4 of my telegram No. 97 passed in Parliament's session last night, thereby completing its work.

With reference to information in last paragraph of my telegram No. 98,<sup>94</sup> it is now confirmed. The entire Government resigned last night, but vote of confidence given it and requested to remain until a new government is formed under the new constitution of Soviet Estonia, which constitution is being prepared by an Estonian Commission.

A delegation of 21 headed by Prime Minister Vares and including Foreign Minister Andresen will proceed to Moscow, date not announced, in connection with Parliament's resolution as indicated in my telegram No. 100.

A reliable source but officially unconfirmed states that Soviet Council<sup>95</sup> in Moscow will meet August 1st to consider entry of Baltic States into the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics.

LEONARD

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760N.00/228 : Telegram

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

Moscow, July 24, 1940—2 p. m.

[Received July 24—1:06 p. m.]

897. *Pravda* today publishes without comment a Tass despatch quoting a Berlin radio communiqué to the effect that Berlin political

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<sup>94</sup> July 22, 9 a. m., not printed; in this telegram the Chargé reported that President Päts had laid down his office the previous evening in favor of Prime Minister Vares (860I.00/444).

<sup>95</sup> Supreme Council of the Soviet Union.

circles declare that the entrance of the three Baltic countries into the Soviet Union does not infringe upon Germany's interests and that Italian political circles state that these events are taking place in a region in which Italy is not interested.

Repeated to Berlin.

THURSTON

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860I.001/21 : Telegram

*The Chargé in Estonia (Leonard) to the Secretary of State*

TALLINN, July 24, 1940—3 p. m.

[Received 6:03 p. m.]

102. The President of Estonia who was forced to give up his high office last Sunday night, the 21st, has appealed to me personally by sending his son to the Legation asking whether the President of the United States could assist him and his family, namely, one son, Viktor, with wife and two minor children and a second son, Leo, six in all, in giving them protection immediately and helping them eventually to proceed to the United States. Permission to leave Estonia now being denied to every Estonian and passports for foreign travel having been invalidated and visas would have to be given consideration on the basis of expired passports or on other documents.

The former President and his family in common with many Estonians live in constant fear of imprisonment or a worse fate. They ask for whatever protection the United States Government through this Legation may be able to give. The Department's instructions as to any action which may rightly be taken and which I could personally convey to the President would be appreciated.

LEONARD

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124.60I/26 : Telegram

*The Chargé in Estonia (Leonard) to the Secretary of State*

TALLINN, July 24, 1940—5 p. m.

[Received July 24—4:40 p. m.]

103. In visiting the Foreign Office today I was told informally that its functions would probably cease about August 1 next and that the Legations would then be required to close and their personnel to leave shortly thereafter, probably within a month or possibly in a fortnight.

In talking with several of my colleagues they inform me that they hope to continue consular functions at least for a few months to give time to close their affairs. I believe it would be advisable to take such steps as the Department might deem expedient to continue our consular functions at least until there has been ample time to protect

American citizens and interests and to close our affairs. Packing and shipping facilities are very slow and limited and it will be difficult to sell anything.

LEONARD

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860M.00/457: Telegram

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

KAUNAS, July 25, 1940—11 a. m.

[Received July 25—9:45 a. m.]

170. During interim period while awaiting word of acceptance into the U.S.S.R. expected August 1st, the Sovietization process is being intensified.<sup>96</sup> Gestapo, police and workers' militia are active. Yesterday all jewelry stores were relieved of their valuable gold and silver stocks and precious stones. Estate owners, former leaders and wealthy people are receiving attention. Arrests are being made consistently [*constantly*] and so silently, usually under cover of night, that a veritable pall has descended over the country. The deposits of all Americans have been frozen as an answer to our action. It is difficult for local people to obtain visas or other attention since much confusion obtains from the state of disintegration and division of authority.

NOREM

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740.0011 European War 1939/4831: Telegram

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

Moscow, July 25, 1940—noon.

[Received 3:45 p. m.]

902. The British Military Attaché formerly assigned to Riga and now en route to London via the Soviet Union states that Soviet troops are believed to be distributed in the Baltic States as follows: Estonia: 150,000 men, 400 planes, and 500 tanks including 6 infantry divisions; Latvia: 200,000 men, 1000 tanks, 500 planes, including 12 divisions and 5 tank brigades; Lithuania: 200,000, including 1000 tanks, 500 planes including 6 divisions, 1 cavalry corps and 6 tank brigades. The Air Corps includes 4 bomber and 4 pursuit regiments.

Major Yeaton<sup>97</sup> has been advised by his British colleague that the War Office at London has informed the British Embassy in Moscow

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<sup>96</sup> With his despatch No. 894 (Diplomatic), September 1, the Chargé in Lithuania sent copies of the official *Vyriausybes Žinios*, No. 719, July 22, 1940, printed in gold-colored ink, which contained the Lithuanian texts of the declaration establishing the Soviet system in Lithuania (July 21, 1940), and of the request of the new Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic for admission into the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (July 21, 1940). (860M.00/467)

<sup>97</sup> Maj. Ivan D. Yeaton, American Military Attaché in the Soviet Union.

that the Germans are moving about 40 divisions into East Prussia and Poland.

Please inform the War Department.

THURSTON

860I.001/21 : Telegram

*The Acting Secretary of State to the Chargé in Estonia (Leonard)*

WASHINGTON, July 25, 1940—8 p. m.

26. Your 102, July 24, 3 p. m. You are authorized to issue the President of Estonia and his family diplomatic visas on presentation of valid passports or appropriate affidavits.

You may, in your discretion, informally advise the Estonian authorities that you are authorized to issue these diplomatic visas and that you have been instructed by your Government to express the hope that whatever facilities may be necessary to enable the President and his family to proceed to the United States will be accorded them.

WELLES

860P.00/310 : Telegram

*The Chargé in Latvia (Washington) to the Secretary of State*

RIGA, July 26, 1940—8 p. m.  
[Received July 26—7: 44 p. m.]

235. Your No. 99, July 23 [22], 5 p. m.<sup>98</sup> The following is a summary of the first day's session of the Latvian Saeima.

A resolution states that as an expression of the will of the entire working class of free Latvia a Soviet regime is inaugurated. Authority henceforth rests in the working population of the towns and countryside and it shall be expressed through the Soviet of workers' deputies.

A resolution regarding the incorporation of Latvia into the Soviet Union states that only in the U.S.S.R. will Latvia be able to "heal the wounds received during the long years of slavery" and that only with the aid of the U.S.S.R. can Latvia develop its culture and insure freedom to its workers.

A declaration states that under the former reactionary regime unemployment and hunger were the lot of the Latvian workers whose interests were sacrificed for the benefit of the capitalists and large landowners who ruled the country; the foreign policy was dangerous for the people especially in its hostility toward the Soviet Union. The people have overthrown that Government and the recent elec-

<sup>98</sup> Not printed; it requested brief summaries by telegraph of the "most important resolutions and proclamations having to do with the annexation of Latvia and with nationalization of property." (860P.00/302)



tions were the triumph of the working classes. In solving the question of the political regime "we turn our eyes toward the great example set by the friendly peoples of the Soviet Union. Every worker in the U.S.S.R. is guaranteed the right to work, to rest, to education and to material support in his old age." The declaration continues with such eulogies of the Soviet system.

A declaration concerning the incorporation of Latvia into Soviet Union after accusing the former Government of oppressing the peasants, squandering the country's wealth, increasing its indebtedness and making the country dependent on foreign capitalists and bankers, accuses it of failure to fulfill the mutual aid pact of October 5, 1939 with the U.S.S.R. and states that a firm and stable union between Latvia and the U.S.S.R. must be legally established.

A telegram to Stalin starts with eulogistic greetings and continues that the Saeima, expressing the will of the people, has unanimously established the Latvian Socialist Republic. Another telegram to Molotov is in the same vein.

WASHINGTON

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861.01/2198 : Telegram

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

Moscow, August 4, 1940.

[Received August 4—10:43 a. m.]

957. The Supreme Soviet yesterday passed a law stating that it had resolved "to satisfy the request of the Seim of Lithuania and to admit the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic into the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics as a constituent Soviet Socialist Republic possessing equal rights".

Action with respect to Estonia and Latvia presumably will be taken at meetings next week.<sup>99</sup>

THURSTON

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860P.00/327

*The Latvian Minister (Bilmanis) to the Secretary of State*<sup>1</sup>

No. 701/502

WASHINGTON, August 5, 1940.

SIR: With reference to my Notes dated July 13th, 18th and 23rd,<sup>2</sup> and in view of the fact that the Supreme Soviet of the Union of Soviet

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<sup>99</sup> The Chargé in the Soviet Union informed the Department in telegram No. 972, August 6 (861.01/2199), and in telegram No. 980, August 7 (860I.01/73), that the Supreme Council of the Soviet Union had similarly resolved to admit Latvia into the Soviet Union on August 6, and Estonia on August 7.

<sup>1</sup> Similar notes were presented to the Department by the Lithuanian Minister, Povilas Zadeikis, on August 3, and by the Acting Consul General of Estonia in New York, in charge of the Estonian Legation, Johannes Kaiv, on August 6. The receipt of all three notes was acknowledged on August 10 by the Counselor of the Department, R. Walton Moore.

<sup>2</sup> None printed.

Socialist Republics has proclaimed the incorporation of the Republic of Latvia into the Soviet Union, I have the honor to inform you that I consider this act to be an outrageous infringement of international law, practice and morals and that I protest against this violation of Latvia's integrity.

Although the U. S. S. R. has attempted to give a semblance of legality to the proceedings, a glance at the Constitution of Latvia shows that this "legality" is nothing but a flimsy veil to cover the annihilation of the independence of a weaker country by brutal force. Article One of the Constitution of Latvia states that

"1. Latvia is an independent democratic republic."

Articles Seventy-six and Seventy-seven of the Constitution further state that

"76. Saeima [Parliament] <sup>3</sup> may amend the Constitution in sessions in which at least two-thirds of the members of Saeima participate. Amendments shall be adopted in three readings by a majority of not less than two-thirds of the votes of the deputies present."

"77. Should the Saeima amend Articles One, Two, Three or Six of the Constitution, such amendments to attain legal force shall be referred to a national referendum."

It is well known that no referendum was carried out in Latvia and that even the Saeima elections were illegal, only one party being permitted to run. Moreover, no referendum could have been carried out in the presence of the huge military forces of the Soviet Union occupying Latvia. Thus the action of the U. S. S. R. and of the Latvian puppet Saeima in incorporating the Republic of Latvia into the Soviet Union does not have the slightest constitutional legality.

In view of the above and as the duly accredited envoy and representative of the constitutional Government of Latvia to the United States of America, I have the honor respectfully to beg the United States Government to refuse to recognize this predatory act of the U. S. S. R. whereby the Republic of Latvia has been robbed of its independence.

Accept [etc.]

DR. ALFRED BILMANIS

860P.01/89 : Telegram

*The Chargé in Latvia (Washington) to the Secretary of State*

RIGA, August 6, 1940—1 p. m.

[Received 1 : 13 p. m.]

254. Latvia has greeted the first day of its incorporation into Soviet Russia with no evidences of spontaneous enthusiasm. Manifestation is scheduled for 6 p. m., today however and members of trade unions

<sup>3</sup> Brackets appear in the original note.

and all other organizations have been told they must attend. Soviet flags have already been hung before most houses in Riga and the shop windows are being decorated with displays of which Stalin's picture generally forms the center.

The Latvian Credit Bank has been merged with the Bank of Latvia but the Government has denied rumors that the Bank of Latvia will become a branch of the Soviet State Bank.

The Foreign Office has informed me today that to enter Latvia visas must still be obtained from Latvian Legations abroad.

All Latvian ships on the high seas have been ordered to proceed immediately to Murmansk or Vladivostok.

WASHINGTON

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840.51 Frozen Credits/326 : Telegram

*The Acting Secretary of State to the Chargé in Latvia (Packer)*

WASHINGTON, August 7, 1940—5 p. m.

118. Your 209, July 19, 6 p. m. Treasury furnishes the following reply:<sup>4</sup>

"You are advised that the following transactions involving property in which Latvia, or any national thereof, has at any time on or since July 10, 1940, had any interest, direct or indirect, may be effected only pursuant to a license issued pursuant to Executive Order No. 8389, as amended, and Regulations issued pursuant thereto: (a) all transfers of credit between any banking institutions within the United States; and all transfers of credit between any banking institution within the United States and any banking institution outside the United States; (b) all payments by or to any banking institution within the United States; (c) all transactions in foreign exchange by any person within the United States; (d) the export or withdrawal from the United States, or the earmarking of gold or silver coin or bullion or currency by any person within the United States; (e) all transfers, withdrawals or exportations of, or dealings in, any evidences of indebtedness or evidences of ownership of property by any person within the United States; and (f) any transaction for the purpose or which has the effect of evading or avoiding the foregoing prohibitions. Applications for a license to effect any of the transactions above referred to may be made to the Federal Reserve Bank of New York by any party to such transaction, whether or not in the United States.

Within the meaning of the Executive Order the term 'Latvia' includes the State and Government of Latvia on July 10, 1940, political subdivisions, agencies and instrumentalities and persons acting for the benefit or on behalf thereof, and any and all other governments (including political subdivisions, etc.) to the extent and only to the extent that such governments exercise or claim to exercise *de jure* or *de facto* sovereignty over the area which on July 10, 1940, constituted Latvia.

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<sup>4</sup> A preliminary answer had been sent by the Department in telegram No. 108, July 31, 1940 (not printed).

The term 'national' of Latvia includes any person who has been domiciled in, or a subject, citizen or resident of Latvia at any time on or since July 10, 1940, but does not include any individual domiciled and residing in the United States on July 10, 1940, and also includes any partnership or other organization, including any corporation organized under the laws of, or which on July 10, 1940, had its principal place of business in Latvia, or which on or after such dates has been controlled by, or a substantial part of the stock or other securities of which has been owned or controlled by, directly or indirectly, one or more 'nationals' of Latvia.

Your questions are answered as follows: (1) Yes. The term 'banking institution' includes any individual or corporation holding credits for others as a direct or incidental part of his business. (2) No. Accounts subject to the provisions of law above referred to do not become 'unfrozen' by reason of subsequent changes of residence or domicile by the persons in whose names such accounts are held. (3) The Treasury Department has licensed the American Express Company to accept and receive payment on drafts drawn on the Secretary of State by United States Foreign Service Officers. The American Express Company's correspondent in Riga, Latvia, the Latvijas Banka, will cash all such drafts."

Treasury has issued license to American Express Company permitting it to:

(1) Receive from Latvijas Banka, Riga, drafts drawn on the Secretary of State by Foreign Service Officers and hereafter acquired by Latvijas Banka directly from such Foreign Service Officers.

(2) Present such drafts for payment and receive payment thereof.

(3) Establish and maintain a free dollar account for Latvijas Banka to which account the proceeds of the collections of such drafts shall be credited and

(4) Make payments out of such account on the order of Latvijas Banka of the proceeds of the collections of such drafts.

WELLES

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701.60P11/75 : Telegram

*The Chargé in Latvia (Packer) to the Secretary of State*

RIGA, August 9, 1940—6 p. m.

[Received August 9—4: 30 p. m.]

265. Have just received a note addressed to me as Chargé d'Affaires ad interim and [apparent omission] today from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs signed by Sablonski [*Jablonskis*] (Vice Minister) requesting me to inform my Government of the tenor of the note in which the following is brought to my notice:

The Soviet Socialist Republic of Latvia having become since August 5 a part of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Latvian Government having decided that after August 6th the Latvian diplomatic and consular representations should cease their functions, Latvia will

hereafter be represented abroad by the organs of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the U. S. S. R. The representatives of Latvia abroad have consequently been directed to deliver to the respective representatives of the U. S. S. R. their archives, their possessions and their [real property].

Moscow informed.

PACKER

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840.51 Frozen Credits/339 : Telegram

*The Acting Secretary of State to the Chargé in the Soviet Union*  
(Thurston)

WASHINGTON, August 9, 1940—6 p. m.

423. Your 885, July 20, 9:30 [9] p. m.

Section 1. The reply to the Soviet memorandum handed you by Lozovsky is set forth in the memorandum comprising section 2 of this telegram. Section 3 contains the text of a first person note which is to be presented simultaneously with the memorandum.

Please examine both documents carefully in order to make sure that no statements contained in them are contrary to facts of which the Embassy may have special knowledge. If in your opinion certain alterations are advisable you should request authority to make them.

It is suggested that you request an appointment on Monday, if possible, to present these documents in person to the Commissar or Assistant Commissar for Foreign Affairs and that you inform the Department in advance of the day and hour of the interview<sup>5</sup> so that it may furnish copies to the Soviet Embassy immediately thereafter.

Section 2. The Government of the United States of America has given careful consideration to the memorandum handed to the American Chargé d'Affaires at Moscow on July 20, 1940, in which the Soviet Government protested because the Federal Reserve Bank of New York had not transferred to the account of the State Bank of the U. S. S. R. certain gold held in the Federal Reserve Bank of New York belonging to the Banks of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia.

The memorandum states in part that the gold in question "was acquired by the State Bank of the U. S. S. R. from the Lithuanian, Latvian, and Estonian Banks on the basis of sale purchase agreements and was subject to transfer to the deposit of the State Bank of the U. S. S. R. by virtue of telegraphic orders of July 13, 1940, of the Lithuanian, Latvian, and Estonian Banks, orders which are unconditionally binding upon the Federal Reserve Bank".

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<sup>5</sup> The Chargé in the Soviet Union reported in his telegram No. 1006, August 12, 3 p. m., that he had handed the memorandum and the first person note to Assistant People's Commissar Lozovsky at noon on that day, without discussion (840.51-Frozen Credits/446).

Under the Gold Reserve Act of 1934<sup>e</sup> and regulations published pursuant thereto which have been in effect since January 31, 1934, gold in any form in the United States may be acquired and held, imported, exported, earmarked or held in custody for foreign or domestic account only to the extent permitted by and subject to the conditions prescribed in regulations which the Secretary of the Treasury of the United States is authorized to issue. Under regulations issued in January 1934 pursuant to such Gold Reserve Act, transfers of the character referred to in the memorandum of the U. S. S. R. may be made only if specifically licensed by the Secretary of the Treasury.

The nature of the United States Government control over gold situated in this country has been known or should have been known to the banks of Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and U. S. S. R. The agreements pursuant to which the gold is held by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York provide that such gold is to be held "within the authority of, and subject to the terms of" the gold license issued to the Federal Reserve Bank by the Secretary of the Treasury. Under the terms of such gold license the Federal Reserve Bank is required, before it may make transfers of the type here in question, to obtain a specific license from the Secretary of the Treasury. Accordingly, the Federal Reserve Bank of New York had no authority to make the transfers of gold which were requested of it until it first received a license from the Treasury Department. In recent months the Federal Reserve Bank of New York has effected transfers of gold between accounts of the Bank for International Settlements and accounts of the Banks of Latvia and Lithuania. The exchange of telegrams between the Federal Reserve Bank and the Banks of Latvia and Lithuania in connection with such transactions must have made it entirely clear to such banks that transfers of gold are made by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York only pursuant to a license issued by the Secretary of the Treasury.

No agreement for the transfer of gold situated in this country, regardless of who may be the parties thereto, may be considered as "unconditionally binding" on the Federal Reserve Bank of New York in cases where no license for the transfer has been issued by the Secretary of the Treasury. The alleged sale, therefore, by the Banks of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia of gold held in the Federal Reserve Bank of New York to the State Bank of the U. S. S. R. was without binding force and effect in this country since no license authorizing the transfer of such gold has been issued by the Secretary of the Treasury. Title to the gold situated in this country cannot be considered to have passed by virtue of any arrangement made outside the country unless the transfer is authorized by a license issued by the Secretary of the Treasury of the United States.

<sup>e</sup> Approved January 30, 1934; 48 Stat. 337.

The memorandum of the U. S. S. R. states that there was a "completely unjustified delay of three days" in the application by the Federal Reserve Bank for authority to transfer the gold to the State Bank of the U. S. S. R. The Government of the United States cannot agree with such a statement. On July 13 the Federal Reserve Bank of New York received a telegram dated July 12 from the Lithuanian Bank requesting the transfer of certain gold to the State Bank of the U. S. S. R., and also stating "You will receive instructions from beneficiary", meaning the State Bank of the U. S. S. R. On July 13, the Bank of Lithuania sent a further telegram to the Federal Reserve Bank of New York amending its telegram of July 12 and, on the same day, the Bank of Latvia sent a telegram to the Federal Reserve Bank of New York instructing that certain gold be transferred to the State Bank of the U. S. S. R. July 13 was a Saturday and the Federal Reserve Bank of New York is not open for business between noon on Saturday and the following Monday morning. The telegrams of July 13 were not received at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York until long after the close of business on Saturday, July 13, and too late for any action to be taken in connection therewith until Monday July 15. On July 15, the Federal Reserve Bank of New York also received for the first time telegraphic instructions dated July 13 and July 15 from the State Bank of the U. S. S. R. relative to such gold transfers. On the same day, namely July 15, the Federal Reserve Bank of New York applied to the Treasury Department for a license, pursuant to the Gold Regulations which had been in effect since 1934, to transfer the gold referred to in the telegrams from the Banks of Latvia, Lithuania, and the U. S. S. R. On the following day, July 16, the State Bank of the U. S. S. R. was advised by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York that application for such license had been made. There was, accordingly, no delay whatever on the part of the Federal Reserve Bank in dealing with this matter.

In this connection it should be pointed out that the Federal Reserve Bank of New York has not as yet received instructions from the Bank for International Settlements to transfer gold which it holds under earmark for the Bank for International Settlements and which apparently belongs to the Bank of Estonia. On July 18, the Estonian Bank advised the Federal Reserve Bank of New York that it had previously given instructions to the Bank for International Settlements concerning such transfer and asked the Federal Reserve Bank of New York to assist in obtaining the necessary license for the transfer. The Bank for International Settlements has never issued any instructions to the Federal Reserve Bank of New York to make such transfer. In view of the agreement between the Federal Reserve Bank and the Bank for International Settlements, pursuant to which such

gold is held, the Federal Reserve Bank of New York is not in a position to take any steps looking to the transfer of such gold until it receives appropriate instructions from the Bank for International Settlements. On July 20, therefore, the Federal Reserve Bank of New York informed the Bank of Estonia that it would apply for the necessary licenses as soon as it received instructions from the Bank for International Settlements. No such instructions have been received up to the present time.

On July 15, 1940, the President of the United States, pursuant to the authority conferred on him by the Act of October 6, 1917,<sup>7</sup> as amended, issued Executive Order No. 8484. This Order amended Executive Order No. 8389 of April 10, 1940,<sup>8</sup> as amended, so as to extend all the provisions of Executive Order No. 8389 to, and with respect to, property in which Latvia, Estonia or Lithuania, or any national thereof, has, at any time on or since July 10, 1940, had any interest of any nature whatsoever, direct or indirect. Executive Order No. 8389 of April 10, 1940, provides that certain transactions involving property in which Norway or Denmark, or any national thereof, has had any interest on or since April 8, 1940, may be carried out only pursuant to license issued by the Secretary of the Treasury. On May 10, 1940, the provisions of Executive Order No. 8389 were extended to, and with respect to, property in which the Netherlands, Belgium or Luxembourg or any national thereof, has, at any time on or since May 10, 1940, had any interest.<sup>9</sup> On June 17, 1940, the provisions of Executive Order No. 8389 were extended to, and with respect to, property in which France, or any national thereof, has, at any time on or since June 17, 1940, had any interest.<sup>10</sup> Under Executive Order No. 8484 transactions of the character referred to in the memorandum of the U. S. S. R. involving property in which Latvia, Estonia, or Lithuania, or any national thereof, has, at any time on or since July 10, 1940, had any interest, may be carried out only pursuant to a license issued by the Secretary of the Treasury. Accordingly, on July 16, 1940, the day following the issuance of Executive Order No. 8484 and the day after it had received instructions from the banks of Lithuania, Latvia, and the U. S. S. R., the Federal Reserve Bank of New York applied for a license pursuant to Executive Order No. 8484, authorizing the transfers of the gold in question. This application was in addition to the application for a license under the Gold Reserve Act of 1934 which, as previously indi-

<sup>7</sup> 40 Stat. 411.

<sup>8</sup> 5 *Federal Register* 1400.

<sup>9</sup> For text of Executive Order No. 8405 of May 10, 1940, see *ibid.*, 1677.

<sup>10</sup> For text of Executive Order No. 8446 of June 17, 1940, see *ibid.*, 2279.



cated, was made by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York on July 15.

The measures against which the Soviet Government protests are neither arbitrary nor isolated manifestations of national policy. They are acts of conservation and control fully within the rights of the Government of the United States and involve no infringement of international law. Similar measures have been applied with respect to property situated in the United States belonging to various countries, or nationals thereof, which have been occupied by the armed forces of a foreign Power or otherwise deprived of their freedom of action by force or threats of force, giving rise to practical problems of the appropriate protection of American institutions and nationals from adverse claims which might result from the making of payments by them on instructions issued under duress, and of the protection of the interests of the rightful owners.

The attempt to transfer the gold belonging to the Banks of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia was made at a time when it had become apparent that the governments and peoples of those countries were being deprived of freedom of action by foreign troops which had entered their territories by force or threats of force. The attitude of the Government and people of the United States with regard to the use of force or threats of force in the conduct of international relations is well known. In keeping with this attitude, it is proper that the authorities of the American Government, in administering the orders and regulations referred to, should not fail to take into consideration the special situation existing in the three Baltic countries.

References in the memorandum to legal property rights and to the elementary principles of international law prompt the Government of the United States to draw the attention of the Soviet Government to the fact that nationals of the United States have suffered heavy losses in territories under the control of Soviet civil or military authorities as the result of acts committed by, under the direction of, or with the active approval of, such authorities. Certain of these losses which have been suffered during more recent months and the responsibility of the Soviet Government therefor are, however, being made the subject of a note to be addressed by the American Embassy at Moscow to the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs.

Section 3 (First Person Note). I have the honor, upon instructions from my Government, to draw the attention of Your Excellency to the fact that American institutions and nationals have suffered considerable losses in territories under the control of Soviet civil or military authorities as the result of acts committed by, under the direction of, or with the approval of, such authorities.

In September 1939, Soviet armed forces entered and occupied certain territories in Eastern Poland. While these territories were under the control of such forces certain persons or groups of persons proceeded to nationalize or confiscate property, including the property of nationals of foreign countries. Nationals of the United States own, or have interests in, property situated in these territories. Although this Embassy has submitted numerous requests to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs for information regarding the status of these properties, it has as yet received no indication from the Soviet Government with regard to the disposition thereof. Under cover of a note dated April 26, 1940,<sup>11</sup> however, the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs transmitted to the Embassy a copy of an instruction of the People's Commissariat of Justice relating to the "nationalization of foreign properties in the territories of Western Ukraine and of Western White Russia." This instruction stated in effect that since measures nationalizing land of estate owners, banks, and large industries had been approved and proclaimed on October 28 and 30, 1939,<sup>12</sup> before the formal incorporation of the territories in question into the Soviet Union, there are no bases for the presentation to the Soviet Union of claims arising from such measures even though the property with respect to which such claims are presented may subsequently have passed into the possession of organs of the Soviet Government.

In June 1940 Soviet armed forces entered and occupied Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina. Nationals of the United States own property and have interests in property in these provinces. Although inquiries have been made to the Soviet Government by the Embassy of the United States at Moscow no information has as yet been received with regard to the status of such property or property interests.

In the countries of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia nationals of the United States also own or have interests in certain properties. It is the understanding of my Government that steps have already been taken by certain persons or groups under the control of the authorities of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to nationalize or confiscate these properties and to take other actions injurious to American property or interests.

My Government instructs me to state that regardless of any disclaimers of responsibility therefor on the part of the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the Government of the United States holds, and will hold, the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics responsible for all losses to American nationals

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<sup>11</sup> See footnote 77, p. 391.

<sup>12</sup> See telegram No. 826, October 28, 1939, 4 p. m., from the Ambassador in the Soviet Union, *Foreign Relations, The Soviet Union, 1933-1939*, p. 785, and footnote 83.

resulting from acts of nationalization or confiscation, or other acts injurious to the property or interests of such nationals, committed in territories under Soviet control by, under the direction of, or with the approval of, the authorities of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

My Government also directs me to bring to the attention of the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics the fact that the governments, institutions, and residents of certain of the countries which at present are wholly or in part under occupation by Soviet armed forces have debts aggregating large sums to the Government or nationals of the United States.

Accept, Excellency, the renewed assurances of my highest consideration.

Section 4. In case the Soviet official to whom the documents are presented intimates that they may have an adverse effect on American-Soviet relations you may state that in view of the contents of the Soviet memorandum of protest and of the attitude displayed by the Soviet authorities with regard to American property and interests in territory now under Soviet control, your Government, in spite of the fact it is hoping for an improvement in American-Soviet relations,<sup>13</sup> has no choice in the matter. It would be lacking in frankness if it should fail to make a clear statement of its position.

For your information, it may be added, during the last week informal discussions of various problems of American-Soviet relations have been taking place between the Soviet Ambassador and members of the Department. Among these problems are those advanced by Mikoyan on July 30.<sup>14</sup> A summary of these discussions will be sent you later.

WELLES

124.60M/21 : Telegram

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

Moscow, August 11, 1940—6 p. m.

[Received August 11—3:28 p. m.]

1001. I have just received a formal note from Molotov dated August 11th, which after citing the fact of the admission of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia into the Soviet Union as component parts thereof having all the rights and obligations ensuing from their new status,<sup>15</sup> stated

<sup>13</sup> For conversations on this subject, see vol. III, pp. 179 ff.

<sup>14</sup> The proposals of Anastas Ivanovich Mikoyan, People's Commissar for Foreign Trade of the Soviet Union, were reported by the Chargé in the Soviet Union in his telegrams No. 936, July 30, 6 p. m., and No. 937, July 31, 9 a. m., vol. III, pp. 446 and 449, respectively.

<sup>15</sup> See despatch No. 726, September 4, from the Chargé in the Soviet Union, regarding the law of August 7, 1940, adopted by the Supreme Council of the Soviet Union making changes in the Constitution of the Soviet Union in consequence of the admission of new Soviet Socialist Republics, vol. III, p. 216.

that direct diplomatic relations between those states and other states have in consequence ceased.

The note then states that

"The Soviet Government therefore expects that the missions of the United States of America in Kaunas, Riga, and Tallinn will complete the liquidation of their affairs by August 25th, 1940. Likewise, the exequaturs which were issued by the former Lithuanian, Latvian, and Estonian Governments to foreign consuls, lose their validity; and these consuls are to liquidate their consular offices by the same date.

"Furthermore the diplomatic and consular missions of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia in other states cease to operate, and transfer their functions, as well as their archives and property, to the appropriate plenipotentiary representatives or consulates of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics."

I shall appreciate instructions as to the reply to be made to this communication.

Repeat to Kaunas, Riga and Tallinn.

THURSTON

124.60I/29 : Telegram

*The Chargé in Estonia (Leonard) to the Secretary of State*

TALLINN, August 13, 1940—9 a. m.

[Received August 13—6:55 a. m.]

124. With further reference to Moscow's telegram No. 1001, the local Foreign Office, in liquidation, sent me last night a note stating that it expects that the Legation and Consulate of the United States of America will be liquidated by August 25 and offers its facilities in aiding the members of the Legation to depart from Estonia.<sup>16</sup> No reply is being made pending Department's instructions. To close affairs, pack and ship official and personal effects and to depart by August 25 will be practically impossible, particularly in view of limited packing and transportation facilities and rush of other legations to leave.

LEONARD

124.60M/23 : Telegram

*The Chargé in Lithuania (Gufler) to the Secretary of State*

[Extract]

KAUNAS, August 13, 1940—11 a. m.

[Received 4:15 p. m.]

205. Within the past 2 days all representatives of foreign countries in Lithuania have received notes dated August 10th requesting them to inform their governments that as a result of the entry of

<sup>16</sup> In his immediately preceding telegram No. 123, August 12, 9 a. m., the Chargé had informed the Department of certain obstacles in the way of closure of the Legation, and hoped that the period could be extended until August 31 (124.60I/27).

Lithuania into the Soviet Union the Lithuanian diplomatic and consular representations in their respective countries are liquidated as of August 8th. A note so dated and signed by the General Secretary of the Foreign Office, Glovackas, as Acting Foreign Minister, was received by this Legation this morning.

I have also received this morning a note dated August 12th signed by Professor Kreve-Mickevicius, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, requesting me to inform the Government of the United States that in view of the admission of Lithuania into the Soviet Union all direct diplomatic relations between Lithuania and the United States of America have ceased to exist.

The note continues:

"The Government of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Lithuania hopes that the Legation of the United States of America will liquidate its affairs in Lithuania by the 25th of this month. On its part it will undertake to extend to you and to the members of the Legation all necessary assistance in matters concerning the departure.

On this same occasion, I have the honor to inform you that the activity of all foreign consulates in Lithuania must be stopped and that the consulates are equally obliged to liquidate their offices by the same date, the 25th of August 1940."

All of the other Legations here have received similar notes.

The Foreign Office has informed me orally that the words "liquidate its affairs in Lithuania by the 25th of the month" mean that we must be over the frontier in person and with our property by that date. In the course of repeating orally the offer of assistance made in the note, the Secretary General of the Foreign Office conveyed to me a strong intimation that if we did not get our personnel and property across the frontier in a hurry while he was still in a position to assist us we might experience some serious difficulties.

With the exception of the British Legation all of the diplomatic missions here propose to liquidate themselves and depart by the date set. The British Minister<sup>17</sup> has closed the doors of his office to the public and has requested through the British Embassy at Moscow an extension of time until September 10 to complete the liquidation of his office and to pack and to ship to Riga his personal property and the property of the British Government for storage in the building owned by his Government in that city.

The Italian Legation, which has a good deal of government property in its possession, proposes in accordance with arrangements that it has made with the Italian Embassy in Moscow to seal the Legation building rented here by the Italian Government and to turn it over, together with the government property that it contains, to the protection of the appropriate local authorities until such time as the Italian

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<sup>17</sup> Thomas H. Preston.

Embassy at Moscow shall be able to send to Kaunas an agent to arrange for the shipment of the property to Moscow.

Because of the large amount of American Government property at this post, the great demand for packers, and the diminished staff now available in this office I fear that it may be difficult to arrange for the packing and shipping of the Government property by August 25 and respectfully request instructions as to whether I should request an extension of time or should make some arrangement with our Embassy in Moscow similar to that made by the Italians. I am convinced that an extension of time will probably not be granted.

GUFLEK

861.111/829

*The Soviet Ambassador (Umansky) to the Acting Secretary of State*

WASHINGTON, August 13, 1940.

DEAR MR. SECRETARY: Upon instruction of my Government I have the honor to bring to your attention the following information:

1. Foreigners not in possession of Soviet entry or transit visas will hereafter not be allowed to enter or cross the territory of the Lithuanian, Latvian and Esthonian Soviet Socialist Republics. Exemption will be made only in the cases of those foreigners who are now in possession of Soviet transit visas or of transit visas issued prior to August 7, 1940 by the diplomatic missions of the former Lithuanian, Latvian and Esthonian Republics.

2. All visas other than those enumerated above and issued by the former Lithuanian, Latvian and Esthonian diplomatic and consular representatives are invalidated.

3. Visas permitting entry into, or transit across, the territory of the Lithuanian, Latvian and Esthonian Soviet Socialist Republics after August 7, 1940 will hereafter be issued only by the diplomatic and consular representatives of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Accept [etc.]

C. OUMANSKY

124.60M/21: Telegram

*The Acting Secretary of State to the Chargé in the Soviet Union  
(Thurston)*

WASHINGTON, August 13, 1940—5 p. m.

436. Your 1001, August 11, 6 p. m. Unless you perceive some reason for not so doing, you are instructed to send a formal note to the Commissar for Foreign Affairs reading as follows:<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> The note was sent to Molotov on August 14.

"I have the honor to refer to Your Excellency's note of August 11, 1940 in which it was requested that the missions and consular offices of the United States in Kaunas, Riga, and Tallinn complete the liquidation of their affairs by August 25, 1940. My Government has instructed me to inform Your Excellency, without admitting the legality of the acts which have given rise to this request and at the same time reserving all rights in the premises, that it has the intention to close the missions and consular offices in question in the near future. Accept, etc."

WELLES

124.60M/21 : Telegram

*The Acting Secretary of State to the Chargé in the Soviet Union*  
(Thurston)

WASHINGTON, August 13, 1940—6 p. m.

437. The Department plans to make a statement along the following lines to the Soviet Ambassador today or tomorrow :

"The Commissar for Foreign Affairs has informed our Chargé d'Affaires at Moscow by note that the Soviet Government expects the missions and consulates of the United States in Kaunas, Riga, and Tallinn to complete the liquidation of their affairs by August 25, 1940. Our Chargé d'Affaires has been instructed to inform the Commissar by note that it is the intention of the American Government to close its offices in Kaunas, Riga, and Tallinn in the near future.

The presence of American Foreign Service officers in the cities above mentioned will be needed for a considerable time after August 25 in order to lend appropriate and necessary assistance to American nationals, to look after American interests, and to arrange the liquidation of the offices. While it expects to close the offices in all three cities as soon as possible, there is the possibility that it may be desirable for them to continue to perform consular functions even until October 1, 1940. It suggests that as a matter of comity the Soviet Government cooperate with it in working out an arrangement whereby it would be possible for American Foreign Service Officers, with the assistance of a competent staff, to continue performing work of a consular nature in Riga after October 1. The American Government, except during the years 1917-1919, has maintained a consular office in Riga for many years. It is important for the protection of American citizens and interests in the Baltic that such an office continue to function. In case Riga should later be used as a port for trade with the United States, the presence of American consular officers in that city would be particularly helpful. It is hoped that it will be possible for these officers to carry on their work in Riga without the question of exequaturs being raised. A plan might be evolved whereby the Foreign Service Officers in question be assigned to the American Embassy at Moscow but continue, as attached to the consular section of the American Embassy at Moscow, to perform consular work in the offices now maintained by the American Government in Riga. In the performance of their consular duties in

Riga they could, if found desirable, use the seals of the consular section of the Embassy.

The American Government considers this suggestion as reasonable. Although it has been unable to recognize changes in the status of certain territories in other parts of the world, the governments which at present are in control of such territories in a number of instances have, as a matter of international comity, permitted it to maintain consular offices in those territories."

It is suggested that you also present proposals along these lines immediately to the appropriate officers of the Commissar [*Commisariat?*] for Foreign Affairs, pointing out that your Government should be informed at once of the Soviet attitude towards such proposals.

In case the question is raised as to the attitude of this Government with respect to the Soviet announcement that the Baltic States have been admitted into the Soviet Union, you may state that you have been given to understand that the views of your Government on this subject were set forth in the statement made by Mr. Welles on July 23, 1940.

WELLES

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124.60M/24: Telegram

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

Moscow, August 15, 1940—noon.

[Received August 15—11:47 a. m.]

1019. Department's 437, August 13, 7 [6] p. m. I saw Lozovski this noon and conveyed to him orally the essential points of the telegram cited.

With respect to our desire for general prolongation until October 1st of the time within which American official establishments in the Baltic States are to be closed, Lozovski demurred, although promising to refer the matter to the government.

He inquired how many citizens we have in that area and when I told him that I believed that they probably do not exceed 100 he stated that such a small number could be evacuated quickly and that he saw no need for us to keep our offices open as late as we had proposed. I pointed out that I had mentioned not only American citizens but American interests as well as the liquidation of the offices themselves, but he made no further comment. As to the retention after October 1st of a consular establishment at Riga, he stated that in view of the importance of the suggestion it would be discussed by the Government and its decisions would be [communicated to us?].

I infer from Lozovski's general demeanor that we may receive an extension of the time limit proposed for the closing of our establish-



ments in the Baltic capitals and I felt it necessary, to facilitate this, to make it clear that we did not insist on the precise date October 1 as the minimum of our demands in this respect. I also believe that the Soviets may be disposed to work out an arrangement with us regarding the retention of the consular branch office at Riga although Lozovski as I have indicated made no commitment in this respect.

In this connection it is my understanding that the British and Italian Embassies probably will request an extension of the time set by the Soviet Government.

THURSTON

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124.60M/25 : Telegram

*The Chargé in Lithuania (Gufler) to the Secretary of State*

KAUNAS, August 17, 1940—11 p. m.

[Received 11:20 p. m.]

217. Reference is made to a telegram received yesterday<sup>19</sup> from the American Embassy at Moscow informing the Legation that a note had been handed to the Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs stating that this Legation and Consulate were to be closed in the near future but requesting an extension of the closing time to October 1.

With reference to this telegram [and?] Legation's No. 205, August 13, I respectfully request that immediate authorization be given (1) to ship from Lithuania to Berlin in the case of persons transferred to the west and to Moscow in the case of those transferred to the east, all personal property of members of the Legation, (2) to evacuate all personnel, (3) to send by courier to Berlin all code books and archives that are not to be destroyed or sent to Moscow, (4) to ship to Berlin or to Moscow all other Government property. If this authorization is granted immediately it might be possible to get the Government-owned property loaded and under orders for shipment by the 25th. Property shipped to nearby overland destination can be packed directly in the freight cars which thus serve as vans.

We have been informed that this country will not be unsafe for Government property after the 25th but that our own goods must be over the border by that date.

The considerations which lead the Legation to make this request despite the request for an extension of time made in Moscow are as follows:

1. There are no further useful functions that this office is in a position to perform.

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<sup>19</sup> For substance of the matter involved, see *supra*.

(a) Protection. There now remain in Lithuania no citizens who have not been offered an opportunity to leave. The remainder with three exceptions have dual nationality under local laws.

2. American companies have branches here. The Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer distributing agency has been put out of business by the nationalization of all theaters which now show Soviet films only and the Singer Sewing Machine Company is virtually nationalized. All property and claims of American citizens who have applied have been already recorded. No applications for recording have been brought in during the past week.

(b) Reporting can be done only on a basis of newspaper reports. Every other source of information has been dried up by the terror.

(c) Our visas are useless to 99% of the applicants despite the demand for them since few can obtain proper travel documents and fewer can obtain exit visas or arrange transportation.

2. [3.] This office is under constant pressure to leave exercised through every agency with which the office deals and obviously dictated from above. Offers of assistance from local authorities are always coupled with a statement that they will be able to give assistance only up to August 25. Incidents have occurred which show that purely Soviet agencies such as the border guard are not inclined to give much consideration to Americans. Reference is being made to the Legation's telegram No. 216 of today's date.<sup>20</sup>

In arranging to depart the Legation must undertake simultaneously negotiations with various local agents including the Foreign Office, the Foreign Exchange Commission, packing and forwarding and other private companies, travel bureau, bank, railway administration, Minister of the Interior and other Legations. Many of these organizations will leave, or be abolished or reorganized after the 25th so that even though permission be given by Moscow for us to remain the agencies here with the assistance of which we can arrange for our departure from this country and for our admission into other countries will have ceased to exist. Everything will then have to be done in Moscow or through American missions in the countries of destination or transit of goods and personnel.

I do not know what the situation may be in the other Baltic States but special military zones have already been established along the border with Germany and Kaunas is being rapidly and thoroughly transformed into a pure garrison town by the wholesale eviction of the civilian population. The capital will soon be transferred to Vilna, and Kaunas [will?] practically have its former status of fortress. At least 50,000 troops are believed to be now quartered within the city.

The British Minister has informed me that no reply has been received to his Government's request for an extension of time until September 10.

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<sup>20</sup> Not printed.

The German Legation and its consular section will cease to exist as such on August 25. They will be succeeded by a "sort of consular repatriation office with some measure of diplomatic immunity". All other missions and consulates have arranged to depart by August 25.

GUFLEL

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702.6111/334

*The Acting Secretary of State to President Roosevelt*

[WASHINGTON,] August 19, 1940.

MY DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: I have received your memorandum of August 15<sup>21</sup> asking that we make recommendations to you in regard to the advisability of requesting the closing of certain Soviet consulates in this country and of placing additional restrictions on those which remain, in view of the fact that we are being compelled to close our consulates in Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia.

There is no doubt that the Soviet Government, in taking over additional territories in Eastern Europe, has not shown consideration for nationals and interests of the United States which might be expected of a Government which maintains friendly relations with the Government of the United States. The request that we liquidate within a period of two weeks our diplomatic and consular offices in Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia is an illustration of the attitude which the Soviet Government has assumed.

Although the Soviet Government has been successful in overthrowing the Governments of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, and in obtaining full control of the territories of those countries, the diplomatic missions of Lithuania and Latvia and consular offices of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia continue to function in the United States and to protect the nationals and interests which they represent. So long as this Government continues to refuse to recognize the legality of the seizure by the Soviet Government of the Baltic States and so long as it continues to recognize the diplomatic missions and consulates of those States in the United States, the Soviet Embassy and consular offices here will, it is believed, not be successful in their efforts to obtain possession of the property of these States in the United States.

At the present time there are Soviet consular offices in New York, San Francisco, and Los Angeles, as well as a consular section in the Soviet Embassy in Washington. We have in the Soviet Union only

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<sup>21</sup> Not printed.

æ consular section in the Embassy at Moscow. We are therefore in a position, on the basis of reciprocity, to demand that several Soviet consulates be closed or that we be permitted to open consular offices in the Soviet Union. We have suggested to the Soviet Government some time ago the advisability of a consular office of the United States being established at Vladivostok,<sup>22</sup> and in reply to the request that we close our offices in the Baltic States we have already suggested, as a matter of comity, that consular officers of the United States be given facilities which would permit them to continue to perform consular services in Riga. We are still awaiting answers to these suggestions.

After giving the matter careful consideration, I am inclined to believe that no useful purpose would be served at the present time by requesting the Soviet Government to close certain of its consular offices in the United States and by placing additional restrictions on those offices which remain. The closing of these offices would be of no aid to the nationals or property interests of the Baltic States since such nationals and interests are being protected by the diplomatic missions and consulates of those States at the present time. Such a request furthermore would probably result in the rejection of our suggestions with respect to the maintenance of American consular offices in Riga and Vladivostok and might well lead to a series of retaliatory measures which would render futile the efforts which we are making just now in a continuing series of negotiations that are going on with the Soviet Ambassador to remove some of the obstacles that might permit an improvement of relations between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Faithfully yours,

SUMNER WELLES

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124.60M/21 : Telegram

*The Acting Secretary of State to the Chargé in the Soviet Union  
(Thurston)*

WASHINGTON, August 20, 1940—6 p. m.

464. Department's 437, August 13, 6 p. m. Unless Embassy receives reply from Foreign Office by August 21, Department will be forced to interpret Soviet silence as rejection of its suggestions. You may in your discretion so inform appropriate authorities, pointing out that shortness of time renders complete liquidation by end of this week physically impossible.

WELLES

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<sup>22</sup> For correspondence concerning the opening of an American Consulate General at Vladivostok, see vol. III, pp. 460 ff.

124.60M/26 : Telegram

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

Moscow, August 21, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received 5:10 p. m.]

1048. Pursuant to the Department's 464, August 20, 6 p. m., I arranged to see Lozovski this afternoon at half past four. At three o'clock Valkov,<sup>23</sup> Chief of the American Section of the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, requested that Mr. Dickerson<sup>24</sup> or Mr. Ward<sup>25</sup> come to see him. In the absence of Dickerson, Ward called at Valkov's office and was notified as follows: (1) The Soviet Government agrees to the extension of the existence of the American Government establishments at Tallinn, Riga and Kaunas to September 5 inclusive; and (2) the Soviet Government is unable to agree to the establishment of any foreign consular representation in the former Baltic States.

Tallinn, Riga and Kaunas advised.

THURSTON

840.51 Frozen Credits/481 : Telegram

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

Moscow, August 21, 1940—5 p. m.

[Received 6 p. m.]

1049. After conveying the notification reported in the Embassy's 1048, August 21, 4 p. m., Valkov stated to Ward that acting upon instructions from Molotov he was returning my note of August 12 (section 3 of the Department's 423, August 9, 6 p. m.) for the reason that the note is unacceptable to the Soviet Government since it employs the term "occupation by the Red Army" with respect to areas which recently have been incorporated into the Soviet Union pursuant to the unanimous election of the peoples of those areas.<sup>26</sup> He thereupon handed to Ward the note in question.

It is needless for me to say that my note followed verbatim the text furnished by the Department; that text is accurate and factually unobjectionable.

THURSTON

<sup>23</sup> Vasily Alexeyevich Valkov.

<sup>24</sup> Charles E. Dickerson, Jr., Consul and First Secretary of the American Embassy in the Soviet Union.

<sup>25</sup> Angus Ivan Ward, Consul, First Secretary, and Chief of Consular Section of the American Embassy in the Soviet Union.

<sup>26</sup> For a similar exhibition of Soviet sensitivity, see telegram No. 503, May 8, 6 p. m., from the Chargé in the Soviet Union, and the Department's reply, telegram No. 271, May 11, 3 p. m., vol. III, pp. 199 and 201, respectively.

124.60M/29 : Telegram

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

Moscow, August 22, 1940— 4 p. m.

[Received 8 : 33 p. m.]

1053. Lozovski handed to me this afternoon the reply of the Soviet Government to my note of August 14 (Department's 436, August 12 [13] 5 p. m.) regarding the closing of our missions and consulates in Kaunas, Riga and Tallinn. When the Soviet reply had been read to me in English translation I stated that I would not attempt to discuss its contents and that I had nothing to add to the expressions of my Government's views as set forth in my recent notes and in the public statement made some time ago by Mr. Sumner Welles. To this Lozovski replied that he likewise had nothing further to say adding that the situation is one in which the Soviet Government and the Government of the United States hold conflicting views.

As a precaution in view of the ambiguous nature of the last paragraph of the Soviet note I cited Valkov's oral statement yesterday to Ward and said that I understood that the note does not alter the date September 5th as that of the limit within which our offices in the Baltic area can continue to operate. Lozovski stated that my understanding in this respect is correct.

The Soviet note which is dated August 22nd reads as follows :

“With reference to the note dated August 14, 1940 of the Chargé d'Affaires of the United States of America in Moscow, Mr. Thurston, the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs has the honor to make the following statement: The Soviet Government cannot accept the statement contained in the above mentioned note of Mr. Thurston concerning the non-recognition of the legality of the acts of the free expression of the will of the peoples of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia as the result of which Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia entered into the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the suggestion of the Soviet Government concerning the closing of the American missions in Tallinn, Riga and Kaunas and the termination of the activities of the Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian missions and consulates in the United States and does not consider it possible to discuss with the Government of the United States the question of the legality of these acts which were the free expression of the sovereign will of the peoples of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

The note of Mr. Thurston is all the more inexplicable since it is well known that the Government of the United States has more than once through its official representatives expressed its objection to the separation of the above-mentioned Baltic countries from Russia considering without doubt that such a separation does not correspond to the interests of the peoples of Russia at present the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics or the peoples of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Thus in the note to the Italian Ambassador of August 10th, 1920, the Secretary of State of the United States of America, Colby, announced: <sup>27</sup> 'The continued refusal to recognize the Baltic States as separate nations independent of Russia.' The Secretary of State, Hughes, in a letter to the plenipotentiary representative of the United States in Riga, Young, dated July 25, 1922, <sup>28</sup> made a statement of the Government of the United States on the question of the recognition of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia in which it was stated that 'the United States of America has consistently affirmed that the disturbed conditions of Russian affairs cannot serve as an excuse for the alienation of Russian territory and does not consider that this principle is violated by the recognition at the present time of the Governments of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania which were established and supported by the local population.'

In connection with the foregoing it is incomprehensible that in contradiction to the above-mentioned declarations of the Government of the United States at the present time the Government of the United States considered it possible to object to the reunion of the peoples of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania with the peoples of the Soviet Union which occurred as a result of the unanimous decision of the legislative organs of the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republics elected on the basis of the broadest democratic principles.

The Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics has noted the statement of the Chargé d'Affaires of the United States, Mr. Thurston, contained in his personal note of August 14, 1940 addressed to the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Molotov, that the Government of the United States intends to close the above mentioned missions and consulates in the near future and expects that the liquidation of the aforesaid missions and consulates will be effected within the period established by the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics."

THURSTON

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840.51 Frozen Credits/481 : Telegram

*The Acting Secretary of State to the Chargé in the Soviet Union*  
(Thurston)

WASHINGTON, August 22, 1940—6 p. m.

473. Your 1049, August 21, 5 p. m. You are authorized to replace the phrase "which at present are wholly or in part under occupation by Soviet armed forces" by the phrase "under the control of Soviet civil and military authorities" and to return the note to the Commissar or Assistant Commissar.

WELLES

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<sup>27</sup> *Foreign Relations*, 1920, vol. III, pp. 463, 465. The quotation here retranslated into English is not identical with the original text.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 1922, vol. II, p. 873. The quotation here retranslated into English is not identical with the original text.

840.51 Frozen Credits/497 : Telegram

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

Moscow, August 24, 1940—11 a. m.

[Received 1:20 p. m.]

1065. As I feared that the substitution of terminology authorized in your 473, August 22, 6 p. m., would not satisfy the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs and that to return my amended note to them without prior consultation would merely expose us to its rejection a second time, I had Ward confer with Valkov this morning on the subject.

As a result of their conversation it was apparent that what the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs really objects to is any implication of a distinction between the Soviet Union "proper" and territories which it has recently acquired and incorporated therein. While Valkov was somewhat reluctant to specify the exact parts of my note to which objection was taken, Ward eventually extracted from him a statement that any terminology would be objected to by the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs which implied that the areas acquired by the Soviet Union during the past year have ever been "occupied" by Soviet forces or under their "control" or even any reference to such areas by name unless preceded by the word "former".

The alternative courses which are afforded us, therefore, are to acquiesce in the Soviet attitude and entirely redraft our note to conform to their requirements or to accept its rejection. I shall appreciate your instructions.

THURSTON

860M.01/232 : Telegram

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

Moscow, August 26, 1940—noon.

[Received 12:35 p. m.]

1073. *Pravda* today reports the adoption by the extraordinary sessions of their respective Seimas of the new constitutions of the Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian "Soviet Socialist Republics" and the formation of the new governments in Latvia and Estonia. The texts of the constitutions as adopted are not published but in its leading editorial *Pravda* states that "in conformity with the peculiarities of the young Soviet Republics the drafts of their constitutions now have their own distinguishing characteristics. Thus in the constitution of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic it is written that along with the socialist system of economy, private homesteads of individual[s], peasants, artisans and handicraft men and small private industrial and trading enterprises are to be permitted within the limits estab-



lished by law. The fact refutes the inventions of the Smetona clique concerning the forcible collectivization and persecution of artisans and small manufacturers and traders". From the foregoing it would appear that in the three Baltic States an economic regime will be instituted temporarily at least closely resembling that of the New Economic Policy <sup>29</sup> in the Soviet Union. It would appear likely that so long as that system is in force the three Baltic countries will remain a special economic area and that communication or travel between the Baltic area and the Soviet Union proper will be strictly controlled.

THURSTON

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840.51 Frozen Credits/515 : Telegram

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

Moscow, August 26, 1940—5 p. m.

[Received 10:50 p. m.]

1075. Lozovski read and handed to me today the following memorandum dated August 26, 1940 from the Soviet Government in reply to the memorandum which I delivered on August 12, 1940 in accordance with the Department's telegram 423, August 9, 6 p. m.:

*Translation.* Having studied the memorandum of the Government of the United States of America dated August 12, 1940 on the question of the retention by American institutions of the gold purchased by the State Bank of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics from the Central Banks of Esthonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, the Soviet Government considers that the statement contained in the Soviet memorandum of July 20, 1940 in regard to the responsibility of the Government of the United States of America for the damages suffered by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics as a result of the action of American institutions is fully confirmed.

The attempts of the Government of the United States to explain its measures directed against the legal rights and interests of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics by assertions that the Governments and peoples of the Baltic countries were allegedly deprived of the possibility of disposing legally of the property belonging to them are in full contradiction to the facts and are thus without basis and cannot, therefore, serve as a justification for the above-mentioned actions of the American authorities.

The references in the memorandum of the Government of the United States to orders of the executive authorities of the United States to the right of control, etc., cannot serve as a basis for violation of the property rights and interests of the Soviet State. Insofar as the Executive orders of April 10, May 10, June 17, 1940 referred to in the memorandum of the Government of the United States, are concerned

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<sup>29</sup> The New Economic Policy, or *Nep*, was introduced by Vladimir Ilyich Lenin during 1921, as a strategic retreat following the failure of the economic policies of "war" or militant communism. Certain concessions were granted to economic principles theoretically condemned by the leaders of the Bolshevik Revolution. This period lasted until 1928, when the first Five-Year Plan was put into operation.

the orders in question have no relation whatsoever to the present case and the reference thereto only reveals the unwillingness of the appropriate institutions and of the Government of the United States to carry out measures which are entirely within their competency in order to guarantee the due execution of the orders of the Banks of Esthonia, Latvia and Lithuanian and of the State bank of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics which are based on their legal rights. In view of the foregoing the Soviet Government unreservedly insists on its application of July 20, 1940 for the return to the Soviet Union of the gold purchased by it from the Central Banks of Esthonia, Latvia and Lithuania.<sup>30</sup>

THURSTON

124.613/1065 : Telegram

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

Moscow, August 27, 1940—10 a. m.

[Received 10:35 a. m.]

1077. Department's telegram No. 474, August 22, 7 p. m.<sup>31</sup> At the request of Leonard, Guffer, and Packer, I am sending Ward to Tallinn, Bohlen<sup>32</sup> to Kaunas, and Reinhardt<sup>33</sup> back to Riga, to assist in the final liquidation of our establishments there. As the Department will realize, this action seriously depletes the personnel of this Mission and I trust that our Chargés d'Affaires at the three places mentioned will have progressed sufficiently with the closing of their respective offices to enable the members of this Embassy to return to their post with the least possible delay.

In this connection I take it for granted that the Department's instructions regarding the liquidation of the Baltic offices "before September 5" are not to be construed to mean that the officers in charge must personally remove themselves from those posts prior to September 5 unless they have succeeded in completing the liquidation of their offices. If they have not done so, it would seem to be advisable that they should remain for the time necessary to complete such liquidation, inasmuch as it is obvious that an officer unfamiliar with local conditions would be at a great disadvantage in winding up the last, and presumably minor, details.

Repeated to Tallinn, Kaunas and Riga.

THURSTON

<sup>30</sup> In an attached memorandum for the Acting Chief of the Division of European Affairs, Ray Atherton, the Assistant Chief of the Division, Loy W. Henderson, inquired: "Do you not agree with me that no purpose would be served in replying to this memorandum? We have stated our case; the Soviet Government has given its views. There seems to be no bridge between us at the present time with regard to this matter." Mr. Atherton noted: "O.K. R. A."

<sup>31</sup> Not printed.

<sup>32</sup> Charles E. Bohlen, Second Secretary of Embassy and Consul in the Soviet Union.

<sup>33</sup> G. Frederick Reinhardt, Third Secretary of Embassy and Vice Consul in the Soviet Union, previously at Riga and Tallinn.

124.60P2/312 : Telegram

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

Moscow, August 29, 1940.

[Received August 29—10:38 a. m.]

1087. Riga's August 28th.<sup>34</sup> On August 26th I informed Lozovski personally that our Legation at Riga had encountered difficulties in its efforts to ship out of the country property belonging to the United States establishments we are closing there. I requested that appropriate instructions be sent to the authorities at Riga to the end that no further difficulties might arise and that as a precaution similar instructions be addressed to the authorities at Tallinn and Kaunas. I am today addressing a personal note to Lozovski reminding him of our conversation and informing him that "while my Government is quite prepared to withdraw its establishments from the three Baltic capitals in accordance with the request of the Soviet Government, and will endeavor to do so by September 5th, the date designated therefor by the Soviet Government, it obviously will be unable to take such action unless it receives the full cooperation of the Soviet Government and its local authorities."

Repeated to Riga.

THURSTON

124.60P3/237 : Telegram

*The Chargé in Latvia (Packer) to the Secretary of State*

RIGA, August 29, 1940—5 p. m.

[Received August 29—2 p. m.]

337. Legation's telegrams 283, August 12, 8 p. m.; 316, August 21; 322, August 23, 2 p. m.; 327, August 25, 1 p. m.; and 335, August 28.<sup>35</sup> Local office of People's Commissariat for Foreign Trade has just informed me that "norms" of the Soviet Customs Tariff will apply with respect to export of effects of all members of the staff not included in diplomatic list with the result that they will be expected to pay export duty on all furniture excluding requirements of three rooms, on excess clothing et cetera. I have protested orally on the ground that the members of the Legation staff have not been living under conditions such as prevail in the Soviet Union and it would therefore be unjust to apply the Soviet "norms". The official to whom I spoke has promised to appeal to the head representative of the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs here but I have little hope that unless pressure is applied at once in Washington and Moscow there

<sup>34</sup> Not printed.<sup>35</sup> None printed.

will be a solution satisfactory to us. I hope the Department will not require the members of the staff who acquired property here prior to Soviet occupation to submit to this inequitable treatment. Instructions requested.

Repeated to Moscow.

PACKER

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840.51 Frozen Credits/497 : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, August 31, 1940—2 p. m.

499. (Section 1). Your 1065, August 24, 11 a. m.

(a) Section 2 of this telegram contains a revised note which should be delivered to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs without prior consultation.

(b) If, in your opinion, certain alterations in the note are advisable you should request Department's authority to make them.

(c) This note should bear the same date as the rejected original contained in Department's 423 of August 9, 6 p. m.

(d) Should objection be made to the terminology "establishment of Soviet troops", you may desire to refer to the Tass despatch as reported in your telegram 787, July 2, noon.<sup>36</sup>

(e) In case officials of the Commissariat should question this note, you may state that in the opinion of your Government the original note was entirely factual and that its rejection by the Soviet authorities was unwarranted; that since your Government has no desire necessarily to wound the sensibility of any Government with which it maintains relations, it has, nevertheless, drastically altered the original note. It cannot, however, make any further changes.

(Section 2). During the last eleven months the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics has announced the incorporation into the Soviet Union of certain territories in which nationals of the United States own property or have interests. I have the honor, upon instructions from my Government, to inform Your Excellency that the Government of the United States holds and will hold the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics responsible for all losses to nationals of the United States resulting from acts of nationalization or confiscation, or other acts injurious to the property or interests of such nationals, which have been or may be committed under the direction of, or with the approval of, the Soviet authorities in such territories subsequent to the entry and establishment therein of Soviet troops.

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<sup>36</sup> *Post*, p. 488.

My Government also directs me to invite the attention of the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the fact that such territories, prior to the establishment therein of Soviet troops, formed either a part of, or the whole of various countries, the governments, institutions, and residents of which have debts aggregating large sums to the Government or nationals of the United States.

HULL

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124.60P3/237 : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, August 31, 1940—3 p. m.

500. If situation referred to in Riga's 337, August 29, 5 p. m., is unchanged, please bring matter at once to attention of Foreign Office and state that your Government expects that the members in question of the staffs of the Baltic missions shall be permitted without delay and without payment of export duties or fees or without obstruction of any kind, to export all of their household and personal effects. Keep Department informed.<sup>37</sup>

Repeat to Riga, Tallinn and Kaunas.

HULL

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124.60P3/242a : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, August 31, 1940—4 p. m.

501. Your 1087, August 29. In case it becomes apparent that it will be impossible because of lack of cooperation of Soviet authorities to complete liquidation of one or more Baltic missions before September 5, you are authorized, upon notification from them, to insist either in writing or orally at the Foreign Office that such personnel as may be needed be permitted to remain until liquidation is completed and be given every assistance by the appropriate Soviet authorities.

Please repeat to Kaunas, Riga and Tallinn and ask for names of personnel, if any, who should remain.

It is assumed you have made appropriate representations concerning departure of alien clerks for posts to which they have been assigned.

HULL

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<sup>37</sup> In telegram No. 1121, September 6, 6 p. m., the Chargé in the Soviet Union stated that he had made "emphatic representations based literally upon" Department's telegram No. 500. (124.60P3/241)

840.51 Frozen Credits/532: Telegram

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

Moscow, September 2, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received September 2—3:30 p. m.]

1102. Department's 499, August 31, 2 p. m. I handed to Lozovski this afternoon the revised note which, in my opinion, required no alteration. Although Lozovski read the note he did not discuss it, but said that he might wish to speak to me about it later. I did not in consequence have occasion to resort to the instructions contained in sections (d) and (e) of your telegram.

THURSTON

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124.60P/67: Telegram

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

Moscow, September 2, 1940—5 p. m.

[Received 5:50 p. m.]

1103. I informed Lozovski this afternoon that we are doing everything possible to close our Baltic Missions by September 5 but that we are not receiving the cooperation from the Soviet Government and its representatives to which we are entitled and which is necessary in order that liquidation may be accomplished by that date. I then took up with him the delay in issuing visas to members of those missions who have been assigned to Moscow, the effort to apply Soviet customs "norms" to the property of members of those missions, and the question of exit visas for non-American employees. I made emphatic representations on these subjects and left with Lozovski supporting memoranda regarding them.

Lozovski replied that regardless of difficulties our Missions must be closed September 5. I informed him that they would be closed insofar as their functions are concerned but that unless cooperation along the lines alluded to in the preceding paragraph was immediately forthcoming it would be physically impossible to complete the liquidation despite our best efforts. After an argument of some duration Lozovski stated that he would take up the various questions involved with the appropriate authorities this afternoon and endeavor to meet our wishes. I understood him to agree that if it proved to be physically impossible to complete the work of liquidation a reduced personnel including the three officers assigned from this Mission might remain for a very short time for the purpose.

I fear, however, that despite my representations today the situation regarding non-American personnel remains approximately as reported in the Embassy's 1096 of August 31.<sup>38</sup>

Repeated to Kaunas, Riga and Tallinn.

THURSTON

124.60I3/45 : Telegram

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

Moscow, September 3, 1940—10 a. m.

[Received 12:30 p. m.]

1104. My telegram No. 1103, September 2, 5 p. m. A formal note was received last night from the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs in reply to a communication from the Embassy dated August 26, stating that the employees of the American Mission at Tallinn are Soviet citizens and that the question of their departure from the Soviet Union to any other country is to be decided by the Workers and Peasants Militiya. I assume that this note was drafted prior to my conversation with Lozovski.

I have today received a telegram from Ward, however, stating that the Soviet Legation in Tallinn has been instructed by Moscow to examine the applications filed by the Estonian clerks and their families and that the Legation has indicated that a decision on their cases may be reached at an early date. I have had no word from Gufler regarding the alien clerks at his mission. I mentioned them specifically in my talk yesterday with Lozovski.

THURSTON

124.60I/41 : Telegram

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

Moscow, September 5, 1940—11 a. m.

[Received September 6—2:28 a. m.]

1112. 1. Our offices at Tallinn, Kaunas and Riga will formally close today.<sup>39</sup> They have in fact I believe already suspended their functions. The situation at each office is as follows:

2. Tallinn: Packing and customs examination of Government property completed today and Ward intends to depart as soon as railway bills of lading have been obtained and Government-rented quarters have been turned over to local authorities. In the meantime, however, his residence permit will expire today.

<sup>38</sup> Not printed.

<sup>39</sup> For text of the public notice announcing the closure of the American Legations with their consular sections in the three Baltic States, effective on September 5, see Department of State *Bulletin*, September 7, 1940, p. 199.

3. Kaunas: The only pending matters are the granting of Soviet exit visas to McClung and Mazionis, who are assigned to this Embassy and to five alien employees. Bohlen will remain at Kaunas until visas are granted to McClung and Mazionis, which will require extension of his residence permit also.

4. The situation at Riga is more complicated as a result of the insistence Soviet authorities upon opening and examining and probably against the effect<sup>40</sup> of our clerks; the failure of the Soviet authorities to issue a permit for the export of Minister Wiley's automobile consigned to this Embassy; and the failure of the Soviet authorities to issue an exit visa to Marquis who is assigned to duty in this Embassy. Lightner and Reinhardt are remaining until these matters are adjusted which will necessitate prolongation of their residence permits. Packer and Washington also desire to remain but I am recommending that they depart without further delay.

5. I have made repeated oral and written representations to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs regarding the difficulties implicit in the foregoing report and I am renewing such representations orally today.

THURSTON

124.6013/49 : Telegram

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

Moscow, September 6, 1940—1 p. m.

[Received 5:10 p. m.]

1120. Embassy's 1112, September 5, noon [11 a. m.]. Lozovski sent word to me this afternoon as follows:

1. Reinhardt, Bohlen and Ward have been granted extension of their residence permits at Riga, Kaunas and Tallinn to September 8 inclusive.

2. Authorization to grant entry visas to McClung and Mazionis has been sent to Kaunas.

3. Marquis' residence permit at Riga is extended until such time as the question of a visa permitting him to come to Moscow has been decided. (Lozovski had intimated to me that while diplomatic officers assigned to this Mission would receive visas promptly the Soviet Government must reserve the right to examine the eligibility to such visas of non-diplomatic personnel.)

4. The shipment of Wiley's car to Moscow has been authorized.

5. The residence permits of Packer and Washington at Riga cannot be extended (I am informed by Lightner, however, who has just

<sup>40</sup> This passage is obviously incomplete; it may properly read: "and probably levying export duty against the effects".



arrived that the local authorities have assured Packer that no difficulty on this score need arise).

6. The Soviet attitude toward the granting of exit visas to non-American employees of our Baltic Missions remains as previously reported.

7. There is no change in the Soviet attitude with respect to the customs treatment of the effects of non-commissioned personnel of our Baltic Missions.

THURSTON

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861.012/202 : Telegram

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

Moscow, September 8, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received September 8—1:15 p. m.]

1134. The Moscow press today publishes a ukase of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the U. S. S. R., concerning the procedure for the acquisition of Soviet citizenship by citizens of the Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian Soviet Socialist Republics. This ukase provides that in accordance with article I of the law concerning citizenship in the U. S. S. R. of August 19, 1938, citizens of the three republics are Soviet citizens from the date of the admission of these republics into the country; U. S. S. R. citizens of the republics who are not within the borders of the Soviet Union and who have not been deprived [of] citizenship by the Soviet governments of the republics must register as Soviet citizens in the missions or consulates abroad of the Soviet government not later than November 1, 1940, either by personal appearance or by sending a statement by mail with their passports attached.<sup>41</sup> Persons failing so to register may be accepted as Soviet citizens in accordance with article III of the law concerning citizenship referred to.

Persons without citizenship, belonging to national minorities which, under the political conditions prevailing in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia before the establishment there of Soviet power, could not obtain Latvian, Lithuanian or Estonian citizenship shall acquire Soviet citizenship in accordance with the procedure above provided.

Other persons without citizenship, permanently residing in the three republics, may obtain Soviet citizenship in accordance with ar-

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<sup>41</sup>The Soviet Embassy at Washington caused advertisements to be inserted in American newspapers directing the attention of Lithuanians, Latvians, and Estonians to the procedure for acquiring Soviet citizenship in accordance with the decree of September 8, 1940. See for illustration, the *New York Times*, September 22, 1940, p. 51.

While this notice did not violate any United States law, the Assistant Chief of the Division of European Affairs, Loy W. Henderson, observed: "I consider this extremely bad taste on the part of Soviet representatives in this country since they know our attitude. In fact Soviet Consulates are exceeding their prerogatives in trying to frighten Baltic nationals to acquire Soviet citizenship."

article III of the law concerning citizenship in the Soviet Union. Persons who were deprived of Soviet citizenship by the decree of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee and of the Soviet of People's Commissars of the R. S. F. S. R.<sup>42</sup> of December 15, 1921, and who are at present within the territory of the three republics, are to be treated in the same way as other persons without citizenship referred to in the beginning of this paragraph.

THURSTON

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124.6013/51 : Telegram

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

Moscow, September 11, 1940—1 p. m.  
[Received September 11—12: 33 p. m.]

1151. Department's 529, September 10, 2 p. m.<sup>43</sup> Reinhardt reported last night that "all vans passed customs." I assume this means that no attempt was made to collect duty.

The Department's support and offer are greatly appreciated.<sup>44</sup>

THURSTON

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711.61/764

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Secretary of State*

[WASHINGTON,] October 14, 1940.

Participants: Secretary Hull,  
The British Ambassador, Lord Lothian and  
Mr. N. M. Butler, Counselor of Embassy

The British Ambassador, accompanied by Mr. Butler, called to say goodbye before leaving for home. He said that his Government was interested in the Russian situation as it related to the ships and assets of the Baltic states under the operation of our freezing policy. I replied that, of course, we have a definite non-recognition policy, which we pursue steadfastly; that I had suggested to my associates, however, that if Russia should show a real disposition to move in our common direction with respect to the axis countries, then I would

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<sup>42</sup> Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic.

<sup>43</sup> Not printed. The Chargé was hereby "authorized to draw against Department's special fund for money to cover export duties for American personnel and to pay them under protest." It was believed that "the Soviet authorities, on reconsidering their stand, will be prepared to refund this money." (124.6013/49)

<sup>44</sup> The Chargé formerly in Latvia, Earl L. Packer, in his despatch No. 882 written at Stockholm, September 12, summed up as his belief that it was "in large part due to the Department's delay in issuing the necessary instructions authorizing the Legation to proceed with the packing of Government property and the personal property of members of the staff that the liquidation could not proceed more expeditiously once such instructions arrived." (124.60P/76)

be disposed to deal with the Baltic assets and ships on a sort of *quid pro quo* basis rather than to adhere inflexibly to our non-recognition policy in this case. I said that, of course, we would observe very carefully what Russia's real attitude is from time to time.

C[ORDELL] H[ULL]

860N.51/8 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, November 11, 1940—6 p. m.

[Received 11:30 p. m.]

1520. Department's 732, November 4, 8 p. m.<sup>45</sup> The following information concerning the treatment being accorded the property of Reich Germans and German Balts in the Baltic States has been received in the strictest confidence from a member of the German Embassy.

1. My informant stated that Reich German industrial property in the Baltic States has not been nationalized following the Soviet occupation and that in certain cases where predominately German firms had been included in the nationalization lists they were subsequently denationalized as the result of a German protest. The exemption of such property according to this source rests on the provisions of the 1925 Consular Treaty between Germany and the Soviet Union<sup>46</sup> which exempted German property in the future from sequestration by Soviet authorities without compensation. It was added, however, that although technically not nationalized the question of compensation and ultimate disposition of the property is presenting considerable difficulties and that the conversations which are being conducted by the German commissions in the Baltic States with the Soviet authorities have not been successful thus far; it was stated for example that the Russians were maintaining that the provisions of the 1925 Treaty applied only to German property located within the then Soviet Union and not to property in recently acquired areas. The German Government has refused to accept this interpretation and has been successful in maintaining the principle that the provisions of the 1925 Treaty must now be applied to the Baltic States as well. Bank deposits, however, and other financial assets of German firms held in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia have been nationalized and the German Government has not yet been successful in having such assets released. My informant stated further that the Estonian Shale Oil Company to which the Department undoubtedly refers

<sup>45</sup> Not printed.

<sup>46</sup> Signed at Moscow, October 12, 1925; for text, see League of Nations Treaty Series, vol. LIII, p. 7.

has not been nationalized by the Soviets; not, however, by virtue of the 1925 Treaty but pursuant to a special arrangement in the process of being worked out whereby German engineers and technicians will continue the administration and operations of the complicated process required for the extraction of oil from shale. The special treatment being accorded to the Shale Oil Company in Estonia, according to my informant, is believed to be due to the recognition by the Soviet authorities that they would probably be unable to operate the plant successfully with their own engineers and technicians.

2. With respect to the industrial property of German Balts in the three Baltic States such property has not been nationalized by reason of special arrangements in connection with the repatriation of the Baltic German minorities. It was stated that the negotiations in respect of such property have not yet been completed. The question of compensation is still under discussion. The provisions of the Treaty of 1925 do not apply to either industrial or personal property belonging to Baltic German minorities. Bank deposits and other financial assets of German Balts in Latvian, Lithuanian and Estonian banks have, however, been nationalized.

In conclusion my informant expressed the opinion that judging from the difficulties thus far encountered in the negotiations it is doubtful that German or Baltic German firms will receive adequate compensation for their property in the Baltic States and that although such property is technically not being nationalized the ultimate outcome will amount to substantially the same thing. My informant added that as the actual negotiations on the question of Baltic German property were being conducted with the local Soviet authorities by the German commissions in Riga, Kaunas and Tallinn, the German Embassy here was not familiar with all of the details of what he described as very complicated negotiations and it is possible, therefore, that further and more detailed information on the subject might be obtained from the American Embassy at Berlin.

STEINHARDT

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861.515/215 : Telegram

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

Moscow, December 3, 1940—3 p. m.

[Received December 3—10:57 a. m.]

1666. Embassy's 1627, November 27, 5 p. m.<sup>47</sup> The receipt by the Embassy of the Kaunas Russian-language newspaper reveals that in

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<sup>47</sup> Not printed; it reported that the Soviet ruble was declared legal tender on November 24, 1940, in Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia. At this time it was announced that the rate of exchange would be one ruble for one lat, one lit, or one crown, respectively. (861.515/214)

Lithuania the rate of exchange of the ruble which will circulate there together with the lit was established as of November 5 at 1 lit to 90 kopecks. According to the information obtained from the State Bank the rate of exchange in Esthonia has been established at 1 crown to 1.25 rubles.

The Riga and Kaunas Russian-language newspapers received by the Embassy indicate in connection with the introduction of the ruble as legal currency there has been a drastic upward revision of commodity prices in Latvia and Lithuania and presumably in Esthonia. Statements in these newspapers indicate that the aim of the new price decrees is to bring the price level in the Baltic States into conformity with that prevailing in the Soviet Union proper.<sup>48</sup>

THURSTON

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860N.51/9 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, December 14, 1940—6 p. m.

[Received 8:30 p. m.]

1731. My 1520, November 11, 6 p. m. In connection with the general question of foreign property located in the Baltic States the Counselor of the Swedish Legation<sup>49</sup> recently informed a member of the Embassy that the Soviet Government has offered to pay Sweden 10% of the total value of nationalized Swedish property in the Baltic States if payment is to be made within 1 year or 15% of the value if payments are extended over 3 years or 25% if payments are extended over a 10-year period. The Swedish Counselor stated that his Government was not disposed to accept this proposal and before pursuing the matter further would await the outcome of negotiations between the German and Soviet Governments on the question of German property in the Baltic States.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> The Chargé in Germany, Leland B. Morris, reported in his despatch No. 3953, December 3, on the introduction of the ruble, replacing the national currencies of the three Baltic States. He wrote further: "Before introducing the ruble, the Baltic currencies were rapidly inflated, or rather their purchasing capacity was greatly decreased in order to bring the price structure somewhat in line with that in the Soviet Union. . . . Soviet occupation is thus accompanied by (1) looting of the state economy and (2) impoverishment of the people due to great price inflation." (860N.00/72)

<sup>49</sup> N. Lindh.

<sup>50</sup> An agreement between Sweden and the Soviet Union was eventually signed in Moscow on May 30, 1941, which regulated their mutual property claims in the former Baltic States. Swedish economic claims of all kinds amounted to about 118,000,000 Swedish crowns; and "in final settlement of all other Swedish claims the Soviet Government will pay the Swedish Government the sum of 20,000,000 Swedish crowns in eight quarterly installments, or over a period of two years." In return, Sweden "released gold to a value of 18,000,000 Swedish crowns belonging to the Baltic States and deposited in Sweden, and also a number of Baltic ships lying in Swedish ports before the negotiations were concluded." (758.61/75, 78)

A member of the German Embassy states in the strictest confidence that the German and Soviet Governments have reached an agreement concerning the compensation to be paid for Reich German and German Balt industrial property with one or two exceptions among which the Estonian Shale Oil Company which is still the subject of special negotiation, is to be taken over by the Soviet authorities and the agreed valuation which it was stated was "somewhat less" than the real value is to be credited to Germany in the balance of payments under the existing economic accords and will be used to offset the value of Soviet deliveries to Germany. My informant said he could not give the exact agreed value since "the arrangement in regard to compensation would apply to German property only" which he said had been agreed upon partly because of the German-Soviet treaty of 1925 referred to in my telegram under reference and partly because of the existence of special economic agreements between Germany and the Soviet Union. My informant stated that originally the Soviet Government had made the same proposal to the German Government which it had made to Sweden but that this proposal had been rejected by Germany as entirely inadequate.

STEINHARDT

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138 U.S.S.R./607 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, December 15, 1940—9 p. m.

[Received December 15—7:50 p. m.]

1734. For the Under Secretary.<sup>51</sup> Department's 869, December 13, 4 p. m.<sup>52</sup> In the course of your conversations with Umanski<sup>53</sup> you may wish to consider the advisability of referring to the fact that the Soviet Government has ignored the Embassy's notes for the past 14 months concerning the seizure and nationalization of American property in Poland, Bessarabia and particularly the Baltic States and to contrast such treatment with the negotiations now being secretly carried on here with Germany and Sweden to compensate the nationals of these countries for their property in the Baltic States (see my telegram 1731, December 14, 6 p. m.). This might serve as a reply to Umanski's pressure for action in the matter of the gold and ships of the Baltic States sequestered by our Government as I am persuaded that as soon as he has as many machine tools as he believes

<sup>51</sup> Sumner Welles.

<sup>52</sup> Vol. III, p. 417.

<sup>53</sup> Konstantin Alexandrovich Umansky, Soviet Ambassador to the United States.

he can obtain you will be subjected to severe pressure in the matter of the gold and ships of the Baltic States.

STEINHARDT

### III. ACTIVITIES OF THE SOVIET UNION IN THE BALKANS; THE SEIZURE OF BESSARABIA

761.6211/316

*The Ambassador in Turkey (MacMurray) to President Roosevelt*

ANKARA, November 9, 1939.

[Received December 18, 1939.]

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: The courier taking this letter from Istanbul at the end of this week will afford the first opportunity for me to make any reasonably intelligent reply to the letter of August 28 in which you asked for my impressions of the effect of the Russo-German alignment<sup>54</sup> upon Turkey and her policy. For it reached me at a moment when the very question you had asked was uppermost in the minds both of foreigners and of the Turks themselves, as a query for the answer to which nobody had any reliable data. Only a few days before, the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Saracoglu, who is admirably honest and frank in answering one's questions, although perhaps inclined in some cases to take a little advantage of the privilege of answering no more than the precise question put to him) had told me that he was going to Moscow primarily for the purpose of satisfying his own mind as to whether the Soviet authorities were now friendly or unfriendly towards Turkey. And it is only very recently that the question has cleared up enough to justify even a tentative opinion on that question and on its effect upon the Turkish attitude with regard to Soviet Russia.

Perhaps, in order to put things in perspective, I should start with a comment upon the rather exceptional relationship of friendliness that until recently prevailed between Turkey and Russia. In the days when both countries were . . . fighting against interventions in order to assert themselves as new national entities, it was not unnatural that they felt a considerable mutual sympathy, lent each other support (Russia's assistance to Turkey naturally being far the more important), put aside the rivalries and ambitions that each of them associated with a discredited past, and convinced themselves that their common boundary and their common interest in the Straits as the key to the Black Sea could thereafter be regarded as

<sup>54</sup> A treaty of nonaggression, with secret additional protocol, was signed at Moscow on August 23, 1939; for text, see *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, series D, vol. VII, pp. 245-247.

matters of cooperative effort against an unfriendly outer world rather than as matters of contest between them. And I really believe it is true that, for a dozen years and more, this sense of an especial closeness of sympathies was a reality, among the leaders of both peoples, to a degree that seemed to confute those of us who find it hard to conceive of nations or peoples as entertaining, for more than a brief spell of emotional excitation, those sentiments of affection and sympathy which are normal as between individuals. This rather idyllic friendship between the two nations was somewhat clouded by the Soviet Government's reluctance at the Montreux Conference of 1936<sup>55</sup> to concede to Turkey full control of the Straits: but it continued to receive at least lip service (perhaps a sort of Coué treatment) from both sides. And up to a few months ago I think it might have been said, without any sentimental illusions, that there continued to exist relations of an exceptional degree of friendliness and of mutual trust between the two Governments.

The favorable psychological relationship which had existed over all this period had meanwhile taken legalistic form in a treaty of non-aggression between them,<sup>56</sup> which ten years ago had been supplemented by an agreement<sup>57</sup> that neither of them would, without fully consulting and obtaining the approval of the other in advance, come to any political understanding with any neighboring country.

This was, in outline, the background of Turco-Russian relations at the time when, last April, the Italians moved into Albania<sup>58</sup> and thereby precipitated a new situation in the Balkans and compelled the Turks to seek some method to meet what they not unnaturally felt to be a menace to their national safety. The story is current—whether it is true or not, I do not know; but I really think it not unlikely—that Atatürk<sup>59</sup> had some years ago made to his more responsible advisers the observation that, if Mussolini<sup>60</sup> really wanted to restore the ancient Roman Empire, he was stupid not to see that his first step to that end should be the taking of Albania; in which case, Turkey could assure its own safety only by allying itself with Great Britain

<sup>55</sup> For correspondence regarding the conference on the Straits, held at Montreux, June 22–July 20, 1936, 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. CLXXIII, p. 215.

<sup>56</sup> Treaty of Friendship and Neutrality signed at Paris on December 17, 1925; for text, see *ibid.*, vol. CLVII, p. 355.

<sup>57</sup> Protocol enlarging and prolonging the validity of the treaty of December 17, 1925, signed at Ankara on December 17, 1929; for text, see *ibid.*, p. 361. Further prolonged by Protocol signed at Ankara on October 30, 1931, *ibid.*, p. 367; and prolonged until November 7, 1945, by Protocol signed at Ankara on November 7, 1935, *ibid.*, vol. CLXXIX, p. 129.

<sup>58</sup> The Italians entered Albania on April 7, 1939. For correspondence concerning the absorption of Albania by Italy, see *Foreign Relations*, 1939, vol. II, pp. 365 ff.

<sup>59</sup> Mustapha Kemal Atatürk, President of Turkey, 1920–38.

<sup>60</sup> Benito Mussolini, Head of the Government and Prime Minister of Italy since 1922.



as the dominant sea power of the world, and incidentally with France as the necessary ally of Britain. Whether or not such a voice from the tomb was decisive, it is natural enough that the Turkish Government did, under the circumstances of last April, promptly go at least half way to meet the desire of the British and French to reinsure themselves on their commitments to Greece and Rumania.<sup>61</sup>

But the Turks (despite having their fair share of human weaknesses, and being often enough irritating in cases where we find it hard to understand why they should be) have at any rate a rather fine sense of obligation in the matter of their loyalties; and feeling that the Russians were, so to speak, their best friends in the international society, they insisted on taking the Soviet Government into their confidence, and working with its full approval, before coming to an agreement even with the British, who might well have been construed to stand outside of the Turkish obligation to consult Russia before reaching new understandings with a neighboring power. Thus the Russians were, so to speak, unofficial observers of the negotiations which led to the preliminary Anglo-Turkish Agreement of last May,<sup>62</sup> and the Franco-Turkish Agreement of a month or so later.<sup>63</sup> And in the arrangements leading up to both of those declarations, it was clearly understood that they were subject to Turkey's non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union, and would not require her to engage in hostilities with Russia—although the clause providing that there should be no separate treaty of peace implied that if Turkey were once engaged in hostilities on the side of the Allies, she would not drop out in the event that Russia should later become involved on the other side.

Having thus, with Russian acquiescence, committed themselves to the Allied camp, the Turks felt it was a blow in the face when Russia (in the latter part of August), without the slightest intimation to them, entered into the preliminary agreement with Germany which at least potentially ranged the Soviet Union with the opposite camp. The Turks were hurt and at a loss to understand the meaning of it. Their inclination was to feel disillusioned, suspicious and even antagonistic; but they at least made an effort to rationalize as favor-

<sup>61</sup> For text of an announcement made on behalf of both Great Britain and France by Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain in the House of Commons on April 13, 1939, see *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Commons, 1938-39, 5th series, vol. 346, col. 13; and simultaneously in the House of Lords by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Lord Halifax, *ibid.*, House of Lords, 5th series, vol. 112, col. 612.

<sup>62</sup> Prime Minister Chamberlain announced this agreement in the House of Commons on May 12, 1939; see *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Commons, 1938-39, 5th series, vol. 347, cols. 952 ff.

<sup>63</sup> For text of the Franco-Turkish declaration of mutual assistance of June 23, 1939, see Germany, Foreign Office, *Documents on the Events Preceding the Outbreak of the War* (New York, 1940), p. 332.

ably as possible what Russia had done, and to keep as much of the old confidence as they could.

They were somewhat reassured when (early in September the not very personable or beloved Soviet Ambassador<sup>64</sup> returned from a prolonged visit to Moscow and laid before them a Russian proposal for a Turco-Russian treaty of mutual assistance, which would have paralleled and supplemented the tripartite Turco-Franco-British treaty which was then in the later stages of negotiation, and which, in conjunction with it, would seemingly have made Turkey the central pier in a bridge uniting the Soviet Union with the Democracies in the protection of the Balkan and Black Sea region against invasion by either Germany or Italy. These proposals (whose precise terms, by the way, are still a well-kept secret) were promptly laid before the British and French Ambassadors,<sup>65</sup> and approved by their Governments; and although naturally under very heavy pressure of work here, Mr. Saracoglu eventually yielded to the insistence of the Russians that he should go to Moscow to negotiate the details of a treaty on the basis of the proposals.

I talked with him just before he left, and found him in a mood of almost pathetic desire to justify the traditional Turkish confidence in the Soviet leaders, but with a very realistic and even cynical apprehension that, in view of their unknown commitments to Germany, they might well prove to be double-crossing their old friends. President İnönü<sup>66</sup> evidently shared that apprehension, and is understood to have given Mr. Saracoglu, by way of parting instructions, a warning to be on the alert against any trick detrimental to the interests either of Turkey herself or of her British and French allies.

Before Mr. Saracoglu had actually left Turkish soil, the Russian invasion of Poland had brought closer and made more acute the apprehensions that Russia really belonged to the opposite and potentially hostile camp; and after he reached Moscow, he was held at arm's length and treated like a tourist until the Soviet leaders had finished their new set of negotiations with von Ribbentrop.<sup>67</sup> Even then, he was still kept dangling, without an opportunity to talk with any responsible officials, for about another week. Whatever may have been the reason for this, it had a lamentable effect on general Turkish opinion, which felt affronted by the seeming lack of even common courtesy towards the representative of the Turkish Government.

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<sup>64</sup> A. V. Terentyev.

<sup>65</sup> Sir Hughe Montgomery Knatchbull-Hugessen, and René L. D. Massigli, respectively.

<sup>66</sup> İsmet İnönü, President of Turkey since November 11, 1938.

<sup>67</sup> Joachim von Ribbentrop, Reich Foreign Minister.

When the actual conferences with the Soviet leaders (including Stalin<sup>68</sup> himself) began on October 1, it appears that they put forward two new proposals which would wholly have changed the purport and the bearing of those which they had previously made. One was that the proposed Russo-Turkish pact of mutual assistance should not obligate the Soviet Government to assist Turkey against Germany; the other was that Turkey should bind herself to Russia in advance that, in the event of a war in which Turkey might be a belligerent, she would forego the discretion granted to her in such a case by the Convention of Montreux, and would undertake to close the Straits to the war vessels of her co-belligerents. Both of these proposals Mr. Saracoglu refused to consider or even to refer to his Government; whereupon, as he has told me, the Russian negotiators dropped them with the statement that they did not attach much importance to either of them.

They also made two other proposals, which contemplated modifications of the tripartite treaty with Great Britain and France as already drafted. One of these was to the effect that Turkey should go no further than she had already gone in the Turco-British and Turco-French declarations in undertaking to *consult* (rather than to *participate*) in the event of Britain and France being called upon to fulfill their guarantees in the Balkans; the other was that, in the event of Soviet Russia's becoming involved in hostilities against the Allies, the provisions both of the Turkish alliance with Great Britain and France, and of the proposed Turco-Russian treaty of mutual assistance, should be suspended for the duration of the war. The Turks talked over both of these proposals with the British and French, and worked out with them formulae which were believed to meet the Russian requests in full. When, however, Mr. Saracoglu informed the Russians that he was prepared to meet their views, they again (actually for the third time) raised the two demands which he had refused to consider, and said they would negotiate no further until these demands were conceded; whereupon Mr. Saracoglu apparently asked his Government to order him home.

He actually left after having been in Moscow more than three weeks. While he was on his return journey, the Turkish Prime Minister<sup>69</sup> made a singularly blunt and unreserved statement that the negotiations which the Minister for Foreign Affairs had gone to Moscow to conclude had come to nothing because the Russians had made new (and impliedly incompatible) demands. The Russians, on the other hand, published a communiqué which said in effect that there was a

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<sup>68</sup> 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.

<sup>69</sup> Refik Saydam.

mere pause for rest and refreshment in the course of negotiations which were necessarily long and arduous, and that the talks would shortly be resumed in Ankara. And (no doubt at the suggestion of Mr. Saracoglu) the Turkish Government pressed the British and French Governments to sign the new tripartite treaty of alliance,<sup>70</sup> exactly as it stood in the initialed text before the three Governments had consented to the changes requested by the Soviet Government, at as early a date as possible—or rather, at the earliest moment after Mr. Saracoglu should have left Russian territory.

Mr. Saracoglu returned to Ankara in a sweeter temper than I should have thought possible: he showed none of the resentment that many of his fellow countrymen had felt about his being kept dangling in a rather humiliating way. On the contrary, he professed a very optimistic view of the Russian situation as his experience in Moscow had disclosed it. His views are worth considering, because he is an exceptionally intelligent man, representing a country which undoubtedly does still have some special sort of relationship to Russia, and having known personally for years most of the Russian leaders with whom he had been dealing. Against these qualifications as an observer should perhaps be set the fact that he was undoubtedly somewhat elated and exalted in his ego by the fact that he had received from the lips of Allied statesmen as well as from the press considerable praise (to which he adverted somewhat naïvely in the course of my conversation with him) for the staunchness and loyalty with which he had met a difficult situation. But in any case, his views have the importance that they represent the bases on which Turkish policy has been and doubtless will be formed.

His explanation of the situation starts with the assumption that Soviet Russia has reverted to old Tsarist imperialism, but that it is not yet morally or materially prepared actually to fight for its imperial ambitions; and that it is therefore rather a jackal (to borrow a phrase once used to me in another connection by a certain Chinese politician) feeding where bolder beasts have killed. He does not believe that the Soviet Government has committed itself to Germany more deeply than is necessary to enable Russia to profit by the situations which German aggressive activities may bring about. He thinks that Russia has not any concrete plan of expansion, but is simply on the watch for any advantageous opportunity that may turn up. He feels fairly confident that she will not risk any adventure in Bessarabia or elsewhere in the Balkans unless, despite her having screened the northern border of Rumania, Germany should make such a devastating rush into the Balkans as would completely destroy

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<sup>70</sup>Treaty of Mutual Assistance, signed at Ankara on October 19, 1939; for text, see League of Nations Treaty Series, vol. cc, p. 169.

the morale of the Balkan peoples—in which case the Red Army would, as in Poland, be able to enter without serious cost or risk, and interpose itself between the Germans and the coveted objective of the Straits. In the meanwhile, he believes the Soviet refusal to go on with its own proposals of last September was primarily the result of indecision and a desire to play for time, and perhaps in part a tactical incident to the game which the Soviet Government is playing, the Russians have possibly agreed to turn him away as part of a bargain by which they got from the Germans a free hand in the Baltic States:<sup>71</sup> but he considers that this will not necessarily stand in the way of a future agreement at some time when the Russians find it opportune to assert their real interest in keeping Germany and Italy away from the Straits and the Black Sea. He does not deceive himself into any belief in the tenderness of Russian regard for the interests of Turkey or the other Balkan countries, but assumes that circumstances will for some time to come incline Russia to cooperate with them rather than against them; and so long as that state of affairs exists, he feels that Turkey should make the most of the traditional closeness of relations with Russia. It is a hard-boiled point of view, with just a trifling rather self-conscious but not altogether insincere residue of sentiment.

A different estimate of the situation—an estimate which, I understand, became a matter of very violent debate and even of fisticuffs in one of the private meetings of the official party, although no word of it has been allowed to reach the public ear—is that Mr. Saracoglu's judgment of the matter, hard-boiled as it is, is altogether too optimistic, and that the Turkish Government should from now on recognize and act upon the assumption that Russian neo-imperialism is a definite threat to the safety and independence of Turkey. That, perhaps, is stating the case in its most extreme aspect. Another opinion—one which I understand is rather general among journalists and others of the more intelligent Turks outside of the Government—is rather less extreme and less definite: it could perhaps be described as a feeling that the Russians had failed to live up to the part of old friends, and in a critical time had not only ignored the interests but also deliberately humiliated and hurt the feelings of their Turkish friends. Not only is this feeling somewhat indefinite, but it finds as yet no public expression. I believe, however, that it exists widely, and rankles very deeply, and that it carries with it that especial bitterness which is peculiar to a feeling of having been let down or be-

<sup>71</sup> For information concerning the pressure exerted upon the Baltic States by the Soviet Union in 1939 to conclude pacts of mutual assistance, see *Foreign Relations, The Soviet Union, 1933-1939*, pp. 934 ff.; and for information concerning the incorporation of the Baltic States into the Soviet Union in 1940, see *ante*, pp. 357 ff.

trayed by those in whom one has placed his trust. If so, it is to be anticipated that the canker will in time destroy whatever remains of the more sentimental aspect of Turkish friendship for the Soviet Government.

Meanwhile, what has happened only makes the Turks more resolute in their policy of holding aloof from involvement in the war unless and until new circumstances create a situation calling for positive action by them jointly with their British and French Allies. They have been challenged in their loyalties, and are proud of the faithfulness with which they met that challenge. One feels that even if the Germans were right (and I do not think they are) in their whispering propaganda that the Turks now repent of having committed themselves even conditionally to the side of the Allies, they would nevertheless hold true to the obligations they have undertaken; for my own belief is that the action of the Russians in compounding, to whatever extent, with the Germans, has had the effect of making it more than before a matter of honor and of stubborn pride for the Turks to abide staunchly by the policy in which they have pledged themselves to the British and French.

To sum up the story in its broad outlines:—The Turks were completely surprised by the Soviet *rapprochement* with Germany and participation in the invasion of Poland, at a loss to understand the motives or the implications of that course of action, and torn between a feeling of suspicion and recoil and a desire to put the best possible construction upon it; in the course of the Foreign Minister's visit to Moscow, their first confusion and bewilderment settled into a pragmatic acceptance of the situation that the traditional friendship has proved a bit hollow, that any such idealism as they had supposed to guide the Soviet Government has died out and been replaced by a revived spirit of Russian imperialism which may well become a menace to the interests and the independence of Turkey, but that for the time being Russia has not the resolution or the material strength to take any risks of really serious involvement, and that it may therefore be worth Turkey's while to jog along in cordial relationship with Russia so long as no definite conflict of interests is brought to an issue; and the upshot of the Soviet effort to inveigle them into playing fast and loose with their obligations to Great Britain and France has been to stiffen them in the determination to manifest to the world an even Quixotic staunchness in their loyalty to their Allies.

I trust that I have not, in this lengthy outline of what seems to us here an important aspect of the war situation, trespassed too greatly upon your patience or upon the interest which your letter expressed.

Faithfully yours,

J. V. A. MACMURRAY

761.74/44 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, January 7, 1940—1 p. m.

[Received 1:13 p. m.]

33. In the course of a conversation yesterday the Bulgarian Minister<sup>72</sup> told me that no political subjects had been discussed during the recent negotiations between the Bulgarian mission and the Soviet Government.<sup>73</sup> He said that the Soviet negotiators had broached political subjects on two occasions but that the members of the Bulgarian mission had replied they were neither authorized nor qualified to discuss this aspect.

The Bulgarian Minister expressed the opinion that a month ago the Rumanian Government was prepared virtually to cede Bessarabia to the Soviet Union without a conflict but that recently and as the direct result of the reverses encountered by the Soviet armed forces in Finland,<sup>74</sup> he had heard that Great Britain and France were urging Rumania to resist the annexation of Bessarabia by the Soviet Union by force if necessary and had promised assistance. The foregoing statement, which was made to me yesterday, appears to be confirmed by the statement made by the British Broadcasting Corporation today reporting an alleged statement by King Carol that Rumania would defend Bessarabia.

The Bulgarian Minister also stated that he had learned that Ritter's<sup>75</sup> return to Berlin (see my telegram January 4, noon<sup>76</sup>) was the result of difficulties encountered in the commercial and economic negotiations with the Soviet authorities.<sup>77</sup>

STEINHARDT

761.71/171 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, January 8, 1940—noon.

[Received January 8—10:40 a. m.]

36. I have learned from a source which I regard as reliable that the railroad between Lwow and Przemysl has been cleared and or-

<sup>72</sup> Theodore Christov.

<sup>73</sup> An economic mission had carried on conversations in Moscow which resulted in the conclusion of agreements on January 5. See telegram No. 1, January 12, 5 p. m., from the Chargé in Bulgaria, p. 453.

<sup>74</sup> For correspondence concerning the Winter War and relations between Finland and the Soviet Union, see pp. 269 ff.

<sup>75</sup> Karl Ritter, Ambassador on special assignment in the German Foreign Office, in charge of economic warfare questions.

<sup>76</sup> Telegram No. 13, p. 539.

<sup>77</sup> For correspondence regarding wartime cooperation between Germany and the Soviet Union, see pp. 539 ff.

dered to be kept cleared for the next [few?] days. The same informant advised me that whereas until recently Rumanian forces had been withdrawn from Bessarabia they have now entered the southern half of that district and are engaged in fortifying it—although the main Rumanian defense line is still on the Prut and Danube Rivers.

STEINHARDT

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740.0011 European War 1939/1452: Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, January 10, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received 4:53 p. m.]

48. I was told today by a generally reliable informant that a substantial number of German troops are moving southeast from the German-occupied area of Poland.

STEINHARDT

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761.742/1: Telegram

*The Chargé in Bulgaria (Millard) to the Secretary of State*

SOPIA, January 12, 1940—5 p. m.

[Received 6:20 p. m.]

1. Minister of Commerce <sup>78</sup> returned today from Moscow where he signed on January 5th a treaty of commerce and navigation effective at latest one month from signature, valid for three years, and a clearing agreement for one year. He stated on arrival in Sofia that the latter provides for trade during 1940 valued at 920,000,000 leva gross (approximately \$9,000,000) Bulgaria to import from Russia petroleum products, iron, steel, copper, sulphate, cellulose, and salt in exchange for tobacco, rose oil, hogs, skins, rice, and seeds. In addition Bulgaria will receive 10,000,000 kilograms of cotton goods for spinning and returning to Russia.

The announcement has been most favorably received in Sofia. It is realized here that while the economic advantages expected to result from the agreements will be very valuable to Bulgaria they are essentially friendly political gestures on Russia's part.

Repeated to Moscow.

MILLARD

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<sup>78</sup> Slavcho Zagorov.



761.74/45 : Telegram

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

BELGRADE, January 12, 1940—7 p. m.

[Received 8:41 p. m.]

14. The Bulgarian Minister<sup>80</sup> said to me today that the Yugoslav Government is complaining against Bulgaria's friendship with Russia. He explained the improved relations as being caused by the same reasons which have brought about the improvement in relations between Yugoslavia and Germany and Italy, namely prudence in the face of a strong neighbor. He added that there is no more communism in Bulgaria than there is in Yugoslavia and no desire on the part of the Bulgarian Government to espouse the Communist cause.

He said that it is in the interest of Europe that the Balkan States should remain united and should not allow war to develop among them. The proposed Balkan bloc would have accomplished this but unfortunately Rumania made as a condition of the formation of the bloc the postponement of Bulgarian territorial revindications until after the war. Bulgaria knows too well from past experience that she cannot trust Rumania and for that reason refused to accept the proposal. In his opinion the Balkan Entente<sup>81</sup> meeting in Belgrade next month<sup>82</sup> will accomplish nothing.

He complained against the Yugoslav distrust of Bulgaria's intentions which he claimed are not belligerent. He said that if Bulgaria should go to war it would be the end of Bulgaria. Bulgaria he continued is no danger to Yugoslavia or to Rumania. He expressed the fear that the present bad relations between Bulgaria and Yugoslavia may be attributed to some of the great powers who are anxious to create dissension in the Balkans.

LANE

740.0011 European War 1939/1528 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, January 19, 1940—11 a. m.

[Received January 19—8:45 a. m.]

77. For the Secretary and Under Secretary. My telegram numbers 36, January 8, noon; 48, January 10, 4 p. m.; and 53, January 11,

<sup>80</sup> Ivan Popov.<sup>81</sup> Formed at Athens on February 9, 1934, between Greece, Rumania, Yugoslavia, and Turkey; for text of treaty, see League of Nations Treaty Series, vol. CLIII, p. 155.<sup>82</sup> Meeting held February 2-4.

5 p. m.<sup>83</sup> Evidence is accumulating that some arrangement may be under discussion between the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics and Germany whereby the Lwow area would be utilized by Germany as a base for eventual operations against Rumania. In view of the methods successfully pursued in the division of Poland, whereby Polish resistance was broken by the German armies and a territorial division effected with a slight effort on the part of the Soviet Union it is not unlikely that a similar arrangement may be in contemplation with respect to Rumania whereby Bessarabia would become the Soviet share of the spoils.

STEINHARDT

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767.74/94 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Turkey (MacMurray) to the Secretary of State*

ANKARA, January 25, 1940—8 p. m.

[Received January 25—7:35 p. m.]

7. 1. The Secretary General of the Foreign Office<sup>84</sup> has explained to me that he made his recent stopover in Sofia for the purpose of a frank discussion which would clear the air in view of the many rumors of Bulgaria's intention to combine with Russia or with Germany and in view of a certain degree of genuine fear in Bulgaria as to Turkey's intentions. He offered to the Bulgarian Prime Minister<sup>85</sup> the assurance that Turkey has no hostile intentions and asked only to be assured that the same was true of Bulgaria. The Prime Minister told him that the Bulgarian Government realizes that any attempt to vindicate its territorial claims at the present time would jeopardize the whole Balkan peninsula and is therefore to maintain a policy of neutrality and to hold its claims in abeyance in the hope of reaching satisfactory adjustments by peaceful means after the danger has passed. Upon Numan's inquiring what would be Bulgaria's attitude if Germany or Russia were to invade the Balkans the Prime Minister expressed his conviction that neither would find it to its interest to do so; but when pressed as to what his Government would do if that contingency were unexpectedly to arise he said that it would fight in defense of its integrity and its right to remain neutral. He declared in answer to further questions that if confronted by a demand to permit passage for invading forces through Bulgarian territory his Government would refuse and would if necessary resist by force rather than plead inability to prevent it. In return for this assurance Numan promised him that so long as Bulgaria effectively maintained its neu-

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<sup>83</sup> Telegram No. 53 not printed.

<sup>84</sup> Numan Rifaat Menemencioglu.

<sup>85</sup> George Kloseivanov.

trality both Turkey and its allies would respect the Bulgarian frontiers as inviolable.

2. He expects the forthcoming conference of the Balkan Entente at Belgrade to lead to no concrete results beyond the prolongation of the Entente but to afford a useful opportunity to survey the Balkan situation in the light of present European conditions and to counteract any centrifugal tendencies among its members. He ridiculed current reports that the conference is to be attended by observers on behalf of any nation outside the Entente.

Repeated to Sofia.

MACMURRAY

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764.71/189 : Telegram

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

BUDAPEST, January 30, 1940—11 a. m.

[Received 11:48 a. m.]

26. The Prime Minister<sup>86</sup> told me last evening that with the idea of forestalling any possible difficulties in Rumania, he called to Budapest all of the various Hungarian leaders of Transylvania to impress upon them the importance of remaining quiet and told them positively that Hungary has no intention of taking advantage of any Russian attack on Rumania nor contrarywise making any attack to give the Russians an opportunity. He says that Hungary realizes that it cannot withstand a German attack in force but under no circumstances will they consent to Germany going through Hungary to Rumania or to enter Hungarian soil for any purpose no matter how futile resistance may be. He considers the situation in Germany serious and believes that some move must be made in March or April. He does not exclude the possibility of an attack on Hungary or Rumania.

Count Teleki considers the results of the Finnish struggle to have an important psychological effect on the Germans and hopes that all possible help will be given Finland, especially airplanes; that if Finland can hold out until next fall the Ribbentrop group which had promised great things from Russia would be considerably weakened and the conservative element might then be in a position to make peace. Hungary is sending half a battalion of picked troops to Finland via France and England. First troops to sail from Hull by Finnish boat early in February and another half a battalion will follow later.

MONTGOMERY

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<sup>86</sup> Count Paul Teleki.

764.7115/37

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

[WASHINGTON,] February 12, 1940.

The Minister of Hungary<sup>87</sup> called this morning at his request. The Minister read to me an instruction received from his Government asking whether the Government of the United States would be prepared, at such time and in such manner as might be considered appropriate, to convince the Government of Rumania that in her own interest it was desirable to come to an agreement with Hungary for the rectification of the frontier in Transylvania. The Minister said that he was instructed further to say that while Hungary did not intend to resort to any measures of force to obtain a return of its minorities in Transylvania, it nevertheless would reserve its right to full action in the event that Rumania made any territorial concessions to any other nation.

I asked the Minister whether this referred to concessions to Russia with regard to Bessarabia, or whether it referred solely to concessions in the Dobruja to Bulgaria.

The Minister said that his instructions on this point were not clear, but that he felt I could safely draw the inference that the question contemplated concessions to Bulgaria.

I told the Minister that I was not prepared to give him a reply to this inquiry without first discussing it with the Secretary of State, but that it was clearly my impression that the Secretary of State would feel as I did that, anxious as the United States Government was for a peaceful and fair solution of all controversies in Europe, it could not inject itself into political questions of this purely European character.

The Minister seemed to be quite prepared for this indication as I gave it to him personally, and I said that upon learning what the Secretary's views might be, I would again communicate with him.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

867.20/101 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Turkey (MacMurray) to the Secretary of State*

ANKARA, March 1, 1940—6 p. m.

[Received 8 p. m.]

22. My telegram No. 17, February 25, 2 p. m.<sup>88</sup> In a radio address last night the Prime Minister warned his countrymen against the

<sup>87</sup> John Pelényi.<sup>88</sup> Not printed; Ambassador MacMurray here stated that recently there had emanated from Ankara "a flood of sensational and irresponsible stories which have not seemed to be worth denial." (867.20/100)

tendentious rumors circulating, especially abroad, relative to Turkey's relations with the Soviet Union and the putting into effect of the law for national protection. He denounced the reports to the effect that the putting into force of this law was a prelude to mobilization or to preparations for war. With regard to Turkey's relations with the Soviet Union he declared that, "there has been no change for six months in our relations with the Soviet Union. We are living in an age when everybody keeps secret his intentions. At this time a person cannot give much assurance about anyone except himself. But I shall say courageously that we have never been disposed to undertake any action whatsoever against the Soviet Union. And since nobody asks us to take such action will the Soviet Union undertake direct action against us? Up to the present there is no evidence to cause us to suppose such an eventuality. You see therefore that the rumors according to which an incident will arise between the Soviet Union and us, rumors which recently have been amplified, are without foundation and of a tendentious character."<sup>89</sup>

The Prime Minister declared that there were no secrets nor uncertainties connected with Turkish policy. "Our obligations are clear. Our aims and objectives are definite. Our policy to keep out of the war is based on national security. It does not tend and will not tend in the future to be the instrument of, nor favorable to, any kind of combination. We follow with deep regret the wars which are ravaging the world. It would be taking serious and grave events too lightly to think that there would be an advantage for Turkey in the development of the wars in this or that direction."

Repeated to Moscow.

For the Ambassador:  
KELLEY

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761.71/180: Telegram

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

BUCHAREST, March 2, 1940—1 p. m.

[Received March 3—7:35 a. m.]

58. I am reliably informed that the German Legation is making arrangements for the transfer of population of about 12 German villages in Southern Bessarabia. The reason alleged is the poor eco-

<sup>89</sup> In a general description of Turkish international policy or attitudes which the Ambassador sent in his telegram No. 22, March 6, noon, from Istanbul, he summarized Turkish feeling regarding the Soviet Union in these words: "Towards Soviet Russia they feel the peculiar bitterness of disillusionment by those on whose friendship they had relied, and along with it a possibly exaggerated contempt for a nation which they consider neither morally nor materially prepared to make war on any considerable scale. There is, however, an effort to keep up appearances and avoid needless antagonism or irritation of Russia." (867.20/103)

conomic condition into which they have been forced by the boycott of Jewish-controlled commerce in that area. However, it is noteworthy that wherever Russian influence becomes predominant the German population has been [evacuated] and this may possibly indicate German expectation of Russian entry into Bessarabia. No effort is being made so far to move the Germans from Transylvania.

GUNTHER

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[For information concerning the removal of Vladimir Petrovich Potemkin as Assistant People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union because of his alleged failure to prevent the Anglo-French-Turkish treaty of October 19, 1939, and the presumed reorientation of Turkish policy away from the Soviet Union, see telegrams No. 228, March 1, 4 p. m., and No. 246, March 6, noon, from the Ambassador in the Soviet Union, volume III, page 186.]

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761.71/185 : Telegram

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

BUCHAREST, March 6, 1940—5 p. m.

[Received 7:40 p. m.]

65. Information reached me yesterday from a creditable but unconfirmed source that a squadron of Russian airplanes a few days ago flew over Bessarabia and went as far as Iasi.<sup>90</sup> It was added that when the Bessarabian officials telephoned to Bucharest for instructions they were told to do nothing. Of course no mention of this has been allowed to appear in the local press.

Today I had an opportunity of checking up on this with one of the principal Ministers. It appears that it is true and moreover that it is not the first time. To avoid creating an incident and an excuse the Rumanian authorities have done nothing.

GUNTHER

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761.67/267 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, March 6, 1940—6 p. m.

[Received March 6—3:28 p. m.]

247. In the course of a conversation yesterday the Turkish Ambassador<sup>91</sup> informed me that he is leaving Moscow on March 10 for a

<sup>90</sup> Jassy.

<sup>91</sup> Ali Haydar Aktay.

purely personal visit to Bucharest and Belgrade and perhaps to Ankara for a few days and that his trip has no political significance.

In respect of Soviet-Turkish relations the Ambassador told me that there have been no border incidents on the Russian-Turkish frontier since the end of September and that reports of such incidents which he said had been spread by the Stefani Agency were clearly for the purpose of endeavoring to foment trouble between the Soviet Union and Turkey.

The Ambassador stated that in his opinion as a result of the conflict with Finland and world reaction thereto the Soviet Government had now adopted a much more sober attitude toward its relations with neutral countries and that this change had been particularly noticeable in Molotov;<sup>92</sup> that at the present time the Soviet Government is desirous of avoiding any further impairment of its relations with neutral countries. In this connection the Ambassador stated that although there had been no Soviet attempt to resume the conversations with Turkey since their collapse last October, presumably because the Soviet Government realized that in view of Turkish commitments to England and France any such negotiations would be fruitless, he nevertheless believed that at the present time the Soviet Government is extremely fearful of the outbreak of war in the Black Sea area and has consequently shown a disposition to placate Turkey. With reference to Soviet alarm over possible developments in the Black Sea area the Ambassador confirmed the arrival of German mines at Odessa as well as the shipment of heavy armament from Germany to Sevastopol (see my telegrams Nos. 231, March 1, 7 [6] p. m.; and 236, March 4, 3 p. m.).<sup>93</sup>

In conclusion the Ambassador informed me in the strictest confidence that the recent meeting of the Balkan Entente had been more successful than was generally supposed and that both Germany and the Soviet Union were somewhat concerned at the results achieved; that on the initiative of the Turkish Government an agreement in principle had been reached providing for the ultimate cession of at least a part of the Dobrudja to Bulgaria and that the Turkish Foreign Minister had been authorized to convey this information to the King of Bulgaria who had received the news with evident satisfaction. The agreement concerning the Dobrudja is not to be made public and no steps will be taken at the present time to give effect thereto in order to avoid stirring up the Soviet claims to Bessarabia, and Hungarian claims to Transylvania. In agreement with the Bulgarians it has been decided to await a more appropriate time before undertaking to define the arrangement.

STEINHARDT

<sup>92</sup> Vyacheslav Mikhailovich Molotov, People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union.

<sup>93</sup> Neither printed.

740.0011 European War 1939/1883 : Telegram

*The Minister in Bulgaria (Earle) to the Secretary of State*

SOFIA, March 25, 1940—1 p. m.

[Received 3 : 42 p. m.]

24. Asked Foreign Minister <sup>94</sup> during long discussion if he believed that Russia would overrun Bessarabia in order to retrieve military prestige seriously damaged in Finland. Foreign Minister answered definitely no, giving following reasons. First, Bessarabia has no important strategic objectives such as Finnish positions; Russia already has more than enough undeveloped land and plenty of coast on Black Sea. Second, Germany would oppose such invasion as war would interrupt vital flow of oil to Germany. Third, Stalin wants no war as his position in peace much more secure than in war surrounded by powerful generals. Foreign Minister thinks sturdy Finnish resistance was great surprise to Russian general staff who expected slight resistance not amounting to war.

Personally believe Foreign Minister neglected to mention importance of controlling the mouth of the Danube.

EARLE

761.71/193 : Telegram

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

Moscow, April 4, 1940—6 p. m.

[Received April 4—1 : 22 p. m.]

353. Reference my telegram No. 338, March 30, 7 p. m.<sup>95</sup> the Rumanian Minister <sup>96</sup> has informed me in strict confidence that under instructions from his Government he saw Molotov 2 days ago in connection with the latter's remarks at the recent meeting of the Supreme Soviet. At this interview Molotov stated that it was not the intention of the Soviet Government to prolong the present incomplete relationship between the two countries<sup>97</sup> and that in due time (which the Minister believes may be interpreted to mean within the next 2 or 3 weeks) a new Soviet Minister will be appointed to Bucharest.

THURSTON

<sup>94</sup> Ivan Popov, since February 19, 1940, in Cabinet of Bogdan Filov.

<sup>95</sup> Vol. III, p. 192. See also telegram No. 337, March 29, 10 a. m. [p. m.], *ibid.*, p. 191, wherein the Chargé in the Soviet Union reported remarks on Rumania made by Molotov in his speech before the Supreme Council of the Soviet Union.

<sup>96</sup> Gheorghe Davidescu.

<sup>97</sup> The Soviet Union did not have a Minister in Rumania after February 1938; see vol. III, p. 193, footnote 39. For a statement by Ambassador Konstantin Alexandrovich Umansky to Secretary of State Hull that the Soviet Union "had no intention to interfere with Bessarabia", see the Secretary's memorandum of April 2, *ibid.*, p. 266.



740.0011 European War 1939/2295 : Telegram

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

BUCHAREST, April 17, 1940—2 p. m.

[Received 7:35 p. m.]

133. Since my 78, March 15, 4 p. m.,<sup>98</sup> second paragraph, the Prime Minister has on two occasions reiterated to me his conviction that danger from Russia is only temporarily deferred. Yesterday for the first time he referred to the possibility of danger for Rumania from Germany. As on previous occasions he emphatically stated to me that Rumania would and could put up a determined resistance and added that even if both attacked her together she would go down fighting. In my own opinion this country will probably shortly be invaded by German forces as well, in the first instance under the guise of assistance.

Tatarescu seemed more confident than in previous conversations that the army of about 1,200,000 is in good shape and well enough prepared and equipped to offer stiff resistance. He stressed, however, Rumania's great need for raw materials from the United States such as copper.

GUNTHER

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660H.6131/6 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

MOSCOW, April 19, 1940—11 p. m.

[Received 11:53 p. m.]

412. The Soviet press has thus far published no reference to the probable arrival in Moscow of a Yugoslavia mission to conclude a commercial agreement as reported by Minister Lane in his telegram to the Department, No. 120 of April 17th, 7 p. m.<sup>99</sup> On the other hand yesterday's issue of *Trud*,<sup>1</sup> which appeared today, carries an article which is most unfriendly toward the Belgrade Government in discussing the effects of the war on Yugoslavia. As *Trud* has recently been found to reflect with particular accuracy the views of the Commissar for Foreign Affairs the article may be of some significance.

*Trud* portrays Yugoslavia's economic position as precarious due to lack of raw materials notably fuel oil. Increased unemployment

<sup>98</sup> Not printed; in this telegram the Minister reported that the Rumanian Prime Minister, Gheorghe Tatarescu, had expressed his apprehension that the Soviet Union would soon "begin on Rumania" (760D.6111/63).

<sup>99</sup> Not printed.

<sup>1</sup> Publication of the All-Union Central Council (Soviet) of Labor Unions.

and the rise in the cost of living are said to have led to serious strikes and riots among "the starving peasantry". Trade union leaders are accused of betraying the workers and the authorities are charged with repressing by force all those who attempt to improve the lot of the masses. The article continues that the misery of the workers has been further aggravated by nationalistic oppression. "The Government," the writer declares, "has shown itself incompetent to reach any satisfactory solution whatsoever of this problem and has therefore embarked upon a policy of forcibly destroying the nationalist movement by the dismemberment of revolutionary organizations and by the most extreme pressure upon the workers." The law of December 17 for the protection of the Government is characterized as "providing for the erection of concentration camps for the progressive workers, the peasants and the intelligentsia who are fighting for peace and freedom." The article concludes: "repressions however are powerless to stamp out the growing revolutionary movement of the Yugoslav peoples. The working masses of Yugoslavia are showing ever increasing interest in the Soviet Union and its glorious policy of peace."

In view of the persistence previously exhibited by the Kremlin (particularly in the case Germany and Japan) in demanding a political understanding as a condition precedent to economic cooperation, it is not improbable that any commercial agreement finally reached with the Yugoslav Government will include at least a political understanding. In such event the article above quoted may foreshadow an attempt on the part of the Soviet Union to penetrate into the internal political structure of Yugoslavia by resorting to its customary tactics of making use of left wing labor organizations and existing Russophile societies. The article may be construed as challenging Italian influence in the Balkans and as another sharp warning not only to Yugoslavia, but particularly to Rumania and the other Balkan States not to place too great reliance on the ability of small countries to remain neutral in the present conflict.

STEINHARDT

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660H.6131/10 : Telegram

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

BELGRADE, April 23, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received 4:11 p. m.]

136. My telegram 125, April 18, 4 p. m.<sup>2</sup> A Foreign Office official stated to me today that the commercial negotiations with the Soviet Government will result in formal recognition; that the decision to

<sup>2</sup>Not printed.

normalize relations had been taken in 1939, but that because of the war in Finland it was considered advisable to defer action so as not to irritate unduly the British and French. Furthermore Yugoslavia had been handicapped because other Balkan States had official relations with the Soviets. He specifically mentioned that Yugoslavia did not wish Bulgaria to have this advantage.

Repeated to Moscow, Rome, and Paris.

LANE

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860H.00/1161 : Telegram

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

BELGRADE, April 27, 1940—7 p. m.

[Received 8:35 p. m.]

141. The following is the substance of the declaration of the Minister for Foreign Affairs<sup>4</sup> published in *Politika Orthodox*, Easter issue:

The Government is resolutely pursuing its announced policy of neutrality and independence. The war, however, is extending into the economic life of the neutral countries and the Government, in its economic relations with the belligerents, is endeavoring to meet this problem with the objective of keeping the country out of the conflict and maintaining correct relations with all the great powers.

He mentioned the recent Danube accord<sup>5</sup> as happily regulating a problem important to this area. He also pointed out that the country was desirous of good relations with all the great powers and accordingly has agreed with the Soviet Union to undertake negotiations for a commercial agreement between the two countries.

He closed by stating that Yugoslavia, along with its policy of neutrality, had taken all indispensable precautionary measures imposed by the international situation. All that had been done placed the Government in a position to view the future with serenity relying on the unity of spirit of the whole population.

LANE

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<sup>4</sup>Alexander Cincar-Markovich.

<sup>5</sup>The International Commission of the Danube, meeting at Belgrade on April 17, 1940, adopted strict measures of control for traffic on the Danube River following the Giurgiu incident, when arms and explosives were discovered on British barges and were suspected to be for use in causing damage in the region of the Iron Gates. Subsequently, the European Commission of the Danube adopted similar measures of control for the lower, or maritime reaches of the river at its sessions at Galatz, beginning on May 20, 1940.

660H.6131/20 : Telegram

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

Moscow, May 12, 1940—2 p. m.  
[Received May 12—11 : 20 a. m.]

524. Embassy's 489, May 4, 11 a. m.<sup>6</sup> *Pravda* and *Izvestiya* today announce the signature yesterday of a treaty of commerce and navigation between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia with an attached protocol concerning the trade representation of the Soviet Union in Yugoslavia and concerning the temporary trade delegation of Yugoslavia in the Soviet Union and of an agreement respecting trade turnover and payments for the years 1940 and 41 between the two countries. The papers state that the total trade turnover for 1940 and 41 on the basis of the latter agreement will amount to 176 million dinars and that the Soviet Union proposes to import copper concentrates of lead and of zinc ores, lard and other articles from Yugoslavia and to ship to Yugoslavia agricultural and other machinery, kerosene, cotton and other goods. These instruments were signed on behalf of the Soviet Union by Mikoyan <sup>7</sup> and on behalf of Yugoslavia by Djordjevic <sup>8</sup> and Obradovic.<sup>9</sup> There are rumors that a Yugoslavia military mission is shortly expected in Moscow.

THURSTON

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740.0011 European War 1939/3188 : Telegram

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

Moscow, May 20, 1940—6 p. m.  
[Received 7 p. m.]

564. Rumors of an impending Soviet move against Rumania persist among some diplomats and foreign press correspondents in Moscow. The Rumanian Minister, however, has consistently rejected the possibility of a Soviet offensive at this time and he assured me today that he has had no reason to change his opinion.

With respect to the border incidents mentioned in the Embassy's 465, April 27,<sup>10</sup> the Minister stated that some time ago the Soviet Gov-

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<sup>6</sup>Not printed; with reference to the Yugoslav-Soviet trade negotiations, it was here stated that it did not seem likely that the products mentioned during the conversations could form the basis of any considerable trade with the Soviet Union, and that it might be presumed that the chief aim of both Governments was the establishment of political relations (660H6131/16).

<sup>7</sup>Anastas Ivanovich Mikoyan, People's Commissar for Foreign Trade of the Soviet Union.

<sup>8</sup>Milorad Djordjevic, former Minister of Finance of Yugoslavia.

<sup>9</sup>Sava Obradovich, Assistant Minister of Trade and Industry of Yugoslavia.

<sup>10</sup>Not printed.

ernment lodged another complaint alleging that on two occasions shots had been fired across the Rumanian border into Soviet territory. The Rumanian Government has also submitted a reply to this charge. The Minister did not make it clear to me whether these incidents are regarded by the Soviet Government as closed, and it is of course possible that they may be revived should that Government consider such a course to be desirable. With respect to the appointment of a Soviet Minister at Bucharest, Mr. Davidescu stated that there had been no developments, notwithstanding Molotov's assurance some weeks ago (Embassy's telegram 353, April 4) that the appointment had been decided upon.

Current Soviet military activities, which may be responsible for the rumors referred to, are attributed by the Rumanian Minister and by the Turkish Military Attaché whose opinion is concurred in by Captain Yeaton,<sup>11</sup> to general uneasiness on the part of the Soviet Government arising out of the European war now in progress. The persons cited believe that the Soviet is merely redistributing its forces, largely along its western frontier, for defensive and protective purposes. Figures furnished by our Military Attaché indicate that approximately 1,500,000 Soviet troops, the bulk of which is made up of infantry with lesser forces of cavalry and mechanized brigades, were distributed on April 1 as follows: In the northern or Finnish area, 62 divisions; White Russian area, 30 divisions; Ukraine, 30 divisions; Odessa, 5 divisions; unknown, 20 divisions. Approximately 17 divisions are stationed in the Caucasus and 54 in the Far East.

THURSTON

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740.0011 European War 1939/3275 : Telegram

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

BUCHAREST, May 23, 1940—10 p. m.

[Received 10:41 p. m.]

226. The Military Attaché<sup>12</sup> has ascertained that the Rumanian military authorities have learned that since May 1 Russia has changed the locations and disposition of troops in Russia proper in such a manner that now she has facing Rumania 26 to 30 divisions, 9 cavalry divisions, and 14 armored brigades. The troops are not actually on the Russian-Rumanian frontier, with the exception of some at Tiraspol but disposed in depth as far east at [as?] Kiev. Reports also

<sup>11</sup> Ivan D. Yeaton, American Military Attaché in the Soviet Union.

<sup>12</sup> Maj. John P. Ratay.

have reached Bucharest from Moscow that a Russian move against Rumania is again quite possible. Though these reports are disturbing the situation however is not considered acute.

Of late unconfirmed rumors have reached us of a German concentration on the Slovakia border. It is quite possible that this may be a countermove and warning to Russia and designed to check any unauthorized advance upon Rumania of troops in Russian-occupied Poland. From remarks let fall by members of the Yugoslav Embassy one would judge that they have hopes now that Russia would seek to aid Yugoslavia in the event of Italian aggression.

The calling up of additional troops today at less than 24 hours' notice should have taken place between March 1st and 5th in accordance with orders given one month previously. As I have already reported it was only partially carried out then possibly in deference to German insistence that the planting of crops should not be interfered with.

The French Military Attaché informs me that the additional troops have been distributed 50-50 on Hungarian and Russian frontiers.

In the opinion of our Military Attaché the additional mobilization here was ordered: (1) to deter Russia from action she may contemplate as feasible at an opportune moment; (2) to caution Hungary; (3) to be in the highest state of readiness for any eventuality in these times when the most unexpected is always possible. I concur and would add that it probably would have happened anyway. In opinion of the German Military Attaché, as stated to Major Ratay, the Hungarian Army is incapable of taking the western fortifications of Rumania.

In my own view, unless a joint move through Rumania towards the Dardanelles and/or Salonika has been decided upon by Germany and Russia, any unauthorized move on the part of Russia towards the mouths of the Danube is almost certain to encounter German armed resistance. This would probably also apply in case the U. S. S. R. endeavored to come to Yugoslavia's aid against Italy. I gather that the Germans feel very confident that Russia can be held in check by diplomatic pressure and that it is not likely to embark upon any adventure at this time. As you are aware from many telegrams and despatches Germany has for a long time been consistently arming Rumania. Even though Germany had no other means of barter for supplies of oil and food it would be quite probable that it was reasoned in high German military circles that these arms might serve a useful purpose one day against Russia.

GUNTHER

740.0011 European War 1939/3344 : Telegram

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

BUCHAREST, May 27, 1940—7 p. m.

[Received May 28—12:05 a. m.]

237. For the Secretary and Under Secretary. My No. 226, May 23, 10 p. m., and 231, May 25, noon.<sup>13</sup> I have just seen the Minister for Foreign Affairs<sup>14</sup> at his request. He said that his Government was frankly perturbed by the realignment of Russian troops facing Rumania, the intensive building of roads and rail facilities towards Rumania from the railroad connections with Russia in Russian-occupied Poland and the moving away from the frontier of peasant populations. Further he admitted to me personally for the first time that the German Government was using this situation to press for a hundred percent alignment of Rumania with Germany for protection.

He recalled that Ambassador Steinhardt when here recently had said that if at any time the Rumanian Government was desirous of a clarification of Russian intentions he would be glad to endeavor to obtain this. Gafencu is now desirous of just that but naturally he does not want either the German Government or the Soviets to know that he has asked us to obtain it. He asked me if I would telegraph to our Chargé d'Affaires at Moscow to endeavor to elicit from the Government of the U. S. S. R. a statement of its real intentions regarding Rumania. I replied that I would submit the matter to you. I shall not telegraph Thurston regarding this as I have not got the extra confidential codes which he has. Gafencu added that if the Russian Government wished to open discussions he was ready to do so. Naturally he is seeking a way out of succumbing to German offer of protection with all the consequences which that would entail. He did not mention Italy and I doubt if it has figured in this matter to date. It is clear that he appeals to us in the light of our declared desire to prevent extension of area of conflict and in view of the interest which Ambassador Steinhardt was good enough to show in the matter. May I have a direct reply to this message in due course. I might add that there have been unconfirmed reports from official Greek and other sources of recent discussions in Moscow concerning the Balkans between the Soviet Government and representatives of Germany and Italy and that the former is alleged to have declared that it wants all of Rumania. Also a theory is held here as to the workings of Stalin's mental processes whereby since he is presumably aghast at the extent

<sup>13</sup> Latter not printed.

<sup>14</sup> Grigore Gafencu.

and [rapidity?] of German military success he has decided to occupy as much of Rumania as possible now while Germany is otherwise engaged in order to be in a better bargaining position vis-à-vis Germany later on.

GUNTHER

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740.0011 European War 1939/3353 : Telegram

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

BUCHAREST, May 28, 1940—3 p. m.

[Received 5:08 p. m.]

240. My telegram of May 27, 7 p. m. Major Ratay has just discussed the threat to Rumania of Russia with the high German military authority<sup>15</sup> referred to in my telegram 239, May 28, 1 p. m.<sup>16</sup> The latter stated that his authorities were perfectly well acquainted with the Russian militarized preparations apparently threatening Rumania. However, he said that a definite understanding exists between Germany and Russia and that his Government would not permit the Russian Government to invade Rumania. He stated flatly that the German Government had its own views as to the mouths of the Danube and certainly would not permit Russia to occupy them; that Germany did not want the peace and the *status quo* of the Balkans disturbed. He alluded banteringly to the prevailing nervousness in Rumania regarding Russia, which of late seems to have extended even to the King. He implied that this fear was being communicated in part by the Turks who now find that they have elected the wrong side and are concerned as to their own fate.

GUNTHER

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740.0011 European War 1939/3344 : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, May 29, 1940—4 p. m.

292. Rumanian officials have informed our Legation in Bucharest that they are frankly perturbed by the intensive military activity along the Rumanian frontier in the Soviet Union, by the very active construction of roads and rail facilities in Russian-occupied Poland and by the removal of peasant populations from the frontier districts in the Union. The Rumanians are fearful of a Soviet military invasion. Information received by the Department from other sources tends to confirm the statements of the Rumanian officials.

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<sup>15</sup> This authority was a personal friend of Göring and was also reputedly close to Hitler.

<sup>16</sup> Not printed.



You are instructed, unless you perceive some reason for not so doing, to request an appointment with the Commissar for Foreign Affairs or with one of the Assistant Commissars. During your conversation you may state that you have been instructed by your Government to express its concern at reports which it has been receiving of the possibility of the extension of the war into the Balkans. You may add that your Government would appreciate any information which the Soviet Government may find it possible to convey to you regarding these reports. It is hoped that you will be able to elicit from this conversation some information, or at least to obtain some idea, regarding Soviet intentions in the Balkan area.

Please telegraph full report of conversation.<sup>17</sup>

HULL

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740.0011 European War 1939/3391: Telegram

*The Ambassador in Turkey (MacMurray) to the Secretary of State*

ANKARA, May 29, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received 4: 11 p. m.]

The following telegram has been sent to the Legation at Belgrade:

I understand that the Yugoslav Ambassador here<sup>18</sup> was used by his Government as the means of informal approach (through the Soviet Ambassador) in the necessary preliminary arrangements for the recent negotiations with Soviet Russia concerning economic and eventual political relationships. While not referring to his own part as intermediary Choumenkovitch has confirmed to me the impression that it was the Yugoslav Government which took the initiative in this matter.

I also learn that the Russians availed themselves of his friendly good offices to suggest to the Turkish authorities a discussion with a view to restoring the former degree of cordiality of Turco-Soviet relations—a suggestion which was coldly received and has apparently been ignored.

Repeated to the Department and Moscow.

MACMURRAY

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740.0011 European War 1939/3446: Telegram

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

Moscow, June 1, 1940—5 p. m.

[Received June 2—1: 15 p. m.]

608. My telegram 604, May 31, midnight.<sup>19</sup> As the Department is aware, an appraisal of Soviet policy is rendered difficult by the absence

<sup>17</sup> The answer received from the Chargé in the Soviet Union is contained in his telegram No. 604, May 31, midnight, vol. III, p. 304.

<sup>18</sup> Iliya Shumenkovich.

<sup>19</sup> Vol. III, p. 304.

of normal intercourse between the Diplomatic Corps and official[s] of the Soviet Government and Soviet citizens in general; by the fact that the Soviet press is exclusively an instrument of official propaganda; and by the concentration of all initiative and all power in one inaccessible person. Nonetheless, past actions of the Soviet Government and the opinions of experienced observers here furnish a basis for the belief, communicated to the Department by this Mission in earlier reports, that the Soviet Government desires to avoid participation in the current European war or in any war requiring a major military effort. This presumed policy is believed to result from Stalin's realization that a major war would place too great a strain on Soviet economy in general and on production and transportation in particular, and perhaps also on the military establishment. At the same time, however, it has been shown by the invasion of Poland, the coercive measures taken against the three Baltic States and the attack upon Finland that the Soviet Union is willing to risk minor conflicts designed to enhance its security or to reconstitute its old imperial boundaries.

It may be conjectured that Soviet policy at the moment is largely defensive and based upon the fear of possible aggression by Allied or Associated powers in the Black Sea or Caucasus areas and possibly upon uneasiness over the prospect of a victorious Germany.

The first consideration would account for troop concentrations in the south and southeast and the second for a possible invasion of Lithuania designed to facilitate the further fortification of the German frontier.<sup>20</sup> Soviet preoccupation with respect to Sweden's neutrality and the eventual political and territorial integrity of Norway has already been reported to the Department.<sup>21</sup> However, should conditions appear propitious (as the result of general hostilities in the Balkans or otherwise) it is to be assumed that the Soviet Government would seize the opportunity to recover Bessarabia. Whether its aspirations with respect to Rumania go further is not known.

In this connection a Secretary of the German Embassy, whose information and opinions have heretofore proved reliable, stated to a member of this Embassy yesterday that, whereas a Soviet invasion of Lithuania, and perhaps of Estonia and Latvia as well, appeared quite possible in the near future, he felt sure that an invasion of Bessarabia is not imminent, as 5 days previously Molotov had explicitly stated to the German Ambassador<sup>22</sup> that the Soviet Union does not intend to invade Bessarabia. He further pointed out that, whereas the Baltic States might be desirable territorial acquisitions for economic and

<sup>20</sup> For information concerning the forcible occupation of the Baltic States and their incorporation into the Soviet Union, see pp. 357 ff.

<sup>21</sup> Telegram No. 588, May 27, 1 p. m.; not printed.

<sup>22</sup> Friedrich Werner, Count von der Schulenburg.

strategic reasons, the return of Bessarabia could in comparison be considered as largely a matter of prestige and that, according to his information, Soviet troop movements to the south were directed as much to the Caucasus and the Crimea as to the Odessa region. He concurred with the view expressed above that these measures were precautionary to meet any eventualities which might develop from an outbreak of hostilities in the Mediterranean involving Italy, Great Britain and Turkey.

THURSTON

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740.0011 European War 1939/3496 : Telegram

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

Moscow, June 4, 1940—2 p. m.  
[Received June 4—12:20 p. m.]

619. Embassy's telegram 564, May 20, 6 p. m. The Rumanian Minister called on me this morning to inquire whether I had made any representations to this Government designed to ascertain what position it would assume in the event that Italy entered the war. I informed him that I had not made any representations of that character.<sup>23</sup>

I asked the Minister if he still felt that there is no danger of an immediate Soviet move against Rumania. He replied that he has had no reason to change the opinion he has entertained for some time in this respect and that he does not fear such a move unless, as a result of Italian entry into the war or other developments affecting the Balkans, the Soviet Government should consider that an opportunity was afforded to acquire Bessarabia.

THURSTON

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740.0011 European War 1939/3552 : Telegram

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

BUCHAREST, June 5, 1940—noon.  
[Received 7:17 p. m.]

254. My 237, May 27, 7 p. m. The Chief of Military Intelligence is reliably reported to me as being less anxious regarding the Russian menace. In view of increased Russian effectives (see my 251, June 4, noon and previous<sup>24</sup>) and intense activity in the direction of the Polish-Rumanian frontier this is unexpected. I therefore questioned

<sup>23</sup> The Department, in telegram No. 311, June 6, 7 p. m., approved the answer given by the Chargé.

<sup>24</sup> Telegram No. 251 not printed; but see the Minister's previous telegrams Nos. 226, May 23, 10 p. m.; 237, May 27, 7 p. m.; and 240, May 28, 3 p. m., pp. 466, 468, and 469, respectively.

a high official of the Foreign Office as to what had happened to allay Rumanian apprehension and he replied that Molotov had very recently said to the Rumanian Minister at Moscow that he was considering appointing a Minister to Rumania in a week or two. This is the first time Molotov has been anything but vague as to when this event might take place.

I was informed by the same official that von Schulenburg recently asked Molotov the reason for the augmentation of Russian forces based on Lwow, Kiev and Odessa and that Molotov replied that it was for defense. As it is certainly not likely that Rumania would attack Russia this was rather pointed.

Last Friday another high official of the Foreign Office stated to Hibbard<sup>25</sup> that in his personal opinion the situation regarding the involvement of Rumania in the present war had greatly improved. In support of this thesis he talked of the old Turkish policy of maintaining quiet in the Balkans by playing one large power against another. He felt that such a point had not been reached, Italy having stated that any movement in the Balkans would involve Italy whereas Russia had issued a similar warning. Germany had assumed the role of mediator between the two and had informed them that under the circumstances the best policy was to leave the Balkans alone. He felt therefore that for the time being there would be peace in Rumania.

GUNTHER

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740.0011 European War 1939/3344: Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, June 7, 1940—4 p. m.

185. Your 237, May 27, 7 p. m.

1. If you are approached again on this subject by Rumanian authorities, you may state that after having given the matter careful consideration your Government has decided it would be inopportune and would serve no useful purpose for the American Embassy at Moscow to take steps along the lines suggested.

2. Your action in submitting this suggestion through the Department is approved.

3. For your strictly confidential information. During a conversation with Molotov on May 31 Thurston made some inquiries regarding the Rumanian situation.<sup>26</sup> Molotov showed himself to be disinclined, however, to discuss the matter.

HULL

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<sup>25</sup> Frederick P. Hibbard, First Secretary of Legation in Rumania.

<sup>26</sup> See telegram No. 604, May 31, from the Chargé in the Soviet Union, vol. III, p. 304.

740.0011 European War 1939/3678 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Turkey (MacMurray) to the Secretary of State*

ANKARA, June 11, 1940—6 p. m.

[Received 10:35 p. m.]

76. Pending your [*sic*] determination of the Turkish position, the Secretary General of the Foreign Office today outlined to me substantially as follows the general viewpoint of this Government:

(a) In view of Italy's declaration of war the Turkish Government recognizes that it is obligated to the support of Great Britain and France under its treaty with them and is prepared to live up to its obligation. It is a question, however, whether there is at this juncture anything that this country could do that would be useful to the common cause and whether the Allies may not prefer to have Turkey stand aloof for the time being rather than risk spreading the conflict to the Balkans.

(b) He denied the rumor that the Italian Embassy had given formal assurances that its Government would not initiate any hostile action against Turkey. He also said that no assurance of that sort had been given on behalf of Germany although the Ambassador<sup>27</sup> had frequently expressed himself conversationally in that sense.

(c) He acknowledged that this Government had recently inquired of the Yugoslav Government whether it would be prepared to mobilize in the event of Italy's entering the war but that the reply had been discouraging although perhaps inevitable in view of that country's exposed position; and he added that Greece likewise was not taking any military precautions other than slight increases in existing cadres. [Bulgaria?], her armaments being already fully mobilized had not been similarly approached. No decision as to a Turkish mobilization has yet been taken.

(d) He volunteered that the real anxieties of the Turkish Government are as to the action not of Italy but of the Soviet Union. Relations with that country are at present correct and satisfactory and this Government does not regard the recent considerable increase of Russian forces on the Caucasus border as a threat or even a manifestation against Turkey. But the Union has been massing large forces along the Black Sea coasts and the Rumanian frontier which would enable it to take advantage of any conjuncture favorable to a riskless invasion of the Balkans.

MACMURRAY

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<sup>27</sup> Franz von Papen.

740.0011 European War 1939/3759 : Telegram

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

BELGRADE, June 12, 1940—7 p. m.  
 [Received (June 13)—9:45 a. m.]

249. Prince Paul<sup>28</sup> informed me this afternoon that he has asked for the *agrément* of Milan Gavrilovic, leader of the Agrarian Party, as Minister to the Soviet Union. He referred to my conversation of yesterday with Smiljanic<sup>29</sup> and said that he did not attach too much importance to Smiljanic's comments regarding anti-British and anti-French propaganda being disseminated by Communists here. He expressed the opinion that if Germany and Italy should be victorious against the Allies they will then attack Russia. He expressed apprehension regarding Russia's aims in the Balkans and said that for this reason he could no longer delay establishing formal diplomatic relations.

He said he had no information as to whether or when Turkey would enter the war.

He said that all the telegrams which he had received from Yugoslav consular and diplomatic officers in Italy referred to the singular lack of enthusiasm with respect to Italy's declaration of war<sup>30</sup> and that there was virtually no anti-Ally feeling evident except as officially manufactured.

Repeated to Rome.

LANE

701.6171/14 : Telegram

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

MOSCOW, June 14, 1940—11 a. m.  
 [Received 1:17 p. m.]

674. It is announced in *Pravda* that A. I. Lavrentev has been appointed as Soviet Minister to Rumania having been released from his duties as Minister to Bulgaria.

Embassy's 353, April 4, 6 p. m. The Rumanian Minister states that Molotov requested him on June 11 to ascertain whether the appointment of Mr. Lavrentev would be acceptable to the Rumanian Government and that he received his Government's agreement to the appointment yesterday and so met Molotov at 3 o'clock yesterday afternoon. He states that Lavrentev recently visited Belgrade for the purpose

<sup>28</sup> First Regent of Yugoslavia.

<sup>29</sup> Miloye Smilyanich, Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs of Yugoslavia.

<sup>30</sup> June 10, 1940.

of exchanging ratification of the Soviet-Yugoslav trade agreement.<sup>31</sup> Mr. Davidescu has no knowledge of an impending visit to Moscow by Gafencu and is inclined to believe that radio reports regarding such a visit are unfounded.

THURSTON

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740.0011 European War 1939/3810 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Turkey (MacMurray) to the Secretary of State*

ANKARA, June 14, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received June 15—7:05 a. m.]

86. For the Secretary and Under Secretary. Amplifying my next previous telegram.<sup>32</sup>

1. It appears that although the British and French Ambassadors had been led to expect that the Turkish Government would promptly give its undertaking to adopt the measures (short of a declaration of war) indicated in my telegram of 2 days ago<sup>33</sup> they were informed yesterday by the Minister for Foreign Affairs that this Government had under the circumstances decided provisionally not to take any action upon the requests of the Allies. The reason stated was that his Government had reason to believe that such action would involve it in hostilities with the Soviet Union and that the obligation under article II of the Tripartite Treaty of October 19 was therefore nullified by the second protocol thereto.

2. The Minister said in explanation that upon Italy's declaration of war the Turkish Ambassador in Moscow had mentioned to the Minister for Foreign Affairs that his Government contemplated mobilization whereupon the latter appeared displeased but made no comment. After the Allied *démarche* the Ambassador under instructions advised the Soviet Foreign Minister thereof in accordance with the Russo-Turkish Protocol of 1929 and on that occasion Molotov took a very menacing tone. There were no formal representations, however, and the question was not raised by the Soviet Embassy here.

3. The only concession which the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs would make to the importunities of the Allied Ambassadors was that by way of allaying the impression of Turkish indifference to the situation he would make public reference to the fact that the Turkish Army is calling up several classes of reserves. The Minister presented for the approval of the Ambassadors the draft of a proposed public statement to the effect that in full agreement with its Allies the Government had decided not to act at this time under the

<sup>31</sup> Ratifications were exchanged in Belgrade on May 31, 1940.

<sup>32</sup> Telegram No. 85, June 14, 1 p. m.; not printed.

<sup>33</sup> Telegram No. 77, June 12, 1 p. m.; not printed.

Tripartite Treaty; but they refused to permit such an assertion and the question of the nature of the statement to be made is now under consideration.

4. When taxed with resorting to the protocol as a mere subterfuge to evade the obligations of the alliance and reminded that he had all along insisted that the Soviet Government was neither able nor willing to undertake any serious military involvement, the Minister maintained that since the Finnish campaign the Red Army had considerably increased its fighting capacity and that the Kremlin had become much bolder in its policy towards the war. But he appears to have admitted that in any case this Government did not feel able to commit itself in the present military and political situation in Europe to action which would almost necessarily draw it into the war.

Repeated to Moscow, Rome.

MACMURRAY

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740.0011 European War 1939/4018: Telegram

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

BUCHAREST, June 19, 1940—3 p. m.

[Received June 20—2:10 a. m.]

282. Suspicious troop movements and military activity between Odessa and the Rumanian frontier have been more frequent of late. I am informed that the Russian Chargé d'Affaires has stated however that it is not Russian policy to attack a country without previous negotiations and that there had been no negotiations with Rumania for some time. This is the stage setting upon which Lavrentyev, the new Russian Minister, will make his first appearance (see first paragraph No. 254, June 5, noon). Eighteen hours late from the frontier, he is due today.

There is no concealing the fact that there is trepidation in Rumanian official circles coupled with determination to defend Rumania's frontiers with all its power and this latter should be made clear to Russia. It is realized that Russia is now thoroughly frightened that its turn will come after England and seeks to shorten and straighten out its line of defense against Germany. It has done so in the Baltic States and to do so here would entail doing away with the curve and sweep of its frontier on the Dniester around Bessarabia and the Pruth instead which would make a relatively straight line from the Baltic to the Black Sea. There is also the objective of the destruction of the oil fields to prevent this supply from reaching Germany. No one knows what Hitler agreed with Stalin in September with regard to



Bessarabia. Hitler's constitutional objection to fighting two fronts however is known and it is possible that the Russians, if unable to obtain what they wish by negotiation, consider it the lesser of two evils to embark upon military operations for advantageous military objectives now rather than when forced to at a disadvantage later on.

GUNTHER

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701.6160H/5 : Telegram

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

Moscow, June 24, 1940—5 p. m.

[Received June 24—2:37 p. m.]

741. Embassy's telegram No. 489, May 4, 11 a. m.<sup>34</sup> The Foreign Office has just announced that diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia have been established and that respective Ministers to Belgrade and Moscow have been named.<sup>35</sup>

Repeated to Belgrade.

THURSTON

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740.0011 European War 1939/4231 : Telegram

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

BUCHAREST, June 24, 1940—6 p. m.

[Received June 28—3:44 a. m.]

294. My 293, June 24, 5 p. m.<sup>34</sup> The Minister of Foreign Affairs<sup>36</sup> has told me he received the new Russian Minister on Friday and that he politely suggested that there were a number of commercial matters which they might discuss to mutual profit and that Lavrentev had replied rather brusquely that he had other more important matters to take up first which of course probably meant Bessarabia. Relations with the new Russian diplomat have not had an auspicious start—details follow by despatch.<sup>37</sup>

It is his information that Hitler is [displeased?] with [Stalin?]. I have heard this from other reliable sources. He spoke of the crying need here of another hundred anti-tank or anti-aircraft guns and said that there were hopes that Germany would supply these soon. With these he feels that Rumania can hold a Russian attack for 4

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<sup>34</sup> Not printed.

<sup>35</sup> Milan Gavrilovich, Chief of the Serbian Agrarian Party, and journalist, was appointed Yugoslav Minister to the Soviet Union, and Viktor A. Plotnikov was transferred from Norway to become the Soviet Minister in Yugoslavia.

<sup>36</sup> Ion Gigurtu, Rumanian Minister for Foreign Affairs, June 4—28, 1940.

<sup>37</sup> Despatch No. 1464, June 24; not printed.

months after which the Russian offensive would probably collapse. What was also in his mind I think was German aid by that time. He spoke also with confidence of aviation assistance from Italy.

Although I realize that there is very little which we can or should do in the premises I expressed interest in the progress of negotiations and asked that he cause me to be informed of any important developments.

GUNTHER

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740.0011 European War 1939/4226 : Telegram

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

Moscow, via TOKYO, June 27, 1940—10 a. m.

[Received 10:45 p. m.]

757. I inquired of the Rumanian Minister last evening with respect to the accuracy of current rumors regarding clashes on the Rumanian-Soviet frontier and alleged Rumanian-Soviet negotiations for transfer of Bessarabia to the Soviet Union.

Mr. Davidescu stated with respect to the first rumor that no clashes have recently occurred on the Soviet-Rumanian frontier. He added, however, that for some time past Soviet military planes have been flying over Bessarabian territory, obviously for the purpose of conducting an aerial survey, and that he is considering the advisability of protesting against such activities to Molotov. With respect to the second report he said that he is certain that no such negotiations are under way and remarked that if the subject of the transfer of Bessarabia should be broached by the Soviet Government, the Rumanian Government would refuse to discuss it.

THURSTON

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740.0011 European War 1939/4237 : Telegram

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

BUCHAREST, June 27, 1940—1 p. m.

[Received June 28—9:25 a. m.]

302. The Bolshevik Government presented at 10 o'clock last night a 24-hour ultimatum to the Rumanian Government demanding the immediate return of Bessarabia and that part of Bukowina inhabited by Ukrainians as indicated on a map yet to reach Bucharest. The preamble of the ultimatum refers to Bessarabia having been taken at a time when Russia was militarily weak "an unfortunate state of

affairs which now no longer exists.”<sup>38</sup> In my personal opinion this ultimatum will be rejected.

Repeated to Moscow.

GUNTHER

740.0011 European War 1939/4280: Telegram

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

BUCHAREST, June 27, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received June 29—11:15 a. m.]

304. My telegram No. 302, June 27, 1 p. m. The following is translation of the text of note handed to the Rumanian Minister in Moscow by Molotov yesterday at 10 p. m.:<sup>39</sup>

“In 1918, Rumania, taking advantage of the military weakness of Russia, took by force from the Soviet Union (Russia) a portion of its territory, Bessarabia, and thus disrupted the eternal unity of Bessarabia, populated chiefly by Ukrainians, with the Ukrainian Soviet Republic.

“The Soviet Union has never reconciled itself to the fact of the violent seizure of Bessarabia, and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics has repeatedly and openly stated this before the whole world.

“Now, when the military weakness of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics has become a thing of the past, and when the international situation which has arisen demands a very swift settlement of unsolved questions inherited from the past, in order finally to lay the foundations for a lasting peace between countries, the Soviet Union considers it necessary and timely, in the interests of the reestablishment of justice, to reach, together with Rumania, an immediate settlement of the question of the return of Bessarabia to the Soviet Union.

“The Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics considers the question of the return of Bessarabia to be organically linked with the question of the cession to the Soviet Union of that part of Bukovina the population of which by a huge majority is related to the Soviet Ukraine, not only by the community of its historical fate, but also by the community of language and national composition. Such an act would be all the more just in that the cession of the

<sup>38</sup> The Rumanian invasion of Bessarabia began in January 1918, and with the disintegration of Russia after the Bolshevik revolution the province became effectively Rumanian. A treaty signed at Paris on October 28, 1920, between Great Britain, France, Italy, Japan, and Rumania, formally assenting to the acquisition of Bessarabia by Rumania, was never ratified by Japan and was not actually in force; for draft and correspondence regarding the treaty, see *Foreign Relations*, 1920, vol. III pp. 426-435; for text, see *British and Foreign State Papers*, vol. CXIII, p. 647. The United States was not party to this treaty and for a long time refused to recognize Rumanian sovereignty over Bessarabia, until *de facto* recognition was granted in 1933; see *Foreign Relations*, 1930, vol. II, pp. 801-807; *ibid.*, 1932, vol. II, pp. 503-508; and *ibid.*, 1933, vol. II, pp. 656-682.

<sup>39</sup> The translation contained in this telegram was frequently garbled, although the meaning remained clear. Consequently, the translation which was enclosed in despatch No. 599, July 8, from the Chargé in the Soviet Union, has been substituted here. (740.0011 European War 1939/5096)

northern part of Bukovina to the Soviet Union could be—in truth, only to an insignificant degree—a form of reparation for the enormous harm done to the Soviet Union and the population of Bessarabia by the 22 years of Rumanian rule in Bessarabia.

“The Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics proposes that the Royal Government of Rumania :

1. Return Bessarabia to the Soviet Union.
2. Cede to the Soviet Union the northern part of Bukovina within the boundaries set by the appended map.<sup>40</sup>

“The Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics expresses the hope that the Royal Government of Rumania will accept the present proposals of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and thus make possible a peaceful settlement of the protracted dispute between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and Rumania.

“The Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics expects the answer of the Royal Government of Rumania on June 27, 1940.”

The Rumanian Crown Council presided over by the King has been in continuous session since early this morning. I am informed by my Yugoslav colleague<sup>41</sup> who has seen the King that Rumania has requested the opinion of Germany,<sup>42</sup> Italy, Turkey, Greece and Yugoslavia on this document.<sup>43</sup> So far only Yugoslavia has replied counseling extreme prudence. The Yugoslav Ambassador states that while his Government does not wish to meddle in the internal affairs of her ally she feels that it is far easier to begin a war than to finish it and that Rumania will be well advised to accede to the Russian proposal in the hope that at a later date this question may be settled at a peace conference. He further informs me that the Yugoslav Government has information from both Budapest and Sofia that these two Governments will remain tranquil but that they wish it understood that this action on their part does not imply relinquishment of their claims to territorial revision. The speeches by the various Crown councilors are said to have been very bellicose but up to the present time the King has given no indication of his opinion.

For historical background in view of distortion of historical facts in Russian history see my despatch No. 1207 of January 30th, 1940.<sup>44</sup>

GUNTHER

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<sup>40</sup> The Minister reported in his telegram No. 316, June 28, 3 p. m., that the map had still not arrived, and that “there may be some unpleasant surprises when it does.” (740.0011 European War 1939/4283)

<sup>41</sup> Yovan Duchich.

<sup>42</sup> Material illustrative of the position adopted by Germany during this crisis has been published in Department of State, *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, series D, vol. x.

<sup>43</sup> In his telegram No. 316, June 28, 3 p. m., the Minister stated that he had been told that every government which Rumania had consulted had replied advising appeasement, and that in consequence “it would have been a hopeless task to hold out alone” against the Soviet Union. (740.0011 European War 1939/4283)

<sup>44</sup> Not printed.

740.0011 European War 1939/4254 : Telegram

*The Minister in Bulgaria (Earle) to the Secretary of State*

SOFIA, June 27, 1940—7 p. m.  
[Received June 27—6:44 p. m.]

71. I have seen the Minister for Foreign Affairs regarding Russian ultimatum to Rumania.

(1) He believes there was a general understanding between Russia and Germany that Bessarabia would be taken at some time by Russia, but that Russia's present timing of its ultimatum had taken both Germany and Rumania by surprise.

(2) Now that the Rumanian territorial subject had been opened by Russia, Bulgaria's claims to the southern Dobrudja<sup>45</sup> would be considered because they were so just that not even a devil's tribunal could reject them. But this would definitely be done by Bulgaria through peaceful negotiation and not by military force.

(3) That Bulgaria had only normal frontier guards at the present time on the Rumanian border, but would certainly heavily increase them should fighting break out in Rumania.

(4) That there are only some slight unimportant misunderstandings between Bulgaria and Russia in connection with the recent [apparent omission].<sup>46</sup>

My impression is that the King<sup>47</sup> and Government sincerely want their claims to the Dobrudja acceded to peacefully since it would mean a much more permanent settlement. However, the Bulgarian people and the Army feel so righteously justified in their Dobrudja claims that there is a possibility that the King and Government might be forced by the Army to take military steps if fighting breaks out in Rumania.

EARLE

740.0011 European War 1939/4280½ : Telegram

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

BUCHAREST, June 27, 1940—8 p. m.  
[Received August 30.<sup>48</sup>]

307. My telegram No. 304, June 27, 4 p. m. The following is translation of the text of the Rumanian Government's immediate reply to

<sup>45</sup> Bulgaria had ceded this territory to Rumania by the treaty of peace signed at Bucharest on August 10, 1913; for text, see *British and Foreign State Papers*, vol. cvii, p. 658.

<sup>46</sup> Intended reference is probably to some suspected pro-German trend in the Bulgarian Government, as illustrated by the signature of the Bulgarian-German Cultural Convention at Sofia on June 19, 1940.

<sup>47</sup> Boris III.

<sup>48</sup> This telegram is copied from the confirmation received by mail as the original was not received by wire.

the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics' ultimatum. For some as yet unexplained reasons communications with Moscow are at present interrupted.

"The Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics has addressed to the Rumanian Government a note which was handed by His Excellency Mr. Molotov, President of the Council of Commissars of the People of the Soviet Union and Commissar of the People for Foreign Affairs, to His Excellency Mr. Davidescu, the Rumanian Minister at Moscow, on June 26, 1940 at 10 p. m.

Animated by the same desire as the Soviet Government to see resolved by pacific means all questions which might produce a misunderstanding between the Soviet Government and Rumania, the Royal Government declares itself ready to proceed immediately and along the most broadminded lines to a friendly discussion and a common agreement on all proposals emanating from the Soviet Government.

In consequence the Rumanian Government requests the Soviet Government to be so good as to indicate the place and the date which it desires to fix for this purpose.

As soon as it shall have received a reply from the Soviet Government the Rumanian Government will designate its representative and it hopes that the conversation with the representatives of the Soviet Government will result in creating durable relations of good understanding and friendship between the Soviet Government and Rumania."

There has as yet been no reply from Germany or Italy to Rumania's request for their views. I have just left the Minister for Foreign Affairs who has now gone to the Palace to urge that full mobilization, now ordered for 12 midnight, be deferred on account of the impression it would cause. I find only a desire to conciliate if possible and to lead the affair into the channel of discussion but failing they are prepared to defend their territory. The British attitude in all this is not clear.

GUNTHER

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740.0011 European War 1939/4251 : Telegram

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

BELGRADE, June 27, 1940—9 p. m.

[Received June 28—5:51 p. m.]

282. A high official in the Foreign Office informed the Legation this afternoon that although there is local concern with the possible disintegration of the Balkan system due to the Russian ultimatum to Rumania, as yet no indications have been received here of any preparations by Hungary or Bulgaria to take military steps at this moment. The Balkan Entente was of course of no effect against a great power, and if Russia consents to the Rumanian suggestion of negotia-

tions it is hoped that the *status quo* may be maintained except for those concessions that will be given to Russia by Rumania. He added that Rumania had appealed to both Berlin and Ankara that representations be made in Moscow in her behalf by the German and Turkish Ambassadors there, but it is reported here there had been no indication of the Turkish or Axis position.

LANE

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740.0011 European War 1939/4266 : Telegram

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

Moscow, June 28, 1940—3 p. m.

[Received 8:50 p. m.]

768. Embassy's 767, June 28, 2 p. m.<sup>50</sup> The communiqué referred to has not yet been received<sup>51</sup> but the special 2 p. m. broadcast announcing the acceptance by Rumania of the Soviet demands is understood to have contained the following statements:

A first ultimatum concerning Bessarabia and northern Bukowina was sent by the Soviet Government to Rumania on June 26th and yesterday the Rumanian Government indicated to the Soviet Government willingness to discuss the adjustment of the Soviet demands; this reply was considered indefinite by the Soviet Government, however, which then submitted a second ultimatum yesterday to expire at noon today and containing the following demands:<sup>52</sup>

1. That Rumanian troops should evacuate Bessarabia and northern Bukowina within 4 days.

2. That the Red Army should occupy these districts within the same period.

3. That on June 28th the Red army should occupy the Rumanian cities of Chernovitsy,<sup>53</sup> Kishinev<sup>54</sup> and Akkerman.<sup>55</sup>

4. That the Rumanian Government should accept full responsibility for any damage which might be found to have been done to railways, telegraph lines, river bridges, etc., in the areas to be occupied and

5. That a mixed commission of four persons consisting of two Rumanians and two Russians should meet at Odessa to discuss any problems which might arise in connection with the carrying out of these demands.

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<sup>50</sup> Not printed.

<sup>51</sup> The communiqué of the Tass Agency (Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union) upon which the radio broadcast here summarized was based.

<sup>52</sup> The translation of this second Soviet ultimatum as sent by the Minister in Rumania in his telegram No. 316, June 28, likewise dispatched at 3 p. m., was not received in the Department until 11:30 a. m. on June 29.

<sup>53</sup> Cernauti.

<sup>54</sup> Chisinau.

<sup>55</sup> Cetatea-Alba.

At 11 a. m. today the Rumanian Government notified the Soviet Government that in order to avoid bloodshed etc. it was compelled to accept the Soviet terms.<sup>56</sup> The Rumanian Government also asked, however, that the 4 days' time limit mentioned be extended.

Soviet troops crossed the Rumanian frontier at 2 p. m. today.  
Repeated to Bucharest.

THURSTON

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740.0011 European War 1939/4284 : Telegram

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

BUCHAREST, June 29, 1940—4 a. m.

[Received 6:40 p. m.]

321. General mobilization was ordered last night at midnight although some classes had already been called on the night of June 26. Certain categories of Government employees, railway men and others in essential industries have been [called up?]. I am reliably informed that this has been taken as a precautionary measure against possible Russian incursions beyond the time agreed upon and in order more easily to control the population in internal matters. The Government's decision to accede to Russia's demands came as a great shock to the people who have been filled for 20 years with strong words against territorial cession of any kind and Rumania's ability and willingness to defend her soil at all costs. Coming closely upon the French defeat<sup>57</sup> and the sudden swing of the Government into a pro-German political party,<sup>58</sup> it has disturbed the public calm and there is reason to believe that dissident groups in the country may endeavor to take advantage of this situation for their own ends. There is much feeling expressed against England as the instigator of this Russian move in order to involve Germany and Russia. A high official of the German Legation expressed the opinion this morning that England had "put over a fast one" on Germany and it is probable that whatever the truth of this theory may be the story is being circulated here by the Germans to break further pro-Ally sympathy. The same German official stated that his Government was greatly annoyed by Russia's action and that "Hitler will never forget."

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<sup>56</sup> For the text of this Rumanian reply, see telegram No. 331, July 3, 1 p. m., from the Minister in Rumania, p. 489.

<sup>57</sup> France signed an armistice with Germany on June 22, 1940, and with Italy on June 24, 1940. For additional material on the German invasion and the collapse of France, see pp. 217 ff.

<sup>58</sup> A hasty reorganization of the Tatarescu Cabinet took place on June 28, 1940, with the inclusion of several pro-German Ministers. This Cabinet was replaced on July 4, 1940, by another, with Ion Gigurtu as Prime Minister, which was strongly pro-German.



Rumors persist here of a Russian ultimatum to Hungary for sub-Carpathian Russia<sup>59</sup> and to Bulgaria for naval and air bases but it is the opinion of my Yugoslav colleague that these are being adroitly spread by Government agents in an attempt to remove from the people the sting of Rumania's action by showing that her neighbors are threatened.

Alarming stories are also current and may be repeated in the American press that Hungary and Bulgaria have made demands on Rumania but I am informed officially that no such action has been taken on either side.

The Russian occupation of the ceded territory is taking place in advance of schedule in some instances and there appears to be great confusion. Some minor incidents have been reported as the troops advance. Refugees are streaming out into other provinces but there is much difficulty in rail transportation as the Russians are endeavoring to prevent trains from going beyond the new Russian zone.

GUNTHER

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740.0011 European War 1939/4293 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Turkey (MacMurray) to the Secretary of State*

ANKARA, June 29, 1940—1 p. m.

[Received 7:47 p. m.]

112. 1. Apart from a sentiment of regret at the spoilation of a friendly neighbor the Turkish Government regards without perturbation the Russian occupation of Bessarabia. That action is regarded as primarily strategic in intention of [*as?*] designed to give the Soviet Union a more defensible southwestern frontier and not indicative of any purpose of taking further more offensive action in the Balkan Peninsula.

2. The Minister for Foreign Affairs has just informed me that all the information available to him indicates that the Russian move was made without previous arrangement or even knowledge on the part of the Axis Powers which when informed of the Soviet ultimatum hastened to advise the Rumanian Government to yield in order to avert a disturbance of the peace and in return offered to exert their influence with Hungary and Bulgaria to restrain them from pressing their territorial claims. He understands that the Bulgarian Government has already assured the Yugoslav Government that it will not attack Rumania; the Turks therefore feel that (at least in the present phase of developments) there is still not reason to apprehend an extension of hostilities to the Balkans.

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<sup>59</sup> Ruthenia, Carpatho-Ukraine.

3. [He] acknowledged only a rather indefinite feeling of uncertainty as regards Bulgaria whose troops are concentrated on the Turkish frontier not out of fear of aggressive action by this Government but because of an apprehension that in case of an invasion of the Peninsula the Turkish Army would be tempted to advance into Bulgarian territory to a more secure line of defense. He said, however, that although Turkish troops were likewise massed on the frontier these concentrations on either side were fully understood by both Governments as natural military precautions and implied no ill feeling. His somewhat vague uneasiness about possible Bulgarian action seemed to be based only on the general political restlessness of that country.

4. He stated that this country has taken no new military measures as a result of the Bessarabian matter and expressly denied the report that the Turkish fleet had been sent into the Black Sea.

Repeated to Bucharest, Moscow, Sofia.

MACMURRAY

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740.0011 European War 1939/4303 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, June 29, 1940—5 p. m.  
[Received June 30—10:06 a. m.]

2211. My 2207, June 29, 2 p. m.<sup>60</sup> Rumanian circles in Berlin indicate that Germany strongly recommended that the Rumanian Government make no resistance to the Russian ultimatum with respect to Bukowina and Bessarabia and made it very clear that the Reich would not give Rumania military or diplomatic assistance. They claim, however, that the German discussions with Rumania in the matter were concluded at Bucharest and not through the Rumanian Legation in Berlin.

These circles state that German officials here are intimating that Russian occupation of the territories is not to be regarded as definitive and may possibly last only a few months. Rumanians here do not extract complete consolation from these intimations since only a few weeks ago they were receiving reassuring if vague statements from high German officials that Germany would prevent Russian aggression against Rumania. With regard to reports of Bulgarian demands for the return of Dobrudja, Rumanian circles claim that the Italian Government has informed the Bulgarian Government that it must await the occurrence of peace before pressing its territorial claims.

My sources avoided answering questions with regard to Hungary's position in these developments.

Repeated to Rome for Kirk.

HEATH

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<sup>60</sup> Not printed.

740.0011 European War 1939/4355 : Telegram

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

Moscow, July 2, 1940—noon.

[Received 5:30 p. m.]

787. *Pravda* today carries a Tass despatch from Kiev dated July 1st, as follows:

“Soviet troops have established themselves in northern Bukowina on the determined border with Rumania. In Bessarabia, Soviet troops have fulfilled their task and have reached the Rumanian border along the entire length of the Prut and Danube Rivers.”

Further despatches have stated that work has already begun toward the establishment of railway, telephone, and telegraph communications between the Soviet Union and its newly annexed territories.

These and similar reports imply that the occupation by the Soviets of the territories in question is virtually completed.

Repeated to Bucharest.

THURSTON

740.0011 European War 1939/4387 : Telegram

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

BUCHAREST, July 2, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received July 3—4:35 p. m.]

326. I am privately informed by Mr. Gigurtu, who participated in all the deliberations last week when still Minister for Foreign Affairs, that the advisers of the King pointed out that Rumania had munitions for a month and a half at the most and sorely needed another 2,000 anti-aircraft and/or anti-tank guns and many more planes, both bombers and pursuit. It was pointed out that if at the end of a month and a half of resistance the Rumanian Army was badly broken both Hungary and Bulgaria would be in a position to enforce such demands as they wished whereas by concession now the Army would remain intact and there was always hope that a more favorable opportunity to attack Russia might present itself later on. It was argued that it would be impossible to explain to the Rumanian people such a lack of foresight in some weeks' time should the Rumanian Army have broken down.

Mr. Gigurtu thought that what his Government should have done some time ago was to have thrown over the Franco-British guarantee which was already meaningless and have followed up the offers of a German guarantee and then have told Russia that they were ready to settle the Bessarabian and Ukrainian minority questions by negotiation when with the German guarantee behind them they could have

made a good bargain and possibly an independent buffer state of Bessarabia. As you probably know the Council of Ministers last night formally renounced the Franco-British guarantee.<sup>61</sup> The Council unanimously approved the new orientation of foreign policy to meet "the new European order in the course of installation".

He confirmed the information I had already obtained from other official sources that every government consulted, including the German, had advised extreme prudence and conciliation. It is of historical interest that the King, throughout the crisis and until the cogency of the arguments presented convinced him, was for war. After being convinced by the arguments presented by his advisers he wept.

According to Mr. Gigurtu who is in close touch with German official circles the Germans are resigned but extremely annoyed. He himself hopes that peace in the west will ensue when Germany will have a freer hand to deal with Russia.

GUNTHER

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740.0011 European War 1939/4400: Telegram

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

BUCHAREST, July 3, 1940—1 p. m.

[Received July 4—10 a. m.]

331. The texts of all communications exchanged by this Government with that of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics through the Rumanian Minister in Moscow have now been given out in the speech made yesterday before the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Parliament by the Minister for Foreign Affairs.<sup>62</sup> The Russian Minister Lavrentev did not figure in the negotiations and has not yet been received by the King. I understand that the address which he proposed making to the King was unacceptable. The texts of the communications exchanged with Russia which I had obtained from various sources are as communicated to you in my telegrams Nos. 304, June 27, 4 p. m., 307, June 27, 8 p. m., and 316, June 28, 3 p. m.<sup>63</sup> There remains only the last communication of the Rumanian Government dated June 28, a translation of which I quote herewith:

"In order to avoid the serious consequences that the use of force and the beginning of hostilities in this part of Europe might have brought, the Rumanian Government finds itself forced to accept the evacuation conditions specified in the Soviet answer.

However, the Rumanian Government wishes to extend the length of terms mentioned in paragraphs 1 and 2, because the evacuation of

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<sup>61</sup> On behalf of Great Britain this guarantee was reaffirmed on September 5, 1940, by Lord Halifax, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs; see *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Lords, 1938-39, 5th series, vol. 117, col. 368.

<sup>62</sup> Constantine Argetoianu, from July 4, 1940.

<sup>63</sup> Telegram No. 316 not printed; but see telegram No. 768, June 28, 3 p. m., from the Chargé in the Soviet Union, p. 484.

the territories in 4 days is extremely difficult to accomplish on account of the rains and inundations which have impaired the means of communication.

The joint committee appointed by paragraph 5 could discuss or solve this question.

The names of the Rumanian delegates for this committee will be made known during the day."

The declarations to the Foreign Relations Commission of both the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs stress the brutality of the despoliation of the territory of a nation of barely 20 millions by that of one of 280 millions. The keynote of patience is struck in these addresses but not resignation and the connotation thereof is that the day will some time come when this cruel wrong can be remedied.

GUNTHER

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870.811/203 : Telegram

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

BELGRADE, July 3, 1940—7 p. m.

[Received 7:52 p. m.]

291. Reference Bucharest's 319, June 28, 7 p. m.<sup>64</sup> A reliable source has informed us that Russia has already requested a place on the commission for the control of the mouths of the Danube<sup>65</sup> and on the International Danube Commission. My informant is of the opinion that the Russian request will be sponsored by the British with the hope that the Russian vote can be counted on to conflict with those of the Axis Powers.

The British Minister<sup>66</sup> while noncommittal on the subject admitted that it was now to be expected that Russia should be represented on both commissions.

The Italian representative on the Danube Commission who resides in Belgrade denies that any Russian request has been made, but admits without enthusiasm that such a move is now to be expected.

Repeated to Moscow.

LANE

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740.0011 European War 1939/4408 : Telegram

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

BUCHAREST, July 4, 1940—noon.

[Received 5:24 p. m.]

337. In a conversation which I have had with the new Minister for Foreign Affairs, Argetoianu, I found him fairly optimistic that Russia

<sup>64</sup> Not printed.

<sup>65</sup> The European Commission of the Danube.

<sup>66</sup> Sir Ronald I. Campbell.

now had what it wanted and would not venture to encroach further in the light of German objection and that Germany could hold both Hungary and Bulgaria in check. He frankly admitted that the declaration<sup>67</sup> which I mentioned in my 326, July 2, paragraph 2, meant that Rumania was now definitely aligned with Germany. I said that I assumed naturally that such a statement would not have been issued without prior satisfactory assurances of support from Germany and he assented that that was so—adding that he himself had always been for such a policy; that the Franco-British guarantee had become quite meaningless and had been only a matter of unilateral prestige anyway. He used the usual arguments in defense of *rapprochement* with Germany, characterized the Russian Government as their principal customer, only Germany which had made a serious endeavor to arm Rumania, etc.

The Under Secretary whom I saw later was much more skeptical; long experienced in foreign relations, far-sighted and shrewd he was not at all sure that Russia would stop where it is, pointing out that a much straighter and more easily defended line would be that of the Siret taking in all of Moldavia. Although each complaint is made [*Although each made complaint?*] about Hungary and less so about Bulgaria, and [*they?*] said that it remained to be seen once embarked upon an attack on England whether Germany could continue to restrain these two.

I tried to draw both of them out as to the nature of German promises of support but without much success. I am inclined to suspect that plans for military cooperation are still in the embryo. The Under Secretary for instance doubted whether if England is to be attacked a very appreciable [number of?] German aeroplanes could be designated for the protection of the Rumanian oil fields. I pointed out that very serious lasting damage could be done by Russia in just a few raids. He admitted this but countered that Russia would hardly take this step as it would be a *casus belli* with Germany. He was also concerned with the possibility of a Russian move southward over the mouths of the Danube to meet with the Bulgarians in the Dobrudja with the attendant menace to Turkey and the Straits.

GUNTHER

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<sup>67</sup> A more complete expression of this statement is given in despatch No. 1478, July 6, from the Minister in Rumania, as follows: "In the foreign field the Government expects to follow a policy of sincere integration in the system created by the Rome-Berlin Axis, and this not only as an expression of political realism, but also as a logical consequence of the ideological and political conceptions of its members, just interpreters of the sentiments of the nation." (740-0011 E. W. 1939/5095)

740.0011 European War 1939/4561 : Telegram

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

Moscow, July 10, 1940—2 p. m.

[Received 2: 31 p. m.]

837. *Pravda* today publishes the following:

"In view of the liberation of Bessarabia from occupation by Rumanian noblemen and its reunion with the Soviet Union the Moldavian population within the U. S. S. R. has considerably increased and now amounts to about 2,000,000 people.

In connection with these circumstances the Soviet of People's Commissars of the Moldavian Autonomous Soviet Socialist and Moldavian Oblast Committee of the Ukraine Communist Party have presented to the Soviet of People's Commissars and the Central Committee of the Communist Party a proposal to reunite the Moldavian population of the Moldavian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic and to form a Moldavian Constituent Soviet Socialist Republic. The Soviet of People's Commissars of the U. S. S. R. and the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party have given their support to the request of the Moldavian organizations and have decided to present the appropriate proposal to the Supreme Soviet of the U. S. S. R."

THURSTON

761.71/271 : Telegram

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

BUCHAREST, July 10, 1940—8 p. m.

[Received August 3—12: 50 p. m.]

366. Both the Turkish and Yugoslav Ambassadors<sup>68</sup> tell me that they have been assured by the new Russian Minister here that Russia has no present intention of advancing further demands upon Rumania. They both concur, however, that this prospect might change overnight depending upon both internal and external developments.

Mr. Lavrentev has just conveyed the same assurances to me. He talked, however, for a long time of the Galati incident<sup>69</sup> concerning which he is obviously much preoccupied and I was able to relate to him the eyewitness account transmitted in my 325, July 2, 1 p. m.<sup>70</sup> and also

<sup>68</sup> Hamdullah Suphi Tanriöver and Yovan Duchich, respectively.

<sup>69</sup> About 2,000 persons, mostly Jews and Communists, stampeded in Galatz on June 30, because the departure of their train for the Bessarabian side of the Pruth River was delayed for several hours. The rioters presumably believed that they were being prevented from leaving, which was a misconception. There was shooting by Rumanian police and armed guards, with resulting casualties. Official reports announced that a small number were killed, although observers and investigators believed that the total was several hundred, the highest figure being about 600.

<sup>70</sup> Not printed; the eyewitness was the Swiss Consul.

my personal impression that the incident was not intentional but merely the result of misunderstanding and bad management. This may serve to offset somewhat the many more lurid accounts which he admits receiving constantly from individuals concerned or their relations here. The Minister also questioned me at length upon the problem of the Hungarian minority.

GUNTHER

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740.0011 European War 1939/4682 : Telegram

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

BUCHAREST, July 16, 1940—10 a. m.

[Received 2:37 p. m.]

382. My 366, July 10, 8 p. m. I have learned that the new Russian Minister here has now assured the German Minister <sup>71</sup> that Russia will not go further in Rumania. For what it is worth and insofar as he may be informed of his Government's real intentions from day to day this is noteworthy in that the declaration was made to the German Minister and by him communicated to his Government.

GUNTHER

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740.0011 European War 1939/4706 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Turkey (MacMurray) to the Secretary of State*

ANKARA, July 16, 1940—5 p. m.

[Received 9:25 p. m.]

125. My telegram 123, July 13, 5 p. m.<sup>72</sup>

1. There has been a substantial relaxation of the nervous tension which had reached its culmination at the moment of the Prime Minister's speech <sup>73</sup> and the Assembly's note of confidence in the Government's policy. The Assembly then adjourned for about a fortnight and the President of the Republic shortly left for a holiday near Istanbul; and there prevails generally a feeling that a crisis has been safely passed which might seriously have compromised this country's relations with the Soviet Union if not handled by the Government with prudent firmness.

2. In conversation today the Minister for Foreign Affairs commented to me upon the effort of Germany to embroil Turkish rela-

<sup>71</sup> Wilhelm Fabricius.

<sup>72</sup> Not printed.

<sup>73</sup> Before the Grand National Assembly on July 12.



tions with Russia by the publication of the despatches (of the last of which the Deutsches Nachrichten Bureau has now had to publish a corrected text) referred to in my previous telegrams including Number 120<sup>74</sup> and by the dissemination of rumors of Russian demands. The Minister thought the German attempt to sow dissension was prompted primarily by these calculations: First, hostile relations between Turkey and Russia would preclude the possibility of the Russian *rapprochement* with Great Britain which Germany fears; and second, involvement in hostilities with Turkey would considerably weaken the Russians whom the Germans do not wish to be (even as partners) too powerful. He also thought that a further motive may have been the belief that Turkey's embroilment would make her more amenable to German influence.

3. He assured me that there was no indication whatever that the publication of the documents had had the intended effect of arousing Moscow's suspicions of Turkey and likewise no reason to believe that the Soviet Government contemplates making any such demands as were rumored. The intrigue had therefore come to nothing but had given occasion for an assertion of this country's position which had not only reassured its own people but had had the result of toning down the asperity of the German press and radio references to Turkey. He also mentioned that the German Ambassador had come in the next day to express his cordial acquiescence in certain points on which the Turks had been insisting in the limited commercial agreement which is still under negotiation.

4. As to the Balkans he is still convinced that the Soviet Union has no present intention of pressing further into Rumania. He also believes that neither Hungary nor Bulgaria will resort to other than peaceful means to enforce their claims against Rumania—the former because of the attacks by the Axis Powers, and the latter partly for the same reason but also because of a sincere conviction that such action would be unwise in the long run. Denying the rumors that the Rumanian Government intends to withdraw from the Balkan Entente he told me that he had received its formal assurances that it would remain faithful to that alliance.

Repeated to Moscow.

MACMURRAY

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<sup>74</sup> July 11, 1 p. m., not printed. The despatches published were concerned with the German White Book No. 6, issued by the German Foreign Office under the title *Die Geheimakten des französischen Generalstabes*, from which selected documents had already appeared in the daily press during July, purporting to show Allied intentions against the Soviet Union in the oil regions of the Caucasus and Baku, with the possibility of assistance from Turkey.

740.0011 European War 1939/4776 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Turkey (MacMurray) to the Secretary of State*

ANKARA, July 20, 1940—1 p. m.

[Received 6:45 p. m.]

127. 1. Upon receiving the repetition of Belgrade's telegram No. 311 to the Department <sup>75</sup> I took occasion to check with one of my colleagues who stands in closest relations with the Turks and would be in a position to know if any proposals for a modification of the regime of the Straits had been discussed with the Turkish Government. He confirmed my previous understanding (see my 125, July 16, 5 p. m.) that no such discussions have been or are taking place and that in fact the Turkish and Soviet Governments have remained quite aloof and have not had any but rather formal contacts since the Turkish Foreign Minister was rebuffed in Moscow last October.

2. From other sources, however, I have gathered rather vague intimations (which I have not been able to confirm and which I report with all reserve) that on both sides there is developing a disposition to resume the former intimacy of relationship and that there may even be in the minds of certain Turkish leaders a still inchoate project of serving as intermediary in bringing the Soviet and British Governments to an understanding.

Repeated to Belgrade.

MACMURRAY

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761.71/265 : Telegram

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

BUCHAREST, July 24, 1940—2 p. m.

[Received 9:03 p. m.]

412. My 255, June 5, 1 p. m., last sentence.<sup>76</sup> I am confidentially informed that Gafencu, former Minister for Foreign Affairs, will go to Moscow in a few weeks' time replacing Davidescu. I consider this a very constructive step in Russo-Rumanian relations. This of course has been done by the King and it was at first difficult to persuade Gafencu to serve in this capacity with the present government with which he is not in sympathy. The King convinced him that he would not be serving this particular government but his coun-

<sup>75</sup> July 16, 7 p. m., not printed.

<sup>76</sup> Not printed; the reference is to whether Gafencu would go to Turkey or to the Soviet Union as Minister (740.0011 European War 1939/3553).

try and that he should make the great personal sacrifice of living in Moscow for a year or less at this critical juncture.<sup>77</sup>

GUNTHER

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740.0011 European War 1939/4926 : Telegram

*The Minister in Bulgaria (Earle) to the Secretary of State*

SOFIA, July 30, 1940—7 p. m.

[Received July 31—12:51 a. m.]

96. I had a long conversation with the Foreign Minister today following his return yesterday from the conference with Hitler and Von Ribbentrop.<sup>78</sup>

Mr. Popoff said Hitler looked well and was full of energy.

The only subject discussed was the Bulgarian claim to southern Dobrudja which Mr. Popoff said, in the strictest confidence for my Government, Hitler admitted was entirely just.

The Kingdom of Rumania, Mr. Popoff said, had asked for a conference with Hitler to receive either help or counsel.

Hitler said that he had advised the Rumanian delegates to negotiate directly with Hungary and Bulgaria with regard to territorial restoration to these countries. This, he said, Rumania had agreed to do. Also that the settlement with Bulgaria was comparatively simple while that with Hungary was very complex. Mr. Popoff said Bulgaria would now await the Rumanian invitation for negotiations between the two countries.<sup>79</sup>

He concluded by saying Hitler's attitude toward Bulgaria was one of the greatest cordiality to "an unfortunate brother-in-arms."

EARLE

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861.014/215 : Telegram

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

Moscow, August 3, 1940.

[Received August 3—8:48 a. m.]

956. *Pravda* this morning publishes laws approved by the Supreme Soviet of the U. S. S. R. last night concerning the incorporation of the northern part of Bukovina and the Khotin, Akkerman and Izmail uyezds<sup>80</sup> of Bessarabia into the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic

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<sup>77</sup> The Minister reported in telegram No. 416, July 25, 1 p. m., that the Soviet Government agreed to the appointment of Gafencu within 24 hours. "This is unheard of. Heretofore it has been a matter of 6 months at least." (761.71/-268)

<sup>78</sup> The conference had taken place at Salzburg, July 26-28; records of these conversations are printed in *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, series D, vol. x, pp. 332-341.

<sup>79</sup> The negotiations were begun at Craiova, Rumania, on August 15.

<sup>80</sup> An administrative subdivision common in tsarist Russia which disappeared after 1922 in most parts of the Soviet Union, although the six uyezds of the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic remained until 1947.

and concerning the organization of the constituent Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic, consisting of a part of the former Moldavian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic<sup>81</sup> and the balance of Bessarabia. Full geographical details will be submitted by despatch.<sup>82</sup> No indication has as yet been given concerning the disposition of the portion of the former Moldavian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic not incorporated by the present law into the new constituent Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic but it seems logical to presume that this will be reincorporated into the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic.<sup>83</sup>

THURSTON

771.74/130 : Telegram

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

Moscow, August 13, 1940—noon.

[Received 3:35 p. m.]

1012. *Pravda* this morning in an unsigned article devoted to an historical review of the Bulgarian claims to southern Dobrudja states that the Bulgarian claims concerning the return of this area are just and concludes with the statement: "As is well known, the Soviet Union has always adopted and continues to adopt the position of supporting these demands of Bulgaria with regard to Rumania." It is reported that the Bulgarian Minister<sup>84</sup> left Moscow on August 11 for Sofia to consult with his Government.

Repeated to Sofia.

THURSTON

740.0011 European War 1939/5092 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Turkey (MacMurray) to the Secretary of State*

ANKARA, August 13, 1940—1 p. m.

[Received 3:30 p. m.]

138. Department's 63, August 3, 1 [2] p. m.<sup>85</sup> According to reliable information available here there has been no appreciable in-

<sup>81</sup> Created in 1924 as a part of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic as an expression of the Soviet claim to Bessarabia and for propaganda usefulness.

<sup>82</sup> Despatch No. 1057, January 8, 1941, not printed.

<sup>83</sup> By ukaz (decree) of August 13, 1940, of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, eight rayons (districts) of the former Moldavian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic were incorporated into the Odessa oblast (region) of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. See also despatch No. 726, September 4, 1940, from the Chargé in the Soviet Union, vol. III, p. 216, regarding the law of August 7, 1940, adopted by the Supreme Council of the Soviet Union making changes in the constitution in consequence of the admission of the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic into the Soviet Union.

<sup>84</sup> Ivan Stamenov.

<sup>85</sup> Not printed.

crease recently in the number of Soviet troops stationed in the Caucasus opposite the Turkish and Iran frontiers. It is estimated that the total number of divisions in this area might not be more than 8 to 10, a number which is not causing any concern to the authorities here.

The Embassy has ascertained from an authoritative source that there is no understanding of any sort between Turkey and Iran with regard to joint action in the event of aggression against either on the part of the Soviet Union.

During the past 4 months, the Turks have increased the number of men under arms from 500,000 to approximately 800,000. Two-thirds of this increase has been absorbed by Turkish troops stationed in Thrace which now number approximately 300,000. In this connection it is worthy of special note that in recent months there has been in progress a steady reenforcement of Turkish troops along the Black Sea littoral for 50 miles either side of the Bosphorus. As I have reported to the Department there has been no recent reenforcement of Turkish troops stationed in the eastern provinces.

MACMURRAY

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701.6761/12: Telegram

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

Moscow, August 15, 1940—1 p. m.

[Received 4:20 p. m.]

1020. Embassy's 1007, August 12, 9 p. m.<sup>86</sup> The Greek Minister informed a member of the Embassy staff last evening that he was convinced from conversations he had had with the Turkish Ambassador just prior to the latter's departure from Moscow,<sup>87</sup> and that he had so advised his own Government, that Aktay had not been presented with any specific Soviet demands on Turkey to take back to Ankara at this time. Mr. Diamantopoulos stated that Aktay had been depressed during the days immediately preceding his departure, but attributed this largely to the probability that his personal position here had become difficult following the publication of the German White Book (see Embassy's 806, July 5<sup>88</sup>). Mr. Diamantopoulos remarked that while he had no definite information which would lead to such a conclusion, he considered it possible that the Turkish Ambassador might not return to Moscow. As the Department is aware, the Soviet Ambassador to Turkey<sup>89</sup> is still in Moscow and no intimation has been given of the probable date of his return to his post.

Mr. Diamantopoulos also referred to the reports which were particularly current some weeks ago of imminent Soviet demands upon

<sup>86</sup> Not printed.

<sup>87</sup> The Turkish Ambassador departed on August 11, 1940.

<sup>88</sup> Not printed, but see footnote 74, p. 494.

<sup>89</sup> A. V. Terentyev.

Turkey and stated that he understood that the Turkish Ambassador had informed the Soviet Government flatly at that time that Turkey would offer armed resistance if any attempt were made by any power to encroach on Turkish territory. The fact that rumors of pressure on Turkey have become somewhat less persistent recently may indicate that the Soviets have decided to defer an active move in this area until after the final settlement of the Finnish question. Mr. Diamantopoulos inclines to the [belief?] shared by most observers in Moscow at this time that the absorption of Finland stands next on the Soviet list.

THURSTON

740.0011 European War 1939/5269 : Telegram

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

BUCHAREST, August 26, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received 10:30 p. m.]

474. My 464, August 21, 8 p. m.<sup>90</sup> There have been no further flights of Russian planes over Moldavia. Discussing this matter with the Prime Minister yesterday he seemed to feel that relations with Russia might be quiescent for the present.

GUNTHER

761.71/277 : Telegram

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

Moscow, August 30, 1940.

[Received August 30—10:33 a. m.]

1088. Embassy's 1080, August 28.<sup>90</sup> *Pravda* this morning publishes the following Foreign Office statement.

"On August 19, 1940, Comrade V. G. Dekanozov, Assistant People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, handed to Mr. Gafencu, the Rumanian Minister in Moscow, a note of protest against the provocative actions of Rumanian army units on the Soviet-Rumanian frontier. Furthermore the note pointed out the inadmissibility of a repetition of the volleys fired at Soviet border guard detachments by Rumanian army units, to which in individual cases the Soviet border guards had been compelled to open fire in return.

On August 29, Comrade V. G. Dekanozov, Assistant People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, summoned Mr. Gafencu, the Rumanian Minister, and again handed him a note of protest both against new hostile acts by the Rumanian border guards and army units on the Soviet frontier, and also against a number of instances of violation of the Soviet frontier by Rumanian military airplanes. The Soviet note of August 29 stated that actually there had been no Soviet casual-

<sup>90</sup> Not printed.

ties but that if there should be casualties the matter would assume a serious character. The Soviet Government charged the Rumanian Government with full responsibility for possible consequences of the acts mentioned on the part of the Rumanian army units and military airplanes.

At the time of this conversation, Mr. Gafencu handed to Comrade Dekanozov a note of August 26 of the Rumanian Government in reply to the note of August 19 of the Soviet Government. In its note of reply the Rumanian Government, contesting the statements contained in the Soviet note as regards firing from the Rumanian side, declared that it had issued repeated instructions to the Rumanian border guards to avoid in every way any incidents which could disturb the good neighborly relations between the two countries. Furthermore Mr. Gafencu stated that cases of firing upon Rumanian border guard detachments and of flights of airplanes across the border from the Soviet side had allegedly taken place.

Comrade Dekanozov declared that these reports would be verified, and emphasized the necessity that a speedy and satisfactory reply be received by the Soviet Government to its renewed protest of that date, inasmuch as, despite the note of August 26 of the Rumanian Government, violations of the Soviet border by Rumanian army units had continued to occur up until that time."

Repeated to Bucharest.

THURSTON

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764.71/251 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, August 30, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received 7:47 p. m.]

3821. My 940, April 12, 10 a. m.<sup>91</sup> The *Völkischer Beobachter* in commenting on the Vienna conversations<sup>92</sup> states that, "While the common efforts to achieve a peaceful clarification of the Rumanian-Hungarian differences have been in progress the International Danube Commission<sup>93</sup> has been forced to cease its activity. There is no place in the new Europe of institutions of this sort." Mentioning the history of this Commission and repeating past German accusations as to its misuse by the British and French the paper concludes, "For these reasons alone the new arrangement which was long overdue proved urgently necessary and it removes a situation which was no longer anything more than a senseless remnant of past days."

<sup>91</sup> Not printed.

<sup>92</sup> Relative to the meeting in Vienna, August 29-30, 1940, of the Foreign Ministers of Hungary and Rumania with Joachim von Ribbentrop and Count Galeazzo Ciano, Foreign Minister of Italy, see *infra*.

<sup>93</sup> The International Commission of the Danube for control of the fluvial portion of the river had been provided for in article 347 of the Treaty of Versailles signed on June 28, 1919; for text, see *Foreign Relations*, The Paris Peace Conference, 1919, vol. XIII, pp. 57, 664. The Convention instituting the Definitive Statute of the Danube was signed at Paris on July 23, 1921; for text, see League of Nations Treaty Series, vol. XXVI, p. 175.

This is the first reference which has been noted in the German press to the final termination of the activities of the Commission.

The impression is current in Rumanian circles here that this decision refers only to the International Commission which administers the upper reaches of the Danube and that the European Commission<sup>94</sup> is to be permitted to continue to operate. The paper cited above describes the Commission only as being a creation of the Treaty of Paris and the exact significance of the change is thus left obscure.

Repeated to Bucharest and Budapest.

KIRK

764.71/253 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, August 30, 1940—10 p. m.

[Received August 31—1:53 a. m.]

3826. My 3820, August 30, 3 p. m.<sup>95</sup> The following is a translation of the text of the arbitral award rendered this afternoon in Vienna as given out by the DNB:<sup>96</sup>

"The Royal Rumanian and the Royal Hungarian Governments have appealed to the Reich Government and to the Royal Italian Government with the request that they settle by arbitration the question outstanding between Rumania and Hungary of the territory to be ceded to Hungary. On the basis of this request and on the basis of the declaration made by the Royal Rumanian and the Royal Hungarian Governments to the effect that they will recognize this arbitral award as binding for them the German Foreign Minister, Joachim von Ribbentrop, and the Foreign Minister of His Majesty, the King of Italy and Albania and Emperor of Ethiopia, Count Galeazzo Ciano, after renewed conversations with the Royal Rumanian Foreign Minister, Michael Manoilescu and the Royal Hungarian Foreign Minister, Count Stefan Csaky have today laid down the following arbitral award:

1. The border marked on the attached map shall be fixed as the final border between Rumania and Hungary. The more detailed delimitation of the border on the spot shall be left to a Rumanian-Hungarian commission.

2. The former Rumanian territory falling accordingly to Hungary shall be evacuated by the Rumanian troops within 14 days and turned over to Hungary in an orderly condition. The various stages of the evacuation and occupation as well as the other formalities shall be determined at once by a Rumanian-Hungarian Commission. The Royal Rumanian and the Royal Hungarian Governments shall see

<sup>94</sup> The European Commission of the Danube for control of the maritime course of the river was provided for in the Treaty of Paris signed on March 30, 1856; for text, see *British and Foreign State Papers*, vol. XLVI, p. 8. Later modifications of the Commission are noted in *Foreign Relations*, The Paris Peace Conference, 1919, vol. XIII, pp. 665-667.

<sup>95</sup> Not printed.

<sup>96</sup> Deutsches Nachrichtenbüro.



that the evacuation and occupation are carried out in complete calm and order.

3. All Rumanian citizens resident as of today in the territory to be ceded by Rumania shall acquire Hungarian citizenship without further formalities. They shall be entitled to opt for Rumanian citizenship within a period of 6 months. The persons who avail themselves of this right of option shall leave Hungarian territory within the further period of a year and shall be taken over by Rumania. They may take with them their movable property and they may furthermore liquidate their immovable property up to the time of their removal and take with them freely the proceeds; should this liquidation not prove possible they shall be compensated by Hungary. Hungary shall treat all questions connected with the resettlement of the optants in a generous and obliging manner.

4. The Rumanian citizens of Hungarian nationality who are resident in the territory ceded by Hungary to Rumania in 1919<sup>97</sup> and now remaining in Rumania shall have the right to opt for Hungarian citizenship within a period of 6 months. The principles laid down in paragraph 3 above shall apply for the persons who avail themselves of this right of option.

5. The Royal Hungarian Government shall solemnly undertake to treat in every way as the other Hungarian citizens are treated those persons who obtain Hungarian citizenship on the basis of this arbitration decision but who are of Rumanian nationality. The Royal Rumanian Government shall solemnly undertake the similar obligation with respect to the Rumanian citizens of Hungarian nationality who remain in its territory.

6. The settlement of other isolated questions arising out of the change of sovereignty shall be left to direct negotiation between the Royal Rumanian and the Royal Hungarian Governments.

7. In the event that difficulties or doubts should arise in the execution of this arbitral award the Royal Rumanian and the Royal Hungarian Governments will inform each other directly in the premises. Should they thereby not be able to reach an agreement about a question they will submit this question to the Reich Government and the Royal Italian Government for final decision.

Vienna, August 30, 1940."

KIRK

764.71/255 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, August 30, 1940—11 p. m.

[Received 11:10 p. m.]

3827. My 3820, August 30, 3 p. m.<sup>98</sup> In connection with the Vienna arbitral award the following further communiqué has been issued by DNB:

<sup>97</sup> For the territory ceded by Hungary to Rumania under terms of article 27 (3) of the Treaty of Peace, signed at Trianon on June 4, 1920, see *Treaties, Conventions, etc., Between the United States of America and Other Powers, 1910-1923* (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1923), vol. III, pp. 3539, 3555.

<sup>98</sup> Not printed.

"Supplementary to the arbitral award there took place the following exchange of notes between the Foreign Ministers of the Axis Powers and the Rumanian Foreign Minister in which Germany and Italy guarantee the integrity and inviolability of Rumania: 'In the name and at the behest of the German Government I have the honor to inform Your Excellency as follows: Germany and Italy assume effective today the guarantee for the integrity and inviolability of the territory of the Rumanian state. Accept, etc. (Signed) Ribbentrop.'

The text of the Rumanian reply reads: 'In the name and at the instance of the Royal Rumanian Government I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of Your Excellency's note of today according to which Germany and Italy as of today assume the guarantee of the integrity and inviolability of the territory of the Rumanian state. The Rumanian Government has taken note of this communication with satisfaction and Rumania herewith accepts the vouchsafed guarantee.' (Signed) Manoilescu."

KIRK

761.71/278 : Telegram

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

Moscow, August 31, 1940—9 p. m.  
[Received August 31—3:20 p. m.]

1098. It has been surmised that recent Soviet-Rumanian agitation based on alleged border incidents may have been designed either to call to the attention of the Axis Powers the fact that the Soviet Union has an interest in Balkan affairs or to serve as the customary buildup [of?] further territorial acquisitions by the Soviet Union which would bring it into physical contact with Bulgaria. If either of these speculative theses is correct it would appear that the joint German-Italian guarantee of the territorial integrity of what remains of Rumania is directed against the Soviet Union as the guarantee presumably would not preclude any consequential settlement of the southern Dobrudja question between Rumania and Bulgaria. No confirmation of any of the views suggested above is available at the moment.

There is also an unconfirmed rumor that Germany has intimated directly to the Soviet Government that Rumania lies within the German sphere of economic interest.<sup>99</sup>

THURSTON

870.811/205 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, September 1, 1940—1 p. m.  
[Received September 1—12:20 p. m.]

3844. My 3821, August 30, 4 p. m. The press today contains a DNB announcement that on the invitation of the German Govern-

<sup>99</sup> See the telegraphic instruction of August 31, 1940, from the German Foreign Minister to the German Ambassador in the Soviet Union, *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941*, p. 178.

ment discussions by experts of the governments concerned will take place in Vienna in the next few days on international Danubian questions.<sup>1</sup> It is stated that the International Danubian Commission at Belgrade set up by Versailles continued to function with a French and British participation after the beginning of the war but that this could no longer be tolerated in view of attempted enemy sabotage of this important German supply route. The Vienna conference of experts it is added is to set up a new provisional arrangement.

KIRK

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771.74/141 : Telegram

*The Minister in Bulgaria (Earle) to the Secretary of State*

SOFIA, September 6, 1940—5 p. m.

[Received 9:08 p. m.]

114. The Foreign Minister has just informed me he did not think General Antonescu<sup>2</sup> would interrupt present negotiations between Rumania and Bulgaria and that an agreement might be signed in a few days. The points under discussion were territory, exchange of populations and financial questions.

Full agreement had been reached as regards territory—the boundary line would be that of 1912.

Also complete agreement had been reached on the exchange of populations. Rumanians in southern Dobrudja are to move to Rumania and Bulgarians in northern Dobrudja are to move to Bulgaria; the number exchanged to be equal. This will be compulsory. The nationals of the two countries residing elsewhere in the other country will have the option of moving to their own country.

As to the financial terms the Rumanians had asked for 15,000,000,000 lei but have now accepted the Bulgarian figure of 1,000,000,000 lei. The remaining unsettled point was the payment for goods requisitioned by the Rumanians in southern Dobrudja.

Mr. Popoff emphasized that unlike the case of Hungary, Bulgaria was reaching its agreement with Rumania entirely amicably. It was true that without the influence of the Axis, Rumania would never have agreed to give up the territory; but the rest of the negotiations had been conducted directly between the two countries without pressure from the Axis.

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<sup>1</sup>The conference met September 5–12. No invitation was extended to the Soviet Union.

<sup>2</sup>By decrees of September 4, King Carol II of Rumania gave up his dictatorial powers, suspended the constitution of February 27, 1938, dissolved Parliament, and gave full powers to the new Prime Minister, General Ion Antonescu, to conduct state affairs. Two days later Carol abdicated in favor of his son, King Mihai (Michael).

Mr. Popoff stated he did not believe that Rumania might now lose her independence. The real danger he thought was internal and if General Antonescu could restore order Rumania would remain independent. He said he did not think that Germany which already has her hands full with several countries wished also to occupy Rumania. He thought that this was likewise true of all the Balkan States.

Regarding Russia's intentions concerning Rumania, Mr. Popoff replied that the German guaranty would apply. Should Germany become weak that might be another matter, but as things stood he did not feel Russia would dare to endanger Rumania's independence.

Regarding the recent Greek-Italian tension<sup>3</sup> he said that he believed the crisis had passed and that Italy would not invade Greece. He could not see it in Italy's interest to do so now. He concluded by saying that he thought it possible that Germany had cautioned Italy not to invade Greece but he had no definite information on this point.

EARLE

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764.71/279 : Telegram

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

BUCHAREST, September 6, 1940—8 p. m.  
[Received September 7—10:38 p. m.]

509. My 497, September 5, 5 p. m.<sup>4</sup> A high official who had been in constant touch with the Transylvanian development has confided to me that Rumania was forced into acceptance of the Axis dictate by dire threats of Axis support to Hungary and subsequent partition of Rumania into zones of influence between Germany and Russia. It was made clear by inference that Germany and Russia were working together in this instance. Further, that Italy had insisted upon "getting something out of all this" which was to have Hungary grateful principally to her.

I am further informed that Hungary no longer desires to proceed on the principle of transfers of population as provided in the agreement since she fears many racial Hungarians would not opt for Hungarian nationality. This change in procedure has German concurrence.

Even more troops are being hurried to the Hungarian boundary.

GUNTHER

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<sup>3</sup> For correspondence on the Graeco-Italian war, see vol. III, pp. 524 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Not printed.

771.74/144: Telegram

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

BUCHAREST, September 8, 1940—2 p. m.

[Received 6:07 p. m.]

511. My 481, August 28, 2 p. m.<sup>5</sup> Rumanian and Bulgarian representatives signed an accord at Craiova yesterday bringing to a conclusion the discussions of the past 3 weeks and providing for: (a) the cession of the Departments of Durostor and Caliacra which comprise Southern Dobrudja or the quadrilateral; (b) obligatory exchange of populations between Northern and Southern Dobrudja and an optional exchange between other parts of the two countries; (c) agreement of both parties never to raise any further territorial pretensions; (d) indemnification to Rumania in the amount of 1,000,000,000 lei for investments in the ceded territory and costs of effecting the exchange of population; and (e) official occupation of the districts to be concluded between September 20 and October 1.

GUNTHER

771.74/148: Telegram

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

Moscow, September 11, 1940—11 a. m.

[Received 1:15 p. m.]

1149. Aside from the brief announcement reported in the Embassy's 1094<sup>6</sup> and the reference to the German-Italian guaranty of Rumania contained in the despatch from the Kishinev correspondent published in *Pravda* on September 9 (see Embassy's *en clair* 1139, September 9<sup>5</sup>) concerning the reasons for Carol's abdication, the Moscow papers have up to the present time made no reference to this Italian-German action. On the other hand, in conformity with the previously expressed attitude of the Soviet Government, the Soviet press has commented favorably on the transfer of southern Dobrudja to Bulgaria. A short signed article in *Trud* of September 10th entitled "The Liquidation of the Injustice of Neuilly"<sup>7</sup> lays emphasis on Rumanian misrule of the Bulgarian minorities in that region and concludes that "now after the signing of the treaty at Craiova the injustice legalized in 1919 by the Anglo-French imperialists at Neuilly in regard to the southern Dobrudja has been liquidated." The Soviet press further this morning publishes communiqué from the Commissariat for

<sup>5</sup> Not printed.<sup>6</sup> August 31, 10 a. m., not printed.<sup>7</sup> Treaty of Peace between the Allied and Associated Powers and Bulgaria signed at Neuilly-sur-Seine on November 27, 1919; for text, see *British and Foreign State Papers*, vol. cxii, p. 781.

Foreign Affairs to the effect that the Bulgarian Minister to Moscow conveyed to Molotov yesterday the gratitude of his Government for the "moral support given by the Soviet Government to Bulgaria in the settlement of the question of the southern Dobrudja."

Repeated to Sofia and Bucharest.

THURSTON

870.811/209 : Telegram

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

Moscow, September 13, 1940—1 p. m.  
[Received September 14—2:50 a. m.]

1156. This telegram refers to Embassy's *en clair* 1157, 13th, which will follow this.<sup>8</sup>

The two announcements whose inter-relation is emphasized by the fact that they are published under the same heading in the Soviet press this morning, appear to bear out the apprehension of the German Embassy here (see Embassy's 1144, September 10, 11 a. m.<sup>9</sup>) that the German-Italian guaranty of Rumania would result in friction between Germany and the Soviet Union. It is significant that the objection to the Danubian Conference in Vienna without the participation of the Soviet Government was delivered to the German Ambassador by an Assistant Commissar rather than by Molotov with whom, insofar as the Embassy is aware, the German Ambassador has heretofore dealt almost exclusively. Of perhaps greater interest is the fact that despite the German-Italian guaranty the Soviet Government continues to adopt a threatening tone toward the Rumanian Government in regard to alleged incidents on the frontier. The fact of the publication of the two foregoing announcements is a clear indication of the continued displeasure of the Soviet Government with the German-Italian guaranty to Rumania.

Repeated to Berlin.

THURSTON

870.811/206 : Telegram

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

Moscow, September 13, 1940.  
[Received September 13—2:52 p. m.]

1157. The Soviet press this morning, in an article entitled "In the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs" publishes the following two announcements:

<sup>8</sup> *Infra.*

<sup>9</sup> *Post*, p. 562.

1. The first states that in connection with reports of the German Information Bureau and radio which have appeared in the foreign press concerning the convocation in Vienna by the German Government of a conference of experts on international Danubian questions for the purpose of effecting changes in the existing international regime on the Danube, the First Assistant Commissar for Foreign Affairs Vyshinski received the German Ambassador on September 10 and declared to him that "the Soviet Union, being a Danubian state, cannot remain indifferent to the navigation regime on the Danube and must participate in the decision of questions affecting the Danube. In view of the foregoing, the Soviet Government hopes to receive from the German Government appropriate information concerning the conference of experts in Vienna on international Danubian problems." The announcement concludes that the German Ambassador replied that he would make inquiry of his Government on this question.

2. The second announcement states that on September 12 the Assistant People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs Dekanosov made a declaration to the Rumanian Minister to the effect that on September 11 at 1 p. m. in the region of the Baloash Mountains, 34 kilometers southeast of Cernovitz, a Soviet frontier detachment was suddenly fired on from the Rumanian territory by rifle and machinegun fire, and that another group of Soviet border guards sent to the spot were likewise fired on from the Rumanian side. The declaration continues that the Soviet frontier units were forced to open fire in reply and that "the Soviet Government notes that up to the present time no reply has been received from the Rumanian Government to the Soviet note of protest of August 29, 1940, in regard to the provocative action of Rumanian frontier and military units and that furthermore, as set forth above on the 11th of September there took place new provocative acts on the part of the Rumanian military units, the impermissibility of which the Soviet Government again calls to the attention of the Government of Rumania. The Rumanian Minister declared that the reply of his Government to the note of protest of August 29 would be handed by him to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs on the 13th of September<sup>11</sup> and in regard to the incident which took place on the 11th of September an investigation would be conducted and those guilty would be punished.

Repeated to Berlin and Bucharest.

THURSTON

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<sup>11</sup> See telegram No. 1174, September 15, from the Chargé in the Soviet Union, p. 511.

761.71/287 : Telegram

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

Moscow, September 13, 1940—6 p. m.  
[Received September 14—2:58 a. m.]

1160. Embassy's 1157, September 13. A Secretary of the Italian Embassy stated today that Gafencu had been dining at the Italian Embassy last night when he received an urgent summons to visit Dekanosov who presented to him the protest concerning further alleged frontier incidents contained in the announcement reported in the Embassy's telegram under reference.

The informant offered the opinion that the Foreign Office announcements testified to the Soviet displeasure at the German-Italian guaranty to Rumania but that it was motivated principally by the desire on the part of the Soviet Government to call attention to its interests in the Balkan area and also to demonstrate both at home and abroad that the Soviet Union had not been overawed by the German-Italian guaranty. The Italian Secretary further stated that he had reason to believe that the German Ambassador (Embassy's 1101, September 1, 10 a. m.<sup>12</sup>) was unaware when he called on Molotov on August 29 of the impending guaranty and consequently had been unable to inform Molotov thereof; and that the Soviet communiqué published the following morning (see Embassy's 1088, August 30) regarding the alleged border incidents on the Soviet-Rumanian frontier had not been issued in anticipation of a disordered situation or collapse in Rumania from which the Soviet Union intended to profit. He added that the German-Italian guaranty had been impelled by the belief that Rumania would prefer to resist the Hungarian demands by force of arms unless Germany and Italy agreed to guarantee the remaining frontiers. He concluded with the observations that while it was to be doubted that the Soviet Union would directly challenge the German-Italian guaranty by armed violation of the Rumanian frontier nevertheless the strain on Soviet-German relations which this guaranty had imposed would not be easily removed.

Repeated to Berlin.

THURSTON

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<sup>12</sup> Not printed; according to this telegram it was understood that the German Embassy had informed foreign correspondents in Moscow that the German Ambassador had informed Molotov of "German plans in the Balkans." (761.71/279)



761.71/288 : Telegram

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

Moscow, September 14, 1940—10 a. m.

[Received 7:05 p. m.]

1162. Reference Embassy's 1163, 14th which follows this.<sup>13</sup> The publication of this somewhat curious denial is apparently motivated by desire to refute any accusations concerning Soviet intentions in regard to Rumania while at the same time indirectly through the reference to the "unbearable situation" of the Rumanian delegation to imply that a Soviet protectorate would have been in conformity with the desire of the Rumanian Government but that German-Italian pressure prevented this from being made known.

The communiqué significantly makes no mention of the Rumanian note delivered yesterday (see Embassy's 1161, September 13, 7 p. m.<sup>14</sup>) disclaiming responsibility for the alleged incidents on the Soviet-Rumanian frontier which may indicate that the Soviet Government intends to ignore this note without however dropping the question of the incident.

Repeated to Berlin and Bucharest.

THURSTON

870.811/208 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, September 14, 1940—1 p. m.

[Received September 14—11 a. m.]

4006. My 3844, September 1, 1 p. m. The latest issue of the Foreign Office DDPK<sup>15</sup> discusses the International Danube Commission which it states has now ceased to exist "by reason of a joint decision of the countries directly concerned." It is emphasized that the participation of the Western Powers in the control of the Danube above Braila was a relic of Versailles which gave them an unjustified political influence in the Balkans and enabled them to commit intolerable acts of sabotage early this year. Pending a final settlement of the Danubian problem it is stated that all necessary measures to insure the safety of

<sup>13</sup> Not printed; in this telegram the Chargé reported a Tass communiqué which denied as "an obvious fabrication" the report in the German newspaper, *National Zeitung*, taken from the Rumanian newspaper, *Bunavestire*, "alleging that the Rumanian Minister in Moscow, Gafencu, during the negotiations concerning the Vienna arbitration advanced proposals of the creation of a Soviet protectorate over Rumania following which 'the situation of the Rumanian delegation in Vienna became unbearable.'" (761.71/289)

<sup>14</sup> Not printed; but see telegram No. 1174, September 15, from the Chargé in the Soviet Union, p. 511.

<sup>15</sup> *Deutsche diplomatisch-politische Korrespondenz*, press releases of the German Foreign Ministry.

shipping on this vital waterway are being taken by the experts who recently met at Vienna.

Similar comment in the *Dienst aus Deutschland* and the *Frankfurter Zeitung* also points out that the mouths of the Danube below Braila are subject to a separate arrangement which, since March 1939 has been placed almost entirely under the sovereign control of Rumania.<sup>16</sup> It is further stated that the provisional measures taken at the Vienna meeting constitute a step toward the new order in this part of Europe and will be supplemented by further meetings.

As far as the Embassy is aware there has been no public mention of the delivery of a note on the matter by the Soviet Government to the German Government which has been repeated by radio.<sup>17</sup>

KIRK

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761.71/286 : Telegram

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

Moscow, September 15, 1940.

[Received September 15—1:30 p. m.]

1174. The press today publishes a Foreign Office announcement which states that on September 13th the Assistant People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Dekanozov, received the Rumanian Minister who handed him the reply to the Soviet Note of August 29 concerning the violation of the Soviet frontier by Rumanian military airplanes and concerning the provocative actions of Rumanian border guards and military units. The announcement continues "The Rumanian note mentions the fact of flights of Rumanian airplanes along the Soviet frontier but denies that any cases of the violation of the frontier by Rumanian airplanes have occurred referring in this connection to the fact that the Rumanian Air Force had categorical orders to carry out flights only along the demarcation line and not to fly across it. Declaring in addition that violations of the frontier had allegedly been made by Soviet airplanes, the Rumanian Government considers that it is impossible to place the responsibility for the incidents on the Rumanian Air Force. 'However'—the note continues—"in a desire to neglect nothing which will preserve good neighborly relations with the U. S. S. R. the Rumanian Government had forbidden beginning September 1st any flights in the region adjacent to the demarcation line between Rumania and the U. S. S. R.'

<sup>16</sup> For information regarding the modifications made at this time in the European Commission of the Danube, see *Foreign Relations*, The Paris Peace Conference, 1919, vol. XIII, p. 667.

<sup>17</sup> For report of the first public announcement, see telegram No. 1157, September 13, from the Chargé in the Soviet Union, p. 507.

The Rumanian Government likewise denies that the incidents on the land frontier had been caused by the actions of the Rumanian border guards and military units and considers that their occurrence is due to the actions of the Soviet border guards. 'However'—the Rumanian note states—"the Rumanian Government in a desire to preserve with the Soviet Union the best neighborly relations has officially forbidden by an order of the Chief [of the] General Staff Rumanian border guards to make use of their firearms except in the event of clear violations of Rumanian territory.'

In accepting this note Comrade Dekanozov promised to bring its contents to the attention of the Government."

Repeated to Bucharest.

THURSTON

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761.71/291 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, September 16, 1940—2 p. m.

[Received 11:30 p. m.]

1182. Embassy's 1174, 15th, and 1180, 16th.<sup>18</sup> It is felt here that the acceptance by the Soviet Government of the Rumanian note delivered on September 13 and the mild tone of the published communiqué, reported in the Embassy's telegram under reference, which selected for quotation and emphasis the more conciliatory parts of the Rumanian note, lends itself to the interpretation that the Soviet Government is for the moment at least inclined to play down the dispute with Rumania concerning alleged border incidents. The article which appeared in *Krasny Flot* for September 15, reported in the Embassy's 1180 above referred to, which concludes with a disclaimer of Soviet interests in the imperialist struggle in the Balkans, appears likewise to reflect a similar tendency.

In connection with the foregoing a Secretary of the Italian Embassy has stated with reference to the liquidation of the Italian Consulate in Cernovitz that the Soviet authorities there were dissatisfied with the existing frontier in Bukowina and that it was quite possible that the intention of the Soviet Government in publicizing the alleged incidents along the frontier in that region was to obtain a slight rectification of the Bukowina line of demarcation.

STEINHARDT

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<sup>18</sup> Latter not printed.

770.00/826 : Telegram

*The Minister in Bulgaria (Earle) to the Secretary of State*

SOFIA, September 19, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received 6:05 p. m.]

121. The Foreign Minister informed me today that Bulgaria will continue her policy of patient waiting for an egress to the Aegean with no threats or action of any kind against any nation.

He is delighted with the Dobrudja settlement, contrasting the Bulgarian acquisition of the Dobrudja with its Bulgarian population (once the Rumanian population of 72,000 are repatriated) with the Hungarian acquisition of Transylvania with that part of its population of over 1,000,000 who are not Hungarians.

He believes that Germany wants only tranquillity in the Balkans and has no idea of invading Turkey.

He feels certain that in the event of an Italian-Greek war Bulgaria can stay out.

He says the Bulgarian people and Government are very grateful to Germany for receiving the Dobrudja but that this gratitude will not change Bulgaria's policy of neutrality nor has Germany given any intimation that such is her desire.

I feel that the Foreign Minister is sincere but is somewhat of a Pollyanna.

EARLE

740.0011 European War 1939/5589 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Turkey (MacMurray) to the Secretary of State*

ANKARA, September 19, 1940—5 p. m.

[Received 7:42 p. m.]

155. 1. The Italian Military Attaché is intimating in Turkish military circles that the Russian maneuvers now taking place in the Caucasus are preliminary to a Soviet attack upon Turkey. In view of the season and the nature of the country this appears *prima facie* unlikely and the report seems to have made no particular impression here except in certain political circles.

2. The Minister for Foreign Affairs yesterday assured me that this country has no reason for any concrete apprehensions with regard to the attitude of the Soviet Union, with which relations are in fact tending slowly towards improvement, a tendency likely to be furthered by the replacement of the Russian Ambassador by the Counselor of Embassy who is a personality more acceptable to the Turks.<sup>19</sup>

Repeated to Moscow.

MACMURRAY

<sup>19</sup> The appointment of Sergey Alexandrovich Vinogradov to replace Ambassador Terentyev in Turkey was announced on September 11.

870.811/210 : Telegram

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

BUCHAREST, September 20, 1940—noon.

[Received September 21—1:28 a. m.]

550. A high official of the Foreign Office has informed me in confidence that the Russian Government in connection with its move to be included in the European Danube Commission has insisted: 1) that Italy be excluded; 2) that Russia should participate from Bratislava to the Black Sea and not merely on the lower reaches of the Danube from Braila down. I understand this to mean that Russia has not suggested that it should become a member of the International Commission but rather that the jurisdiction of the European Commission should be extended to Bratislava. Considering that Russia has never before been a member of either of the two Commissions, these pretensions seemed to him rather ominous.

GUNTHER

740.0011 European War 1939/5600 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Turkey (MacMurray) to the Secretary of State*

ANKARA, September 20, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received 8:40 p. m.]

156. 1. As the satisfaction of Russian, Bulgarian and Hungarian territorial claims against Rumania recedes into the past without producing incidental complications in the Balkans, Turkish opinion generally feels immense relief that the sword of Damocles has fallen without doing any more vital hurt. There is a certain amount of genuine sympathy for the allied country that has suffered dismemberment but this feeling is qualified by the conviction that Rumania brought that fate upon herself by her blind refusal to face the necessity of finding a basis of accord with Bulgaria (as consistently urged by Turkey and the other members of the Balkan Entente) and by the pursuit of a catch-penny policy which in the end outsmarted itself. It seems to be accepted here that the Rumanian *débacle* puts an end to any effective *entente* among the Balkan States and remits them to the pursuit of individual policies involving cooperation *ad hoc* among those that find a common bond of interest under particular circumstances (in this connection see my No. 143, August 30, 4 p. m.<sup>20</sup>).

2. In the course of a recent conversation the Minister for Foreign Affairs gave me to understand that from the Turkish point of view the best that one can hope for Rumania is the establishment of some government (of whatever form or color whether pro- or anti-Nazi) that can in fact govern and maintain order and national coherence;

<sup>20</sup> Not printed.

failing which Rumania must not only suffer extinction but become an apple of discord in southeastern Europe.

3. The Minister is inclined to be optimistic about the recent intermittent series of Italian threats against Greece. Apart from a casual reference to the desire of the senior partner of the Axis for peace and undisturbed continuance of supplies from the Balkans he expressed the opinion that Italy, herself, has no reason to fight for anything she can get from Greece: if she should end up on the winning side she would get what she wants for nothing; otherwise she would lose whatever she had taken; it therefore seemed probable that Italy had been trying merely to bully Greece into making concessions as Rumania had been scared into ceding Bessarabia to the Soviet Union. Greece, however, had at last set herself to making military preparations which in spite of the lack of modern equipment would doubtless suffice to make the Italians feel that the game would not be worth the candle. In reply to a question as to Turkey's attitude in the event that Italy should nevertheless attack Greece he first recalled that this country would be under no legal obligation except to maintain a benevolent neutrality but then went on to say that in that event the Turkish Government would have to make an immediate decision as to the course it should pursue in its own interests under the circumstances presented. (From indications received from other sources I am inclined to believe that the British would not press this Government to support them in their guarantee to Greece.)

4. As to the rumored possibility of Bulgaria's pressing her claims to an outlet on the Aegean Sea he professed complete confidence in the assurances given him by Bulgarian statesmen that they would not resort to hostilities in order to realize that aspiration, especially as they knew that both Greece and this country would resist; he had himself let them know that Turkey would fight to prevent the extension of Bulgarian territory to the Mediterranean.

5. With regard to relations with the Soviet Union he said that while there was some slight tendency toward improvement (see my No. 155, September 19, 5 p. m.<sup>21</sup>) there was no reason to modify the opinion that Russia has various political objectives (among which he agreed should be included the control of the Straits) each of which she is prepared to attain whenever the opportunity is presented to do so without substantial cost or risk. He felt confident that the readiness of this country to put up a stiff fight for its rights would obviate any Russian attempt to encroach upon them. On the question whether the Soviets might be expected to remain faithful to their collaboration with Germany he remarked that as in the cases of Poland and Rumania they would no doubt act for their own profit whether with one side or the other as circumstances might dictate.

<sup>21</sup> Not printed.

6. Recent developments in Turkish official opinion particularly in the light of my latest talk with the Minister for Foreign Affairs suggest to me the following which may be helpful in estimating the attitude of this Government:

(a) The Turks quite realistically and frankly recognize that whatever happens in this part of the world is incidental and eventually conditional upon the outcome of the military struggle between Britain and Germany.

(b) They retain not only their political sympathy with the British but also a confidence in them that revolts against recognizing any loss of military of [*or?*] political prestige.

(c) They are completely cynical as to the intentions and possible actions of the Axis Powers and Russia.

(d) They are perhaps over-optimistically prone to regard the attitude of those powers in questions which arise in this area as being mere bluff which can be called by a demonstration of readiness to resist with a force capable of a considerable nuisance value.

(e) On the basis of their historical tradition and experience of their war of independence but with no radical modernization of ideas or of equipment (save as they have shopped about among arms dealers for a few items of this and that) they are, I am afraid, inclined to overrate their own actual military force and the impression of formidability which it creates.

(f) Against these somewhat hazardous illusions there is the counterweight of their very commonsense realization that the new Turkey they are trying so enthusiastically to build not only needs peace for its development but would if involved in hostilities risk the loss of everything that it has achieved.

7. In supplement to these observations I should note that I understand there is coming to be felt in certain influential circles some apprehension lest Germany as an alternative to the invasion of the British Isles should throw its weight into the support of the Italian attack on Egypt with the possible result of crippling or even driving out the British Mediterranean Fleet by depriving it of the use of the Suez Canal and the base at Alexandria.

MACMURRAY

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740.0011 European War 1939/5603 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, September 20, 1940—7 p. m.

[Received 11:20 p. m.]

1198. Department's 537, September 13, 4 p. m.<sup>22</sup> Gafencu, the Rumanian Minister, called on me yesterday. He stated he was con-

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<sup>22</sup> Not printed. The Department was interested in ascertaining the opinion of the Rumanian Minister in the Soviet Union, Grigore Gafencu, regarding "how far Russian-German collaboration went during the recent Rumanian crisis prior to the German-Italian guarantee of Rumania." (740.0011 European War 1939/5456)

vinced there had been no Soviet-German cooperation in regard to the Rumanian question at any stage. While presumably the Soviet Government may have been informed of the results of the Salzburg Conference in July<sup>23</sup> and of developments subsequent thereto such exchanges had been merely in the form of information and did not constitute prior consultation with the Soviet Government. In respect of the Italian-German guaranty of Rumania, the Minister confirmed the information contained in Embassy's 1144, September 10, 11 a. m.,<sup>24</sup> to the effect that the Soviet Government had been informed by the German Ambassador either at the very last moment or even subsequent to the announcement and that there was little doubt as to Soviet influence of Italian move. He added that the Italian Ambassador here<sup>25</sup> was of the opinion that the guaranty had been deliberately designed to oppose Soviet pretensions in the Balkans. The Minister likewise stated that it was his impression that at his interview with Dekanosov on August 29, which was made the subject of the communiqué in regard to the alleged border incidents (see the Embassy's 1088, August 30) the Soviets had been motivated by the desire to proclaim their interest in the Rumanian question in anticipation of the possibility of a confused situation or even conflict between Rumania and Hungary from which the Soviet Union might profit. (It will be noted that this confirms the view of the Italian Secretary reported in the Embassy's 1160, September 13, 6 p.m.) Gafencu went on to say that Vishinski's protest to German Ambassador in regard to the exclusion of the Soviet Union from the Danube Conference in Vienna had been acrimonious as the Soviet Union felt that this exclusion had been deliberate and evidenced an anti-Soviet policy. He added that according to his information in reply to the Soviet protest, the German Government had agreed to include the Soviet Union in a comparatively unimportant meeting of technical experts but not in a second and more important Danubian Conference which was to be held simultaneously to consider general policies affecting the Danube. Gafencu informed me that on September 17 he had transmitted such a note from his Government to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs concerning the Soviet protest of September 12 (see the Embassy's 1157, September 13) and that this reply, as in the first Rumanian note had been firm in rejecting responsibility for the incidents. The Minister added that he attached some importance to the fact that no mention had appeared in the Soviet press in regard to the second note and he was inclined to believe that,

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<sup>23</sup> Records of these conversations are printed in *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, series D, vol. x, pp. 301-316.

<sup>24</sup> *Post*, p. 562.

<sup>25</sup> Augusto Rosso.



for the moment at least, the Soviet Union was willing to let the question of the border incidents subside.

STEINHARDT

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860H.00/1198 : Telegram

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

BELGRADE, September 22, 1940—11 a. m.

[Received 6 : 23 p. m.]

395. A high Yugoslav Government official informed me at Bled yesterday as follows:

The present policy of the Yugoslav Government is to maintain a dignified position in the face of German pressure, that is, to refuse to permit Germany to dictate how Yugoslavia shall conduct internal affairs. On the other hand, Yugoslavia feels it is imperative to yield to German demands for foodstuffs. It is hoped that the United States Government will appreciate the position of the Yugoslav Government in endeavoring to keep out of the war at the same time maintaining its self respect.

Recently the German Government demanded that the Yugoslav Government should become authoritarian in character. Unfortunately Korosec, the Minister of Education, without consulting the Prime Minister<sup>26</sup> who was then in Bled, issued an order prohibiting the admission into local schools of persons of Jewish race. The Prime Minister countermanded this order thus bringing about attacks on Cvetkovic in the German press. Korosec was deceived by German intrigues in taking action and now realizes his mistake. There will be no Cabinet crisis because of this incident although probably the Government will be "enlarged" to appease foreign nations (presumably Germany). Relations between Cvetkovic and Macek<sup>27</sup> are excellent despite rumors of dissention.

As to repeated reports of Communistic activities in Yugoslavia which have come to our attention my informant said that these are spread by young students encouraged by both Italians and Russians but that they are not to be taken seriously. The Government knows how to control propaganda of this sort. The Yugoslav Government has obtained virtually nothing from its commercial agreement with the Soviet Union nor did it expect anything. No cotton has been forthcoming. The agreement was made solely for political reasons. Yugoslavia has no illusions regarding Soviet aims. Even the Prime Minister who admits that he is accused of being Communistic states

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<sup>26</sup> Dragisha Tsvetkovich.

<sup>27</sup> Vlatko Machek, Vice President of the Council of Ministers, and Croatian leader.

that the best way to cure persons of pro-Soviet views is to send them to Moscow.

My informant as well as another Yugoslav official said to me yesterday that perhaps Germany would attack Yugoslavia or Greece in the event that the air attack on England does not result in German victory but according to German assurances there is no such danger. They agreed with my opinion, however, that no confidence can be placed in German promises.

LANE

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761.71/293 : Telegram

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

BUCHAREST, September 25, 1940—1 p. m.

[Received 3:05 p. m.]

561. According to a member of the German Legation here the Russian civil authorities are about to take over from the military in Bessarabia and occupied Rumanian Bukowina. The evacuation of the 80- to 90,000 German subjects in both provinces has begun and is proceeding according to plan.<sup>28</sup>

My 482, August 28, 4 p. m.<sup>29</sup> Apart from that already reported I have but little reliable information as to conditions. On the whole my impression is that the administration of these provinces by the military authorities has been about what could be expected, the chief fear being of what may be in store for the populations upon the assumption of power by the civilian authorities.

GUNTHER

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740.0011 European War 1939/5915 : Telegram

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

BUCHAREST, October 7, 1940—6 p. m.

[Received October 8—7:25 a. m.]

579. Since early this morning there have been persistent rumors which may have reached you through the press to the effect that German troops have been brought to Rumania and lodged in barracks near Bucharest. I have been unable to confirm this and indeed the Rumanian General Staff and the German Military Attaché state categorically that no German troops or equipment have entered Rumania. The latter adds however that negotiations between the Ru-

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<sup>28</sup> In his despatch No. 1501, July 17, 1940, the Minister stated his view that Germany had had no advance agreement with the Soviet Union for the distribution of Rumanian territory, otherwise "the Germans would have succeeded not only in getting out their 100,000 Germans from the Northern Bucovina and Bessarabia, but also all movable German property. And this is not the case." (761.71/282)

<sup>29</sup> Not printed.

manian, German, and Italian Governments with a view to supplying Rumania with instructors and training cadres have been going on for some time and will probably be successfully concluded at an early date.

Please inform the War Department.

GUNTHER

740.0011 European War 1939/5946 : Telegram

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

BUCHAREST, October 9, 1940—5 p. m.  
[Received October 10—2:30 a. m.]

585. The rumors referred to in my 579, October 7, 6 p. m., persist. Rumanian General Staff and German Military Attaché however continue categorically to deny presence of any German troops in Rumania although I am reliably informed that arrangements are being made for the housing of German military units and staffs expected to arrive as training cadres in the near future. It is probable that these rumors result in part from the presence in Bucharest and elsewhere of German individuals and organizations in SS<sup>30</sup> field uniforms and engaged in the evacuation of Germans from the Bukovina, Bessarabia and Dobrudja.

I believe that ex-King Carol made a request for a German military mission as long ago as last July and also that conversations have continued since then embracing the possibility of the detail of a complete German air unit for the protection of Rumania's oil supplies.

Please inform War Department.

GUNTHER

[For correspondence regarding the freezing of property, credits, etc., of Rumania and Rumanian nationals in the United States, see volume II, pages 780 ff. For the text of Executive Order No. 8565, October 10, 1940, see 5 *Federal Register* 4062. For text of the regulations of the Treasury Department, issued on October 10, 1940, see *ibid.*, 4063.]

740.0011 European War 1939/6137 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, October 17, 1940—5 p. m.  
[Received 11:40 p. m.]

1360. The Turkish Ambassador who has just returned from Ankara and who had a lengthy conference with Molotov yesterday, has

<sup>30</sup> German Schutzstaffel, elite corps of the Nazi Party used for military and police purposes.

given me in the strictest confidence the following summary of his talk with Molotov.

In reply to an inquiry from the Ambassador as to the Soviet Government's reaction to the German-Italian-Japanese alliance,<sup>31</sup> Molotov observed that if the pact had been made 3 months ago on the heels of the crushing German victories its unquestioned design to bring about the apportionment of Europe and Asia between its members might have had a real meaning. However as a result of the developments of the past 3 months the pact was merely "so many words" as any apportionment of Europe or Asia would "rest with the victors". The Ambassador gained the distinct impression from the remarks made by Molotov and his choice of language that he was by no means prepared to concede ultimate victory to the members of the tripartite alliance and that he regarded the United States as being already an ally of Britain.

In response to an inquiry from the Ambassador as to the Soviet Government's reaction to the developments in Rumania and to a specific question whether the Soviet Government had been advised of the German intentions Molotov replied that his Government had been neither consulted nor advised and that "the Soviet Government would ask for explanations at the proper time."

Molotov then asked the Ambassador whether he could outline for him Turkish intentions in the event of further penetration by the Axis Powers in the Balkans. The Ambassador replied that the Turkish Government was finally resolved to carry out all of its obligations under existing agreements and that although Turkey was under no obligation to defend Greece, in the event of an Italian attack the Turkish Government had decided that an invasion of Greece by Italy, particularly in respect of Thrace, could not be regarded as having only local significance but would have to be construed as the forerunner of a violation of Turkish territory, in consequence of which the Turkish Government had decided to assist Greece with all the military power at its command in case Italy made such an attack. The Ambassador also told Molotov that Turkey would resist with arms any attempt by the Axis Powers to invade Syria.

Insofar as concerned Bulgaria, the Ambassador advised Molotov that his Government regarded that country as completely under Axis domination and believed that recent Bulgarian military preparations could only in the final analysis be directed against Turkey in consequence of which the Turkish Government had taken measures to meet

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<sup>31</sup> Three power pact of assistance signed at Berlin on September 27, 1940; for text, see League of Nations Treaty Series, vol. cccv, p. 386. For correspondence regarding negotiation of this treaty, see pp. 633 ff.

any attack from that source whether launched by Bulgaria or with Bulgaria as a [place d'armes?] for Axis troops.

The Ambassador told me that 3 months ago Molotov had requested him to caution his Government against involvement in the Balkans but that at their conference yesterday his attitude was noticeably changed inasmuch as he had expressed no disapproval of Turkish intentions as outlined to him by the Ambassador but on the contrary specifically agreed with him in his presentation of the Turkish treatment of the situation in Bulgaria.

In response to my inquiry the Ambassador stated that he had neither asked for nor received any assurances from Molotov as to the position of the Soviet Union in respect of any of the foregoing eventualities but that he had gained the impression that should hostilities develop out of one or more of the contingencies outlined above Turkey might count upon the real if not the benevolent neutrality of the Soviet Union.

The Ambassador also told me that the Turkish Government had a force of over 1,000,000 men concentrated for the defense of the Straits against any attack that might be launched either from Greek or Bulgarian bases and that it was the opinion of his Government that the Italians could not cross the Straits with an army of less than 1,000,000 men. He referred to Gallipoli as an example of the difficulty of invading Turkey with the Straits on one side and the British Eastern Mediterranean Fleet presumably protecting the Turkish western flank.<sup>32</sup> From the general tenor of the information given me by the Ambassador I gained the impression that he had presented the Turkish position to Molotov without the slightest equivocation and that he felt his statement of that position was not displeasing to the Soviet Government.

STEINHARDT

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870.811/211 : Telegram

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

BUCHAREST, October 18, 1940—2 p. m.

[Received October 19—4 p. m.]

626. In the course of a conversation yesterday with Cretzianu, Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Benton<sup>33</sup> inquired if there had been any sequence to the Russian demand of September 10 to receive from the German Government appropriate

<sup>32</sup> The reference here is to the naval and land attacks in the unsuccessful Gallipoli campaign during the First World War between February 19, 1915, and January 9, 1916.

<sup>33</sup> J. Webb Benton, First Secretary of Legation and Consul in Rumania.

information concerning the conference of Danubian experts which opened in Vienna on September 5 (see Moscow Embassy's telegram No. 1157, of September 13).

The Secretary General replied that no general discussions have occurred regarding Russia's expression of interest in Danubian matters, but he understands conversations on the subject are being conducted between Berlin and Moscow. He added that Germany is fully aware that Russia's demands in this regard must be met in some way and he believes this could properly be done through first including Russia in the membership of the European Commission a position to which Russia is entitled as a riparian state in the maritime stretch of the river as a result of her seizure of Bessarabia; it would then be possible to include Russia in any new arrangement made to replace the dissolved international commission.

The code text of this message has been sent by air mail to Berlin with a copy for Moscow.

GUNTHER

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740.0011 European War 1939/6147 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Turkey (MacMurray) to the Secretary of State*

ANKARA, October 18, 1940—[6] p. m.

[Received 6:50 p. m.]

171. 1. On returning from a visit to Budapest (where through Lane I had also the opportunity to get some impression of feeling in Yugoslavia) I have been struck with the relative calmness of Turkish official opinion with respect to the developments of Axis policy in the Balkan region. As may be inferred from the Embassy's telegram No. 167, October 12, 5 p. m.,<sup>24</sup> it is not that the Turks are unaware of the possible dangers; there is indeed (particularly in Istanbul) a rather general uneasiness in unofficial quarters. But the Government is acting with remarkable lack of nervousness on the assumption that (as remarked to me by the Minister for Foreign Affairs) having calmly made its decisions and its preparations against foreseeable eventualities it can only await developments with like calmness.

2. The Minister stated that he had no actual information as to the decisions taken at the Brenner meeting and could only reason *a priori* as to its significance. He thinks that the mere fact of its being held after so many other meetings of the representatives of the Axis seemed to indicate that Germany and Italy were encountering serious difficulties either external or internal to their association. As to the German occupation of Rumania he noted three possible hypotheses which he described as all equally plausible, namely:

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<sup>24</sup> Not printed.

(First) That action may be purely local and intended merely to assure German control and protection of Rumania's resources;

(Second) It may be intended to establish the strategic basis for a German attack on Russia in which case the plan might or might not contemplate as a complementary necessity the seizure of the Straits; or

(Third) It may constitute a step in a plan for a joint German and Italian advance against the Suez Canal through Turkey, Syria and Palestine. He remarked that this alternative did not seem reasonable but could not be ignored or regarded as improbable.

3. As an indication of the unyielding temper of Turkey it may be noted that no transactions have yet taken place under the commercial agreement with Germany of July 25, in consequence of this Government's insistence upon certain points of interpretation and its unwillingness to meet prices on which Germany insists.

4. Upon the Minister's remarking that relations with Soviet Russia were improving somewhat and my saying that I supposed that meant that they were now able to discuss their common problems with an increasing degree of frankness, he said that it would be going much too far to describe the situation in that way.

MACMURRAY

870.811/213 : Telegram

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

BUCHAREST, October 26, 1940—2 p. m.

[Received October 27—9:30 a. m.]

670. My 626, October 18, 2 p. m. Although no announcement has yet been made I am reliably informed that delegates from Germany, Italy, Rumania and Russia will meet in Bucharest on October 28 to discuss problems and respective interests in connection with the lower Danube or that section of the river lying between Braila and the Black Sea hitherto under the jurisdiction of the European Commission of the Danube. You will recall that as late as last May the European Commission met with delegates from all member states—Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Rumania—present (see despatch No. 1438 of June 5, 1940<sup>85</sup>). Great Britain and France have however not been invited to be represented at the meeting on October 28.

The German delegation, headed by Dr. Martius, has already arrived in Bucharest and the Russian delegation is expected today.<sup>86</sup> V. V. Pella, Rumanian representative on the European Commission, will head the Rumanian delegation.

As the European Commission properly speaking may be considered as having ceased to exist it is a matter of speculation as to whether

<sup>85</sup> Not printed.

<sup>86</sup> The chief delegate for the Soviet Union was Arkady Alexandrovich Sobolev, Secretary General of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs.

the meeting of the four states mentioned above will be carried out under that name, convert itself into a new organization or take steps looking to merge with the International Commission of the Danube.

Copy to Moscow.

GUNTHER

740.0011 European War 1939/6390 : Telegram

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

BUCHAREST, November 1, 1940—11 a. m.

[Received 3:44 p. m.]

696. My 685, October 30, 11 p. m.<sup>37</sup> I have discussed the Russian position in some detail with General Antonescu. He was not apprehensive of immediate Russian action directed against Rumania and is disposed to place his reliance possibly too much so on the German guarantee. He said that according to his military information there were no movements of Russian troops worth mentioning except some in the northern Bukowina. He added that the question of the islands just above Ismail which the Russians want was under negotiation as well as the eventual sovereignty of other small islands near the northern mouth of the Danube.<sup>38</sup>

I asked the General what was his interpretation of the evacuation even from unoccupied Bukowina and Dobrudja of all Germans. He replied that it was to fill with German agriculturists the parts of former Poland left empty now owing to its present shrunken state and the segregation of ethnic Poles therein. It would seem clear that he has had this from a German source.

GUNTHER

870.811/217 : Telegram

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

BUCHAREST, November 1, 1940—7 p. m.

[Received November 2—10:58 a. m.]

700. My 670, October 26, 2 p. m., and previous. I have just learned from a highly creditable source that there is a great deal of tension behind the scenes of the Danubian Conference here. The Germans are insisting that Russia's participation therein be limited to the reaches of the river from Braila down whereas the Russians insist upon joint jurisdiction up to Pressburg.<sup>39</sup> Consternation has also been caused by Russia's insistence upon the elimination of Italy.

GUNTHER

<sup>37</sup> Not printed.

<sup>38</sup> The Kilia (Chilia) channel was the northern mouth of the Danube River.

<sup>39</sup> Bratislava.



740.0011 European War 1939/6469 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Turkey (MacMurray) to the Secretary of State*

ANKARA, November 4, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received November 5—4 : 50 a. m.]

189. 1. In view of the passage in President Inonu's speech (my telegram No. 184, November 1, 5 p. m.<sup>40</sup>) regarding the return to the former degree of cordiality with Soviet Russia, I took occasion today to recall to the Minister for Foreign Affairs that he had fairly recently given me to understand (my telegram No. 171, October 18, 6 p. m.) that the relationship had not at that time been restored to a basis of mutual openness. He assured me that there had since been a considerable improvement and that the two countries were now in a position to deal with each other as unreservedly as say 2 years ago.

2. He went on to say that the Turks quite understood the Russians' situation with the German Army on their backs. From the ensuing conversation I gathered that in his judgment the Soviet Government while hoping that both sides will so exhaust themselves as to be no longer a danger to Russian interests feels that Great Britain is at any rate the less of a menace; and that its sympathies are therefore with the British although it is not in a position to give any effect to them.

3. As to the Italian invasion of Greece he took the attitude that the ultimatum had been a bluff as the Italian forces in Albania (which he estimated at considerably under 200,000) were not sufficient to back it up; and he seemed confident that British naval and air assistance would so gravely embarrass the transport of the necessary reinforcements as to enable the Greeks to hold their own.

Repeated to Moscow.

MACMURRAY

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870.811/224 : Telegram

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

BUCHAREST, November 7, 1940—5 p. m.

[Received November 9—5 : 05 a. m.]

712. My 670, October 26, 2 p. m. The Foreign Minister<sup>41</sup> told me late yesterday that little progress was being made in the conference which convened in Bucharest on October 28th to discuss problems and respective interests in connection with the lower Danube or that section of the river lying between Braila and the Black Sea hitherto under the jurisdiction of the European Commission of the

<sup>40</sup> Not printed.

<sup>41</sup> Prince Mihail Sturdza.

Danube. Russia has, moreover, already seized the island in the Danube near Ismail. This means that the Thalweg is no longer the demarkation line between Rumanian and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics leaving only a small stream tributary, often unnavigable, for Rumanian use. Furthermore the Russians have just seized the large island at the Valcov mouth of the Danube south of the Chilia branch, a serious matter for Rumanian navigation at Sulina the principal channel, due to [apparent omission] scientific and observation of shifting sand bars.

The Foreign Minister also said that Russia was opposing the participation of both Germany and Italy in the settlement of this problem. In other words Russia was desirous of creating a Russian-Rumanian condominium in which the former of course would play the principal role for the discussion and settlement of all problems relating to the lower Danube. The Foreign Minister added that up to the present Germany had shown very little interest in supporting Rumania and I gathered that he felt strongly that the former, for political reasons and inasmuch as her vital interests were not involved, might be willing to accept the Russian thesis and withdraw, at the same time obliging her Italian ally to do likewise, from any active participation in lower Danubian affairs.

I considered the foregoing significant. Germany is undoubtedly anxious to placate Russia; therefore giving away to the latter in a matter such as the above in which Germany has no immediate vital interest would be a good political move costing nothing. I think that Germany takes the view that whatever is arranged now need only be temporary. Moreover I do not think a conflict between Germany and Russia is desired by either at this moment but the former if she finds it imperative to undertake a Balkan campaign—following for instance a British move on Salonika—must first protect either politically and/or militarily her Russian flank. While the Foreign Minister made it clear that he felt that Russia would not attempt to seize more Rumanian territory, I cannot say that I entirely share his optimism. (Please see in this connection my telegram No. 707, November 5, 5 p. m.<sup>42</sup> and previous). The evacuation of Germans from Bukowina and other territories ceded by Rumania as well as from non-ceded territories tends to show that Germany at least envisages the possibility of conflict and accordingly is taking steps to protect her interests politically; and by this I do not mean to imply that I think that the German left flank could rest secure solely as a consequence of appeasement in respect of Russia's Danubian pretensions.

<sup>42</sup> Not printed; it reported that "most of the young Germans of military age have been retained here in a camp at Galatz" where, in the event of trouble, "due to their speaking Russian as well as Rumanian and German, they would be invaluable as interpreters". (740.0011 European War 1939/6501)

As you probably know the British Government has protested to that of Rumania the exclusion of the British from the Danubian corridor.

GUNTHER

761.67/327 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Turkey (MacMurray) to the Secretary of State*

ANKARA, November 13, 1940—11 a. m.

[Received 5:55 p. m.]

201. As a sidelight and possible explanation of recent Turkish insistence upon an almost incredible rehabilitation of Turco-Russian relations (see my telegram No 189, November 4, 4 p. m.) I submit the following outline of views expressed to me by an exceptionally well-informed colleague.<sup>43</sup>

1. Starting from the premise that Stalin's persistent purpose is world revolution and that that objective can best be attained by the mutual destruction of the capitalistic powers, my informant assumed that Molotov had made the agreement of August 1939 for the purpose of precipitating the conflict and in the conviction that communism could only gain by the defeat of Great Britain and would not suffer from the confidently expected German victory, which would involve problems of reorganization in Europe so far beyond the possibility of solution by Germany that any conquered territories would be open for Communist influence. This policy seemed to warrant the close association with Germany and the breaking off of negotiations with England and France and incidentally with Turkey as their ally.

2. The wholly opportunist application of this policy had been profoundly modified by two developments: (first) the Kremlin had now come to believe that England would win in the end; and, (second) it was convinced by the three-power treaty, which it considered to be directed against Russia, that Germany was still actively hostile. He pointed out that the consignment of Europe to the control of the Axis and of "Greater Asia" to that of Japan could not but leave Russia anxious and distrustful. Nobody knew what the novel phrase in quotations meant: it must include Siberia and it might include European Russia and perhaps Turkey and other Near and Middle Eastern countries.

3. In the light of these beliefs the Soviet leaders had to consider two more immediate factors. In the first place the demonstration of the smashing power of the German Army presented the possibility of Germany's inflicting quick and tremendous damage on Russia even if she were herself doomed to ultimate defeat by the British. In the second place, they have no confidence in the loyalty of their own

<sup>43</sup> The Ambassador of Afghanistan. Faiz Mohammed Khan.

armies (made up even to a preponderant extent in the officer grade out of the peasant class which prays for deliverance from Bolshevik control even at the cost of foreign domination) and would not dare risk hostilities of a kind or scope that would threaten the Moscow regime.

4. They therefore found it imperative to reorientate their practical application of their fundamental policy. For the time being they may be expected to hedge, avoiding any possibility of conflict with Germany although prepared to shift to the support of Britain (at least to the extent included within the status of nonbelligerency) if there should arise any conjuncture in which it would seem advisable to assist in maintaining her as a counterweight to the danger of an eventual German attack upon Russia. They do not yet dare or [consider it?] opportune to respond directly to British blandishments<sup>44</sup> but have recently gone to some pains to restore their former intimate relations with the Turks in order that in case of need the latter may serve as catalytic agents to facilitate an understanding. He thinks that there is therefore on the Russian side a calculated effort to recreate at least a plausible semblance of the old relationship and that on the Turkish side there is a corresponding desire (which has almost transformed itself into a belief) that everything should be for the best between them.

5. He tells me that he finds among the Turkish officials a belief that Russia would come to their aid to prevent a German or Italian seizure of the Straits but that for his part he would expect the Soviet Government to be disposed to stand aloof and count on the British ultimately dealing with that situation in their own interest. He feels sure Russia would not risk an out-and-out conflict under present circumstances.

6. He further tells me that at the present time Russian deliveries on petroleum and other materials to Germany have dwindled to almost negligible quantities and that in case of tension developing the Soviet might be bold enough to find excuses for withholding them altogether.

MACMURRAY

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762.74/63 : Telegram

*The Minister in Bulgaria (Earle) to the Secretary of State*

SOFIA, November 21, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received November 22—12: 25 a. m.]

165. The Foreign Minister who accompanied the King to Berchtesgaden on his visit to Hitler<sup>45</sup> has just told me the following:

<sup>44</sup> For correspondence concerning Soviet relations with the United Kingdom and France, see pp. 589 ff.

<sup>46</sup> November 17.

That the King went on Hitler's invitation; that Hitler assured the King that he agreed with him and wanted peace in the Balkans so as to insure Germany's food supply from this region; that Hitler offered a 10-year contract for all exportable Bulgarian foodstuffs, payment to be made by Germany by the barter system; that Hitler has invited all the nations of Continental Europe, big and small including France and Russia to join the so-called tripartite bloc; that Hitler, from a lowly position himself had great sympathy for the common people and desired this bloc of European states to ensure peace for a hundred years to come; that Bulgaria was studying the invitation but that Popoff could not foretell Bulgaria's decision; that Popoff's impression was that Germany contemplated no military action against Yugoslavia and Turkey, if Hitler felt certain of the strict neutrality of these nations. The Foreign Minister added that Bulgaria was as determined as ever to preserve peace and under no condition would attack Turkey or Greece, and he felt certain no German troops would pass through this country or Yugoslavia. He felt Italy, for the time being at least, would ask for no help from Germany against the Greeks as it would be too humiliating.

I had one disturbing impression from this interview which if correct may reflect this country's future course. For the first time since I have been here Popoff, probably expressing the feelings of the King, seemed to believe in ultimate German victory.

EARLE

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740.0011 European War 1939/6925 : Telegram

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

BUCHAREST, November 27, 1940—6 p. m.

[Received November 28—6:50 a. m.]

760. Yesterday afternoon Benton had a conversation with Cretzianu, Secretary General of the Foreign Office, the most important points of which are as follows:

1. Cretzianu said that the Foreign Office knows nothing definite with respect to the recent Hitler-Molotov talks. Asked if Rumania was not worried that Hitler and Molotov have perhaps made some sort of deal at the expense of Rumania, Cretzianu shrugged his shoulders and merely said that during the course of General Antonescu's recent stay in Berlin, Hitler had reiterated that Germany guaranteed Rumania's present frontiers and consequently the latter had nothing to worry about.

2. Cretzianu said that the fact that Bulgaria had not adhered to the Tripartite Pact—he had fully expected she would do so imme-

diately after Rumania's adherence<sup>46</sup>—puzzled and worried him. Bulgaria's failure to adhere to the Pact he felt, might be due to one or the other of the following reasons: (a) Germany and Bulgaria were in complete agreement in respect to military and other policies in the Balkans, particularly as to an attack on Greece, and, therefore, did not desire to advertize too fully this agreement as would be the case if Bulgaria at this moment adhered to the Tripartite Pact until the necessary augmentation measures had been taken; (b) Bulgaria was closer to the U. S. S. R. than most people thought and Molotov had persuaded Bulgaria not to adhere to the Pact. Cretzianu seemed to feel that time alone would show which of these suppositions was correct. (I may say that the Bulgarian Minister<sup>47</sup> has told me that his country is very anxious that Great Britain should recognize Rumania's cession of territory in the Dobrudja; further that Bulgaria does not want to do anything which might jeopardize its value [*valued?*] relations with Great Britain.)

3. Cretzianu expressed the belief that sooner or later, probably sooner, Germany will have to send troops to Greece in order to straighten out the situation there. He said that Bulgaria was quietly but systematically mobilizing on the Greek frontier which gave weight to his first supposition (see preceding paragraph) that there was a close argument [*agreement?*] between Germany and Bulgaria in respect to an attack on Greece. Yugoslavia, he explained was very nervous, and reports received from Belgrade indicate that there was something in the air. Asked if he thought Yugoslavia would fight if Germany violated that country's neutrality—endeavored to send troops through Yugoslavia en route to Greece—he replied that he did not think so. In this connection the Yugoslav Ambassador<sup>48</sup> has remarked to me that he was certain his country would fight if its neutrality was violated by either Germany or Italy.

4. Cretzianu said that the Danubian Conference (please see my telegram No. 729, November 13, 8 p. m.<sup>49</sup>) had been broken off inasmuch as different delegates had had to return home for instructions. The Conference, however, would be resumed probably November 27, and he felt that the attitude of the participating powers, Russia in particular, would give some indication not only of what actually took place between Hitler and Molotov during their recent talks but of the course of future events in the Balkans.

5. During this conversation Cretzianu kept on reiterating that he "had the feeling" that the situation in the Balkans was coming to a

<sup>46</sup> Rumania adhered to the Tripartite Pact by a special protocol on November 23, 1940 (*Reichsgesetzblatt*, 1941, Teil II, p. 31).

<sup>47</sup> Stoyan Petrov Chomakov.

<sup>48</sup> Alexander G. Avakumovich.

<sup>49</sup> Not printed.

head and that something—he did not know what—was likely to happen very soon.

GUNTHER

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740.0011 European War 1939/6941 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, November 29, 1940—6 p. m.

[Received 10:20 p. m.]

1644. The Turkish Ambassador told me this evening that he was reliably informed that in the interview between King Boris and Hitler, the former had told the latter that inasmuch as the Soviet Union was not a party to the Tripartite Pact, Bulgaria could not risk joining it and that the visit of Sobolev to Sofia<sup>50</sup> had been primarily for the purpose of expressing the approval of the Soviet Government of the position taken by Bulgaria.

The Ambassador also told me that he had recently had an interview with Vyshinski in the course of which, under instructions from his Government, he had put to him the three following questions: (1) regarding the attitude of the Soviet Union towards the Greco-Italian war; (2) regarding the attitude of the Soviet Union towards the general situation in the Balkans; and (3) regarding the attitude of the Soviet Union towards the entry of Bulgaria into the war in any degree or in any way.

He said that after a delay of 2 days Vyshinski had sent for him and had said that he had been authorized by his Government to make the following replies: (1) the attitude of the Soviet Union towards the Greco-Italian war would be governed primarily by the military developments in that theater; (2) the attitude of the Soviet Union towards general conditions in the Balkans was strictly that of "just observer of developments"; and (3) insofar as concerned Bulgaria's entry into the war in any degree or in any way that was a matter for the Bulgarian Government to decide.

Vyshinski then asked the Ambassador for a statement of the Turkish position to which the Ambassador replied that he was authorized by his Government to state that the Turkish Government intended to preserve its present status of "nonbelligerency" unless its frontiers were violated or Bulgaria attacked Greece, in which event Turkey would immediately go to the assistance of Greece or in the event that

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<sup>50</sup> For subsequent disclosures of the nature of this visit, which occurred on November 25, 1940, see telegrams Nos. 188, December 18, 6 p. m., and 189, December 18, 7 p. m., from the Minister in Bulgaria, p. 537; see also telegram No. 1720, December 13, 2 p. m., from the Ambassador in the Soviet Union, p. 535.

Syria was attacked, in which event Turkish armed forces would enter that country.

The Ambassador said that in a subsequent conversation with Dekanosov he had called his attention to the rumors current to the effect that in the course of the conversations between Molotov and Hitler an understanding had been reached with respect to a partitioning of the Balkans, with the Soviet Union obtaining the Straits and territorial concessions in Iran and eastern Turkey and asked him if there was any truth to these rumors. Dekanosov replied that no agreement had been entered into in Berlin and emphatically denied the truth of the rumors referred to by the Ambassador, stating that the conversations in Berlin had dealt with an enlargement of the cooperation between the Soviet Union and Germany, provided for under the terms of the non-aggression pact and the economic agreements<sup>51</sup> and that conversations with this object in view would now be continued through the regular diplomatic channels.

STEINHARDT

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740.0011 European War 1939/7010: Telegram

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

[Extracts]

BUCHAREST, December 4, 1940—7 p. m.

[Received December 5—12:52 p. m.]

783. In a long conversation last night General Antonescu told me that during his recent visit to Berlin<sup>52</sup> Hitler had accorded him a three and a half hour interview. Three hours of that time, he said, had been devoted to the Rumanian situation. He, the General, had taken the occasion to serve notice on Hitler that Rumania would never abide by the Vienna *Diktat*, inasmuch as Transylvania had meant too much in the lives and sufferings of the Rumanian people for over 2,000 years to give it up without a struggle; he had, however, promised not to disturb the peace at the present time. With regard to the other boundaries of Rumania, Hitler had renewed his assurances that Germany would not suffer further encroachment by Russia. The General's impression seemed to be that, though Hitler did not desire war with Russia at the present time, if the inevitable happened he would accept it and had sufficient troops not otherwise employed to deal with the situation.

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<sup>51</sup> A German-Soviet trade agreement was signed on August 19, 1939; its provisions are described in a German Foreign Office memorandum of August 29, 1939, *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941*, p. 83. A German-Soviet commercial agreement was signed on February 11, 1940; its provisions are described in a German Foreign Office memorandum of February 26, 1940, *ibid.*, p. 131.

<sup>52</sup> On the occasion of Rumanian adherence by special protocol of November 23, 1940, to the Tripartite Pact of September 27, 1940.



Last night I had a conversation with Sturdza, the Foreign Minister, who remained in Berlin for a few days after the General, and then visited Copenhagen. He also seemed to feel certain that Germany's territorial guarantee of Rumania would hold good.

GUNTHER

711.61/792

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

[WASHINGTON,] December 10, 1940.

The Turkish Ambassador <sup>52a</sup> called to see me. Mr. Murray <sup>53</sup> had informed me previously that the Ambassador, by instruction of his Government, desired to know the nature and tenor of the conversations which had been in progress between this Government and the Soviet Government.<sup>54</sup>

I told the Ambassador that I was most happy to communicate to the Turkish Government, through him, in every detail the conversations which had taken place. I stated that the conversations were solely of an economic and commercial character and had been undertaken for the purpose of solving the accumulated mass of problems of this nature which had arisen during recent years and which had created extreme bitterness on the part of the Soviet Government and extreme irritation on the part of the United States.

I told the Ambassador that I was glad to say that these conversations had in part proved successful and that I believed the Soviet Government now realized that this Government had made every effort to grant, in a spirit of equity and friendship, certain requests made by the Soviet Government, and that I was glad to say that on the other side, the Soviet Government had now solved many of the difficulties with which the United States had been confronted in its relations with the Soviet Union. I said that it was my thought that the conversations would continue from time to time and that it was my belief that many of the problems which still existed could be settled in this manner. I stated that, of course, where certain questions of fundamental principle were involved, notably the question of recognition of the Soviet domination of the Baltic States,<sup>55</sup> I saw no immediate solution.

I said that as a result of these conversations I believed a far more friendly atmosphere existed in the relations between the two countries and that I thought that one clarification had been reached which was

<sup>52a</sup> Mehmet Münir Erteğün.

<sup>53</sup> Wallace Murray, Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs.

<sup>54</sup> For correspondence concerning these conversations, see vol. III, pp. 441 ff.

<sup>55</sup> For information regarding the forcible occupation of the Baltic States and their incorporation into the Soviet Union, see pp. 357 ff.

highly useful, namely, joint recognition that insofar as the Pacific area is concerned there is no conflict of interest between the Soviet Union and the United States.

The Ambassador stated that he was most grateful for the expositions which I had given him and that his Government felt that its own position vis-à-vis the Soviet Union was greatly strengthened as a result of the better relationship which had now developed between the Soviet Union and the United States. He added that he believed that the Soviet Government was far more greatly influenced by the attitude of the United States than might appear upon the surface.

I took occasion to read to the Ambassador some of the contents of Ambassador MacMurray's telegram No. 214, December 9, 4 p. m.<sup>56</sup>

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

761.74/58 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, December 13, 1940—2 p. m.

[Received 7:12 p. m.]

1720. The Bulgarian Minister told me last night in the strictest confidence that on the occasion of Sobolev's visit to Sofia, on instructions from his Government he had proposed to the Bulgarian Government that it enter into a mutual assistance pact with the Soviet Union in which event the Soviet Government would not object to Bulgaria thereafter joining the Tripartite Pact. Should, however, the Bulgarian Government decide not to enter into a mutual assistance pact with the Soviet Union, the Soviet Government "preferred" that Bulgaria should not join the Tripartite Pact. The Minister stated that for the time being his Government had decided not to enter into either pact.

STEINHARDT

761.62/831 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Turkey (MacMurray) to the Secretary of State*

ANKARA, December 13, 1940—5 p. m.

[Received 9:03 p. m.]

218. For the Secretary and Welles. Second section your No. 99<sup>57</sup> delayed in transmission. I greatly appreciate this informative summary of Department's information regarding German-Soviet relations.

<sup>56</sup> Not printed.

<sup>57</sup> December 10, 6 p. m.; not printed.

Replying to your request for comment I submit that from this observation point it seems most probable that Germany and Russia must have agreed from the beginning and regardless of any more recent development of their relations to hold in abeyance any fundamental question as to the ultimate status of the Balkans and particularly of the Straits.

I noted Department assumes Turkey called upon Soviet Government for advice as to attitude towards Germany. Pending possible check on my conviction that such is not the case I hasten to point out that that assumption seems irreconcilable with statements made to me by Minister for Foreign Affairs (see for example my 214, December 9<sup>59</sup>) as well as with information received from colleagues in more intimate relations with this Government. It is difficult for any one in touch with strongly self-assertive anti-German temper of this Government to believe that Turks could have asked advice on that question.

MACMURRAY

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761.62/832 : Telegram

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

BUCHAREST, December 13, 1940—6 p. m.

[Received December 14—6 a. m.]

812. My 785, December 5, 6 p. m.<sup>59</sup> last paragraph. Yesterday evening Benton saw Cretzianu, the Secretary General of the Foreign Office, who reiterated<sup>60</sup> that the situation in connection with the Danubian Conference had improved from the Rumanian standpoint, the Germans being firmer and the Russians less intransigent. He said that the Russians had now agreed to accept the German point of view of a commission including Italy as well as the riparian states but at the same time they insisted on a subcommission composed only of Russia and Rumania to deal with technical questions in connection with the lower Danube. Germany, he explained, was prepared to accept this point of view and the difficulty now lay in deciding just what powers such a subcommission should have. Germany apparently desires the subcommission to be a technical one pure and simple, whereas Russia is endeavoring to invest it with so much power that the real Danubian commission would have little or no say in the lower Danubian region.

<sup>59</sup> Not printed.

<sup>60</sup> In telegram No. 785, the Minister had reported a conversation in which Cretzianu had made this same statement to him. He further stated that Cretzianu admitted in response to his suggestion that as this change of attitude had occurred subsequent to Molotov's visit in Berlin it was quite possibly a sequence thereto. (761.62/824)

Cretzianu added that the various delegates would be leaving for home for the Christmas holidays very soon and that a definite solution of the problem would therefore probably have to wait until after the New Year.

I am reporting in detail on developments in the Danubian Conference inasmuch as I strongly believe that they serve as an excellent barometer indicative of the fluctuations in Russo-German relations.

Copies by airmail to Berlin, Rome, Sofia, Belgrade, Budapest and Moscow (via Berlin pouch).

GUNTHER

761.74/61 : Telegram

*The Minister in Bulgaria (Earle) to the Secretary of State*

SOFIA, December 18, 1940—6 p. m.

[Received 7:25 p. m.]

188. The King and Foreign Minister have the highest regard for our country and Government and are on the friendliest terms with me. However, today for the first time in answer to a question regarding the results of Soboleff's conference here with the King the Foreign Minister begged to be excused, because of the delicate nature of these negotiations, from giving any indication whatever as to what occurred at these discussions. I consider the Foreign Minister's failure to answer my question significant in that it indicates that the Russian proposals were of a highly political nature.

In reply to my question, he said that Bulgaria still had the Tripartite Pact under consideration.<sup>61</sup>

EARLE

761.74/62 : Telegram

*The Minister in Bulgaria (Earle) to the Secretary of State*

SOFIA, December 18, 1940—7 p. m.

[Received 7:15 p. m.]

189. Ganovsky, Secretary of the Bulgarian Communist organization (illegal) informs me that Soboleff asked the King for naval and air bases in Bulgaria. Russia in return offered to force Turkey to give Adrianople and Turkish Thrace to Bulgaria and to exert all possible pressure on Greece to cede Grecian Thrace to the Kavala-Drama line.

Ganovsky says that the King has courteously but firmly refused Russia's proposals.

EARLE

<sup>61</sup> The Minister had stated in telegram No. 177, December 2, that it had been "due to Boris' clever presentation" to Hitler of the consequences of adherence to the pact that such adherence had not so far taken place. "Also, Russian influence here is an important though not decisive factor." (740.0011 European War 1939/6967)

661.7131/11 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, December 27, 1940—noon.

[Received December 27—9 : 38 a. m.]

1783. A member of the Rumanian trade delegation states that the economic negotiations with the Soviet Government are still suspended pending a clarification of the incident referred to in my telegram No. 1762, December 21, 4 p. m.<sup>62</sup> He said that the first explanation of the incident received from the Rumanian Government had been rejected as "unsatisfactory" by the Soviet Foreign Office and that this fact had been reported by his Legation which is now awaiting his Government's further reply. He added that he was still unable to ascertain why, when the negotiations had been proceeding so satisfactorily, the Soviet Government should suddenly have suspended them on what he is inclined to regard as a pretext. He was frank in admitting that the attitude of the Soviet Government was causing the Rumanian Government some concern.

Information from other diplomatic sources in Moscow refers to increase in Soviet activity and intrigue inside Rumania recently. I have been able to obtain no satisfactory information as to the reason for this alleged activity or as to the extent to which it may be directed against German interests there or is in possible agreement with Germany.

STEINHARDT

740.0011 European War 1939/7331 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, December 30, 1940—1 p. m.

[Received 5 : 50 p. m.]

1799. In the course of a conversation with the Bulgarian Minister yesterday, he stated that the reports of the number of German "tourists and technicians" in Bulgaria have been grossly exaggerated and that having made inquiry of his Government comparatively recently on the subject he had been advised that there were "less than a thousand Germans in all of Bulgaria."

The Minister also expressed the opinion that the reports, if true, to the effect that the Iranian Government has called up five classes of reservists indicates that that Government entertains concern with respect to Soviet intentions.<sup>63</sup>

STEINHARDT

<sup>62</sup> Not printed; a member of the delegation staff of the Soviet Union was said to have been assaulted in Bucharest (661.7131/10).

<sup>63</sup> For correspondence concerning pressure by the Soviet Union upon Iran, see vol. III, pp. 621 ff.

IV. WARTIME COOPERATION BETWEEN GERMANY AND THE SOVIET UNION<sup>64</sup>

761.6211/315 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, January 4, 1940—noon.

[Received January 4—9:26 a. m.]

13. My telegram 1113, December 20, [1939,] noon.<sup>65</sup> A member of the staff of the German Embassy has informed me in strict confidence that the discussions now in progress between the German economic delegation and the Soviet authorities have resulted in an agreement by the Soviets to supply Germany during 1940 with 500,000 metric tons of apatite. The negotiations are still proceeding with respect to manganese. I understand the quantity under consideration is also about 500,000 tons for 1940. Deliveries of the oil and fodder previously agreed upon are under way. Ritter<sup>66</sup> left Moscow for Berlin last night. Schnurre<sup>67</sup> and the other members of the delegation are remaining.

STEINHARDT

760D.61/941 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, January 6, 1940—10 a. m.

[Received 12:50 p. m.]

39. My 2393, December 18, [1939,] 4 p. m., and 2446, December 22, [1939,] 4 p. m.<sup>68</sup> I understand that within the past few days the pro-Soviet attitude of the German Government in the Russo-Finnish conflict<sup>69</sup> has been further stiffened and among the reasons given for this reinforcement are the announcement of aid to Finland on the part of England and France and additional pressure which is said to have been brought to bear on the German Government by the Soviets, especially in connection with the pending trade negotiations between the two Governments. According to this information the practical manifestation of this attitude on the part of the German Government

<sup>64</sup> For previous correspondence on relations and wartime cooperation between Germany and the Soviet Union, see *Foreign Relations*, 1939, vol. I, pp. 312 ff. and pp. 477 ff.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 498.

<sup>66</sup> Karl Ritter, Ambassador on special assignment in the German Foreign Office, in charge of economic warfare questions.

<sup>67</sup> Karl Schnurre, Head of the Eastern European and Baltic Section of the Commercial Policy Division of the German Foreign Office.

<sup>68</sup> Neither printed.

<sup>69</sup> For correspondence on relations between Finland and the Soviet Union, see pp. 269 ff.

has so far been confined to threats against Norway and especially Sweden on the matter of the transit of arms to Finland and there is as yet no proof of actual aid to Russia from Germany at the front.<sup>70</sup> In Finnish circles in Berlin the impression prevails that Sweden will not cede to these threats.

KIRK

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761.62/613 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, January 17, 1940—11 a. m.

[Received January 17—9:30 a. m.]

67. A survey during the past week of the best informed and most objective diplomats in Moscow of all shades of opinion discloses virtual unanimity that Russian-German cooperation is steadily increasing. This development is regarded as the logical outcome of the reverses sustained by the Red Army in Finland and the failure of the German peace offensive. It is believed that the bewilderment of Stalin<sup>71</sup> and Hitler<sup>72</sup> at the position in which each now finds himself has accentuated in their minds the necessity of mutual support and that any mental reservations either or both may have made at the time they entered into their Pact<sup>73</sup> have for the time being at least been discarded.

STEINHARDT

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760D.61/1016 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, January 23, 1940—6 p. m.

[Received January 23—2:30 p. m.]

95. There is increasing evidence of German concern at the effect of the Finnish-Soviet war on deliveries to Germany from the Soviet

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<sup>70</sup> For indications of differences of opinion among high German officials toward the Soviet-Finnish war, see telegram No. 18, January 8, 7 p. m., from the Minister in Finland, p. 272.

<sup>71</sup> 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.

<sup>72</sup> Adolf Hitler, Führer and Chancellor of the German Reich from January 30, 1933; Chief of State from August 2, 1934.

<sup>73</sup> Treaty of Nonaggression between Germany and the Soviet Union signed at Moscow on August 23, 1939; for text, with secret additional protocol, see Department of State, *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, series D, vol. VII, pp. 245-247.

Union and the entire Baltic area. The extent of the hostilities has apparently already virtually put an end to timber exports from Finland to Germany and has materially reduced German exports to Finland. The interference with Swedish coastal traffic and the steadily increasing extent of Swedish aid to Finland in respect of manufactured products, foodstuffs, fuel and munitions, with Sweden in turn drawing on Norway, is believed to be seriously embarrassing German imports from Sweden and Norway. Furthermore, I understand that the demand for railway rolling stock and motor trucks in Sweden has been so heavy during the past 3 weeks as to have seriously impeded exports from Sweden to Germany particularly iron ore and foodstuffs. In consequence the Finnish-Soviet war has begun to operate throughout the Baltic area as a partial blockade of Germany.

Insofar as concerns direct deliveries from the Soviet Union to Germany, the Soviet authorities have recently taken great pains to conceal the extent of these movements. Members of the German Embassy staff have recently contented themselves with the observation that the Soviet deliveries were about what they had expected and that being thoroughly familiar with Soviet methods they had never expected very much.

STEINHARDT

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661.6231/256 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, January 31, 1940—3 p. m.

[Received 6:25 p. m.]

251. Members of the Soviet Embassy here are stating that the trade negotiations with Germany are reaching the final stage and that an announcement may be expected shortly. It has also been intimated that the matter of the Galician oil fields will come within the purview of the commercial agreement between the two countries.

Insofar as public utterances and references in the press are concerned the tone of German-Soviet solidarity is being maintained. I have received a report, however, to the effect that a secret directive has been issued to certain newspaper editors in Germany to present material relating to German-Soviet relations in an aspect which need not necessarily preclude a reorientation of present German policy as regards the Soviets.

[KIRK]



761.6211/321 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, February 5, 1940—5 p. m.

[Received February 5—5 p. m.]

144. My telegram No. 132, February 2, 7 p. m.<sup>74</sup> In a conversation Saturday night <sup>75</sup> with Ritter, the German plenipotentiary for economic matters who has been here in connection with the work of the German economic delegation, he informed me that he was leaving within a few days for Berlin. He spoke with surprising frankness perhaps due to his familiarity with Americans and their customs. He told me he feels that the economic and commercial agreements which have been thus far reached between Germany and the Soviets are not unsatisfactory on their face from the German point of view but he seemed somewhat doubtful as to Soviet compliance of [*with?*] the terms of the agreements. He characterized the Russian transportation system as hopeless and general internal economic conditions in the Soviet Union as poor. He told me in strict confidence that while Stalin and Molotov <sup>76</sup> apparently sincerely desired to cooperate 100% with Germany other Soviet officials with whom he had come in contact notably Mikoyan <sup>77</sup> and Kaganovich,<sup>78</sup> had been less cooperative. Ritter spoke at great length of the difficulties of negotiating with Soviet officials whose promises he observed are notoriously short of their performance. I expect to have a further talk with him on the 7th.

STEINHARDT

740.0011 European War 1939/1631 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, February 8, 1940—6 p. m.

[Received February 8—5:30 p. m.]

156. The Swedish Minister <sup>79</sup> informed me this afternoon that there are persistent reports emanating from northern Sweden and northern Norway that Germany has been using or is about to use

<sup>74</sup> Not printed.<sup>75</sup> February 3.<sup>76</sup> Vyacheslav Mikhailovich Molotov, People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union.<sup>77</sup> Anastas Ivanovich Mikoyan, People's Commissar for Foreign Trade of the Soviet Union.<sup>78</sup> Lazar Moiseyevich Kaganovich, People's Commissar for Transportation (Railways) of the Soviet Union.<sup>79</sup> Wilhelm Winther.

Murmansk as a submarine base. The Minister stated that in Sweden and Norway it is believed that the recent sinkings of vessels leaving northern and central Norway for England have been effected by German submarines based on Murmansk, possibly with stores of fuel and provisions which were deposited in the uninhabited and remote sections of the coast of northern Norway.

STEINHARDT

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761.6211/324 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the  
Secretary of State*

Moscow, February 9, 1940—1 p. m.

[Received 4:02 p. m.]

159. My telegram No. 144, February 5, 5 p. m. In the course of a more detailed conversation which I had yesterday afternoon with Ritter and Schnurre I received the impression that they are somewhat better satisfied with the general progress of their negotiation with the Soviets of a trade treaty under which Russia will furnish Germany with certain specified quantities of raw materials than was indicated at the time of my previous talk with Ritter. Schnurre told me he felt useful results had been obtained through the method which he had adopted in connection with the present negotiations of bringing with him the representatives of German firms or agencies for the purpose of holding direct discussions with the Soviet combines through whom mutually foreign trade transactions are normally effected, such discussions being aimed at the conclusion of specific contracts for individual commodities and that the work of the delegation at present was the final embodiment of the various contracts already concluded into a single agreement. Both he and Ritter affirmed that they were pleased with the apparent readiness of the Soviets to cooperate fully with them in principle but observed that the slowness and tediousness of the restriction and the insistence of the Soviet officials upon points which they considered of negligible importance has been very exasperating. Ritter apparently now hopes that the treaty will be signed in Moscow within the next week following which Ritter will return to Berlin leaving Schnurre in Moscow to complete various details.

In regard to difficulties of transportation, which have constituted a serious question in endeavoring to estimate the quantities which the Soviets will actually be able to supply to Germany, Schnurre stated that the Commissar for Railways had shown more optimism than the German officials but that no insuperable problems were anticipated in this respect since in addition to the Baltic and Danube water routes

there were now eight railway lines directly connecting Soviet and German territory as a result of the partition of Poland.

With respect to the commodities and quantities mentioned in my earlier telegrams on this subject it was intimated by my informants that some of the quantities as for example in the case of oil and cotton might be revised upwards in comparison with the figures previously reported and that a number of additional commodities would be added. Although exact figures were not forthcoming Ritter specifically stated that Germany will receive manganese, apatite, soy beans, timber, flax, nickel, chrome, platinum, and some iron ore, pig iron, and scrap iron.

In regard to soy beans Ritter stated that large quantities were expected to be obtained from Manchuria and shipped across Russia by Trans-Siberian. He said that the Soviet railway authorities informed him that transport difficulties in shipping from east to west on that line were very much less than from west to east as the majority of the Soviet freight cars returned empty from the Soviet Far East. He remarked in connection with flax that Germany had previously imported some 30,000 metric tons of flax a year from what is now Soviet-occupied Poland and that the Germans had expressed their expectation of receiving a corresponding quantity in the future but that as regards this item they had encountered resistance and were less well-satisfied than as to others. He also stated that deliveries of oil, cotton, and foodstuffs had already begun and were now in progress mentioning for cotton a figure of 40,000 metric tons actually received, and for feedstuffs a total of six trainloads a day now being regularly obtained.

In return for the Soviet raw materials to be received by Germany under the agreement Ritter gave me to understand that Germany will deliver heavy machinery of various types and probably some naval equipment. Although no German technicians have as yet arrived in the Soviet Union the German machinery and equipment which are to be delivered are expected to be installed by German specialists under technical assistance contracts.

Repeated to Berlin.

STEINHARDT

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661.6231/261 : Telegram

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

Moscow, February 13, 1940—1 p. m.

[Received February 13—11:53 a. m.]

172. My 166, February 11, 7 p. m.<sup>80</sup> The following is the text of the communiqué concerning the signing of the German-Soviet trade agree-

<sup>80</sup> Not printed.

ment<sup>81</sup> which was released on the Soviet radio last night and published in the press this morning:

"On February 11, 1940, in Moscow, following successful termination of negotiations, there was concluded an economic agreement between the Soviet Union and Germany. This agreement corresponds to the desire of the Governments of both countries concerned the working out of the economic program for the exchange of goods between Germany and the Soviet Union expressed in the letters exchanged on September 28, 1939,<sup>82</sup> between the Chairman of the Soviet of People's Commissars and People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the U. S. S. R., Comrade V. M. Molotov, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany, Mr. von Ribbentrop. The economic agreement provides for the export from the Soviet Union to Germany of raw materials to be compensated for by German deliveries to the Soviet Union of industrial articles. The trade turnover between Germany and the Soviet Union will even in the first year of the life of the agreement have reached a total exceeding the highest level reached any time since the World War. It is intended in the future to increase still further the reciprocal deliveries of goods. The agreement was signed on behalf of the Soviet Union by the People's Commissar for Foreign Trade, Mikoyan, and the trade representative in Germany, Barbarin, and for Germany by the special plenipotentiary of the German Government for economic questions, Mr. Ritter, and the head of the German Economic Delegation, Mr. Schnurre."

Between the statement that the total trade turnover in the first year of the agreement will exceed the highest level previously reached in trade between the two countries, which would indicate that the exchange will exceed a billion gold marks, the level reached in 1931, the communiqué reveals nothing in regard to the nature of the agreement. The communiqué confirms the statements contained in the exchange of letters of September 28, 1939 that the Soviet Union will immediately begin the delivery of raw materials against future deliveries from Germany of manufactured articles and equipment. This aspect of the economic agreement if adhered to has a certain political importance in respect of future Soviet-German relations in that at any given time the Soviet Union will have a credit balance in Germany for future deliveries of machinery and equipment and consequently it would not be to the advantage of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to undertake any line of action which might impair the ability of Germany to make these deliveries.

Repeated to Berlin.

THURSTON

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<sup>81</sup> Economic agreement between Germany and the Soviet Union, signed at Moscow on February 11, 1940. For a summary of its terms, see the German Foreign Office memorandum of February 26, 1940, by Karl Schnurre, in *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941*, p. 131.

<sup>82</sup> For texts of these letters, see *ibid.*, pp. 108-109.

761.6211/330 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, February 18, 1940—5 p. m.  
[Received February 18—4:30 p. m.]

186. My telegram No. 172, February 13, 1 p. m. The following information concerning the Soviet-German Agreement of February 11 has been supplied by Commercial Counselor of the German Embassy<sup>83</sup> with the request that it be held in strict confidence.

The Agreement of February 11 is entirely apart from and supplementary to the Commercial Credit Agreement of August 19, 1939.<sup>84</sup> The figures of Soviet-German trade under the Agreement of February 11 alone will surpass the highest level reached since the world war and the Soviet deliveries to Germany will in value be equal to or even greater than those of 1929, the highest level heretofore attained. The Agreement of February 11th is entirely on a barter basis expressed however in terms of Reichmarks at the official rate. At the beginning of the negotiations the Soviet officials were insistent upon balancing the respective deliveries at the end of each year but finally accepted the German contention that this was impossible due to the longer period required for the fulfillment of Soviet orders for machinery in accordance with specifications so that under the Agreement as signed even at the end of 1940, when the sum total of Soviet deliveries agreed upon will have been received by Germany, the full equivalent in German machinery and equipment will not yet have been delivered to the Soviet Union.

The following are the quantities of the principal types of raw materials which the Soviet Union will deliver to Germany under the Agreement of February 11. While some of these figures have been forecast in previous telegrams it is now possible to give them definitively as follows: 900,000 metric tons of oil products consisting of crude oil, refining and lubricating oil, automobile and aviation gasoline; 100,000 metric tons of good quality cotton; 500,000 metric tons apatite; 300,000 metric tons manganese; 800,000 tons of fodder; 200,000 tons of grain for human consumption; approximately a million metric tons of various mineral ores of which 600,000 metric tons are iron ore, 100,000 metric tons chrome ore and the balance made up of small quantities of other types of ore used in metallurgy; 15,000 tons of flax; timber worth 18,000,000 marks in value.

It was stated that the figure for manganese deliveries had been somewhat reduced as Germany needed no more than the official figure

<sup>83</sup> Gustav Hilger.

<sup>84</sup> For a description of the provisions of the trade agreement of August 19, 1939, see the German Foreign Office memorandum of August 29, 1939, by Karl Schnurre, in *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941*, p. 83.

agreed on. No specific figures are forthcoming as to deliveries of leather and platinum and in regard to soy beans and similar products which will come from the Far East it was indicated that the problem as concerns the Soviet Union was more one of transit than of supply. My informant emphasized that the foregoing figures are exclusive of the deliveries under the Commercial Credit Agreement of August, whereby the Soviet Union would furnish Germany with 18,000,000 marks worth of raw materials and in this connection it was stated that the quantity of oil in the neighborhood of 100,000 tons provided for in this Agreement had already been delivered to Germany. In regard to the problem of transportation the opinion was expressed with considerable conviction that despite the admittedly overstrained condition of the Soviet railroads no serious difficulties were anticipated in shipping the quantities agreed upon to Germany. It was stated that aside from the technical assistance contracts for the installation of German machinery in Soviet factories no attempt had been made by Germany to "persuade" the Soviet authorities to accept German specialists but that it had been agreed that should the Soviet Government desire the services of such German specialists as could be spared for any special branch of Soviet industry, the question would be settled by special agreement at a future date.

On the whole, the Commercial Counselor, who took a leading part in the negotiations and whose familiarity with the Soviet Union is unquestioned, seemed to be well satisfied with the results achieved and stated that the care and realism with which the Soviet foreign trade officials had examined the various questions involved, while causing considerable delay in the negotiations, nevertheless in his opinion had removed any doubt in his mind as to the seriousness with which the Soviet Government viewed the expansion of its economic relations with Germany. He added that there had been little difficulty in the negotiations in respect of Soviet deliveries to Germany but that the necessity for drawing up careful specifications and enumeration of the types of machines and equipment which Germany is to supply the Soviet Union had occupied a greater part of the time of the negotiations.

Repeated to Berlin.

STEINHARDT

760D.61/1163 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the  
Secretary of State*

Moscow, February 23, 1940—1 p. m.

[Received 2:49 p. m.]

202. A member of the German Embassy, who has just returned from Berlin with the Ambassador,<sup>85</sup> has stated in strict confidence

<sup>85</sup> Friedrich Werner, Count von der Schulenburg.

that there appears to be no prospect of any settlement of or Soviet acceptance of any settlement of the Finnish conflict by negotiation. He stated that the informal approach made by the German Ambassador in early January (see my telegram No. 134, February 2, 10 p. m.<sup>86</sup>) was made on the Ambassador's own initiative and not under instructions from Berlin but that in this informal discussion Molotov had been quite definite in his statement that the Soviet Government would only negotiate with "a friendly Finnish government", which from the context of his remarks clearly referred to the Kuusinen government<sup>87</sup> or some government in Helsinki which would be completely subservient to Moscow. My informant said that insofar as he is aware there has been no change in the Soviet Government's attitude and expressed the opinion that under the circumstances there was little possibility of any offer of mediation from the German government.

In respect to Soviet-German relations in general my informant stated that both the political and economic relations had now been clearly defined and that in the absence of any new developments in the general European situation or French and British action against the Soviet Union no change in the present status of Soviet-German relations was to be anticipated. He specifically denied any intention at the present time on the part of either the Soviet Union or the German Government to conclude a military alliance. In this connection he reiterated the view previously expressed by members of the German Embassy here that a military alliance would be detrimental rather than beneficial to both Germany and the Soviet Union since assistance of an economic or other nature which the Soviet Union was in a position to furnish Germany could be best accomplished with Russia at least formally neutral. He further expressed the opinion that in view of its preoccupation with the Finnish conflict the Soviet Government had postponed indefinitely the question of the acquisition of Bessarabia and at the present time had no intention of taking any initiative in the Balkans.<sup>88</sup>

STEINHARDT

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761.6215/5 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, March 5, 1940—1 p. m.

[Received 5:09 p. m.]

552. My 2339, December 14, 7 p. m.<sup>89</sup> This morning's Berlin papers announce that the mixed German-Russian commission for

<sup>86</sup> *Ante*, p. 284.

<sup>87</sup> The Soviet-supported puppet government of the "Democratic Republic of Finland" set up at Terijoki at the beginning of December 1939, with Otto W. Kuusinen as President.

<sup>88</sup> For correspondence concerning activities of the Soviet Union in the Balkans and the seizure of Bessarabia, see pp. 444 ff.

<sup>89</sup> Not printed.

frontier questions has reported to the German and Russian Governments that the marking of the "German-Soviet frontier" was completed on February 27 along a distance of some 1500 kilometres, that 2,820 boundary posts were erected, and that the surveying of the frontier has been practically completed. The report mentions that in certain small sectors the task of surveying will be brought to a close shortly after the advent of the thaw and that in the meantime the mixed commission is working on the preparation of the necessary boundary documents.<sup>90</sup>

The reference in the above mentioned to the German-Russian "frontier" instead of the "frontier of interests" which has been the term hitherto employed has been remarked upon in local political circles.

KIRK

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740.0011 European War 1939/2043 : Telegram

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

MOSCOW VIA BERLIN, April 9, 1940—6 p. m.  
[Received April 10—7:05 a. m.]

362. My 361, April 9.<sup>91</sup> I am informed in strictest confidence that Molotov this afternoon received the German Ambassador with great cordiality and in regard of the German actions against Denmark and Norway<sup>92</sup> told him that the Soviet Government fully understood the "defensive character" of these measures.

THURSTON

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761.62/661

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

No. 417

Moscow, April 15, 1940.  
[Received May 15.]

SIR: I have the honor to enclose herewith a memorandum<sup>93</sup> setting forth certain observations on the present status of Soviet-German

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<sup>90</sup> The German-Soviet frontier agreement was finally signed at Moscow on January 10, 1941. In despatch No. 4060 of December 16, 1940, the Chargé in Germany reported that "German officials . . . have expressed great annoyance at what they termed the 'petty attitude' of the Soviet members of the Mixed Boundary Commission." This attitude had caused months of delay. (761.6215/22)

<sup>91</sup> Not printed; in this telegram the Chargé in the Soviet Union reported that a member of the German Embassy had stated that advance information of the German action against Denmark and Norway had been brought to Moscow by special courier late in the afternoon of April 8. Because Molotov "was in the country," this information could not be given to him before the following afternoon. It was believed, however, that the Soviet Government had already been informed through its Embassy in Berlin. (740.0011 European War 1939/2037)

<sup>92</sup> For correspondence regarding the invasion of Norway and Denmark by Germany, see pp. 136 ff.

<sup>93</sup> Not printed.



relations in the light of the information available in Moscow. An attempt has been made in this memorandum to assess the realities that lie at the bases of these relations as well as the prospects of their future development under existing conditions. The conclusions reached in the memorandum are (1) that the present political and economic relations between the Soviet Union and Germany which have been formulated in the series of agreements reached since August, 1939, are under present conditions satisfactory to both countries; (2) that, in the absence of some external developments resulting from French and British initiative,<sup>94</sup> it is not to the interest of either country to expand the relations beyond their present content; (3) that there is little likelihood of a reversal of the present attitude of the Soviet Government under present conditions, since any reversion to a policy of hostility towards Germany may only be envisaged if (a) the Soviet Government believes that Germany is sufficiently weakened or militarily occupied elsewhere to obviate the risk of a German military retaliation and (b) if such a reversal is dictated by Soviet interests. The foregoing conclusions are, of course, based on the supposition that Germany on its part will continue its present policy vis-à-vis the Soviet Union.

Respectfully yours,

LAURENCE A. STEINHARDT

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740.0011 European War 1939/2278: Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the  
Secretary of State*

[Extract <sup>95</sup>]

Moscow, April 16, 1940—7 p. m.

[Received 9:10 p. m.]

392. The Swedish Minister<sup>96</sup> told me the following this morning in the strictest confidence.

1. He said he had learned from a member of the German Embassy that on the day of the invasion of Denmark and Norway the German Ambassador had called on Molotov and had advised him of the invasion (see my telegram No. 361, April 9, noon<sup>97</sup>) giving Molotov an assurance that Germany did not intend to invade or attack Sweden or Finland and requesting and receiving a similar assurance from Molotov with respect to Soviet intentions.

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STEINHARDT

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<sup>94</sup> For correspondence regarding the relations of the United Kingdom and France with the Soviet Union, see pp. 589 ff.

<sup>95</sup> Another section of this telegram is printed on p. 327.

<sup>96</sup> Per Wilhelm Gustaf Assarsson, since February 25, 1940.

<sup>97</sup> See footnote 91, p. 549.

761.62/649 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, April 17, 1940—10 p. m.

[Received April 18—3:10 a. m.]

400. Reference to Department's 222.<sup>98</sup> Reports of a steadily increasing infiltration of German engineers and technicians into the Soviet Union have been persistent since the conclusion of the Soviet-German economic agreement of February 11. It is the consensus in informed but unofficial circles that the German technicians who have come to this country recently have sought to purchase raw materials, sell German merchandise and plan for the erection and equipment of industrial plants to be built for the Soviets by Germany. A member of the staff of the German Embassy who has hitherto been a reliable informant confirms the foregoing and states no German engineers or technicians have thus far come to the Soviet Union to assist the Soviets in improving the organization of any of their industries or transport facilities or to assume charge of factory operations or transport. He states that entirely aside from the question of whether the Soviet authorities would view any such procedure with favor Germany has no wish or intention to pursue this policy. He said that the services being rendered by German technicians are identical with the type of services rendered to Soviet industry by American engineers and technicians in recent years, as, for example, in the petroleum industry and that it is contemplated that German technical assistance to Soviet industry be confined to such services. He said that the Germans had been represented by a very large delegation in Moscow at the time of the negotiations resulting in the economic agreement; that questions of transport had been carefully studied and that the German experts had come to the conclusion that Soviet transport facilities while inefficient and limited were as adequate as could be expected under the circumstances and that it would not be practical to attempt to inject German technicians into the field of Soviet transportation. He said that German engineers have been visiting and will continue to visit the Soviet Union in connection with contracts for the supply and erection of plant equipment; that they would come to plan the installation and if necessary install the equipment after delivery. He told me that the Germans regard the Soviet petroleum industry as of prime importance to them and that the installation of refineries was an important consideration. He also mentioned machinery for the aviation industry.

Insofar as concerns the actual number of German engineers and technicians who have thus far entered the Soviet Union for the pur-

<sup>98</sup> April 13, 2 p. m., not printed.

poses described, no accurate information is available although I believe that several hundred is a reasonable estimate. In addition to the Moscow area I understand that the principal districts visited by them have been the Caucasus, Transcaucasus, Black Sea and Dniester [*Dnieper?*] regions. While confirmation of my belief is not obtainable it appears logical in the light of the information furnished me by the member of the German Embassy referred to above.

With respect to the extent to which the German technicians have been able to achieve successful collaboration with Soviet personnel it is as yet rather soon to attempt to draw anything more than a general conclusion. I have been told that the Kremlin is compelling a greater degree of cooperation in the fulfillment of contracts than some Soviet officials desire. However, conceding an intense desire on the part of all Soviet officials to collaborate, the inherent difficulties caused by Soviet suspicion, indifference, incompetence and defective organization tend to impair materially what might otherwise be effective collaboration. The German attitude appears to be realistic, my informant having stated that thus far the Soviets have lived up to their agreements to the satisfaction and the surprise of the Germans.

It is my opinion that when plant installations are being made the German technicians will encounter the same difficulties in training operating personnel which have confronted our engineers in the Soviet Union, as well as the interminable delays and annoyances resulting from Soviet methods and the characteristics referred to above.

Despatch follows.<sup>99</sup>

STEINHARDT

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661.6231/277: Telegram

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

BERLIN VIA GENOA, May 9, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received May 9—1 p. m.]

1260. My telegram No. 534 of March 2, 9 a. m.<sup>1</sup> According to reports emanating from several sources there seems to have been of late certain difficulties between the German and Soviet Governments owing to delays on the part of German manufacturers in the execution and delivery of Soviet orders placed with German industry under the trade agreements of August 19, 1939 and February 11, 1940 which have been countered by a slowing down in shipments of Russian products to Germany. It is also reported that some 3 weeks ago Goering<sup>2</sup> addressed a letter to the Reich Economic Chamber insisting on the

<sup>99</sup> Despatch No. 464, May 10, from the Chargé in the Soviet Union, not printed.

<sup>1</sup> Not printed.

<sup>2</sup> Field Marshal Hermann Wilhelm Göring, Reich Minister for Air, Commander in Chief of the Luftwaffe, Chairman of the War Cabinet, and nominated successor-designate to Hitler, September 1, 1939.

necessity of manufacturers giving precedence to the execution of Soviet orders over all others even military in view of the decisive importance of an uninterrupted flow of Russian supplies for Germany's war economy. Further, that he promised the full support of all Government and especially of all military departments in speeding up the delivery of Soviet orders and ordered that all cases where such assistance was not given immediately should be reported to him personally.

It is understood that at a recent conference with prominent industrialists Goering again raised this question and urged them to do their utmost to expedite the filling of Soviet orders.

KIRK

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740.0011 European War 1939/3286 : Telegram

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

Moscow, May 24, 1940—noon.

[Received 5:55 p. m.]

580. Referring to the Embassy's telegrams 468, April 27 and 491, May 6<sup>3</sup> American journalists passing through Moscow en route from Stockholm to Bucharest report that the belief is general in Stockholm that Germany is bringing strong pressure to bear on the Swedish Government to permit the passage of German troops wishing to reach Kiruna and Narvik, and that the reluctance of the Soviet Government to countenance any violation of neutrality of Sweden is the principal deterrent to an immediate German invasion of that country.

In connection with the statements contained in the Embassy's telegrams under reference concerning a conversation between Molotov and the German Ambassador with respect to Soviet interest in the maintenance of Swedish neutrality, a member of the staff of the German Embassy whose information has hitherto proved to be reliable recently confirmed that in the course of a conversation on other subjects presented by the German Ambassador, Molotov had voiced the hope of his Government that Germany would respect the neutrality of Sweden if possible.<sup>4</sup> This informant stressed the phrase "if possible" as indicating that the Soviets had made no categorical request that Sweden's neutrality be observed by Germany.

While there is believed to be no doubt that the Soviets would view with disfavor the expansion of the war zone into Sweden it is by no

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<sup>3</sup> Neither printed.

<sup>4</sup> The Chargé in the Soviet Union informed the Department in his telegram No. 588, May 27, 1 p. m., that the Swedish Minister had told him that Molotov had categorically declared to the German Ambassador that the Soviet Union was "vitaly interested in the maintenance of Sweden's neutrality and would view an invasion of that country as an unfriendly act." (740.0011 European War 1939/3345)

means certain that a German move in this direction would constitute an immediate threat to Soviet-German relations. On the other hand continued large scale unexplained troop movements reported in telegram No. 564, May 20<sup>5</sup> and recent extensive curtailment of both interurban and local rail passenger service in European Russia are arousing considerable speculation among foreign observers in Moscow as to the intentions of the Soviet Government. Opinions vary as to whether these activities indicate precautionary measures of a purely defensive character or point to an eventual invasion of Bessarabia or envisage the occupation by the Soviets of the Baltic States<sup>6</sup> in the event that hostilities break out in Sweden.

THURSTON

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740.0011 European War 1939/3445 : Telegram

*The Minister in Sweden (Sterling) to the Secretary of State*

STOCKHOLM, June 1, 1940—noon.

[Received 2:30 p. m.]

577. In making his farewell call yesterday before returning to Finland and retiring to private life Erkko<sup>7</sup> gave me some interesting information. He has been continuously friendly; he is the soundest and best informed of my colleagues.

He stated that with regard to the fortification of the Åland Islands (see my 374, April 24, 10 a. m.<sup>8</sup>) the Finnish Minister for Foreign Affairs<sup>9</sup> had recently visited Stockholm and after discussing the question in all its phases with the Swedish Government, the Finnish reply, although couched in friendly terms, was tantamount to a refusal of the Swedish proposal for joint action. The underlying reasons of the refusal, Erkko said, were (a) Finland was continuing the defense works herself; (b) she wishes to pursue in her present situation a more isolationist policy—friendly to all her neighbors, but taking no action which might lead to international complications during the period of reconstruction; (c) she could not forget how Sweden had broken her written agreement last autumn to send troops to the islands for their joint defense. The Soviet Government, he commented, had no objection to the fortification and while Germany had not been notified he did not doubt that the operations were known although no communication on the subject had been received.

<sup>5</sup> *Ante*, p. 465.

<sup>6</sup> For correspondence concerning the occupation of the Baltic States, see pp. 357 ff.; concerning the seizure of Bessarabia, pp. 444 ff.

<sup>7</sup> Eljas Erkko, Finnish Chargé in Sweden, formerly Minister for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>8</sup> Not printed, but see telegram No. 200, April 17, noon, from the Minister in Finland, p. 328.

<sup>9</sup> Rolf J. Witting.

Copy of this section to Helsinki.

In strictest confidence he told me that from absolutely reliable sources he knew that German High Command and War College were now busily engaged in working out plans for attack on Russia, to begin as soon as Western Powers were defeated. Main objects were to loosen Russia's hold in Baltic and to gain all of Poland and Russian Ukraine. This information had been confirmed to him by Gunther<sup>10</sup> who also told him of German plans for new status of northern states, when and if Germany was victorious in present war in west. Under this rearrangement Denmark would continue to hold her sovereignty and independence; southern Norway, as far north as Trondheim, would remain in German hands or placed under control by means of occupation of strategic points; northern Norway, Sweden and Finland would be compelled to form a loose confederation under economic control of Germany.

In confirmation of the Legation's impression that Sweden, while officially and publicly proclaiming her strictly neutral attitude, nevertheless makes minor concessions to Germany, Erkkö has positive knowledge that a few German ski troops passed through Sweden last month by railway to the Narvik area disguised in Red Cross uniforms. Gunther, he said, reluctantly admitted this fact.

As a keen neutral observer his remarks regarding present situation on western front have value. He believes that if Allies can keep up resistance for 2 or 3 more months Germany will be finished because of tremendous losses of best troops and lack of essential material.

STERLING

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761.6215/18 : Telegram

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

Moscow, June 12, 1940—10 a. m.

[Received June 12—7:55 a. m.]

663. Embassy's telegram No. 466, April 27, 5 p. m.<sup>11</sup> The Embassy has been informed by a Secretary of the German Embassy that the Soviet and German Governments have concluded a treaty for the regulation of border disputes.<sup>12</sup> The informant indicated that the treaty was of purely technical nature and of no political significance. He added that it contained provision for the settlement of border disputes by the local frontier authorities.

THURSTON

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<sup>10</sup> Christian Günther, Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>11</sup> Not printed.

<sup>12</sup> Signed at Moscow on June 10, 1940.

740.0011 European War 1939/4091 : Telegram

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

Moscow, June 22, 1940—10 p. m.

[Received June 22—1 : 30 a. m.]

731. A Tass<sup>13</sup> communiqué has just been issued stating that rumors have been published in American, British, French, Japanese, and Turkish papers to the effect that the Soviet Union has concentrated 100 to 150 divisions on the Lithuanian-German frontier; that this concentration was due to the displeasure of the Soviet Union at the German successes in the west; that it expresses a worsening of Soviet-German relations; and that it is aimed at putting pressure on Germany. It states that Tass is empowered to declare that these ridiculous rumors do not correspond with realities, and that there are not more than 18 or 20 divisions in the three Baltic States; not concentrated on the Lithuanian-German frontier but distributed throughout three States for the purpose of guaranteeing the mutual assistance pact[s].<sup>14</sup>

The communiqué concludes as follows:

“In responsible Soviet circles it is considered that the disseminators of these rumors have as their aim to cast a shadow on Soviet-German relations. But these gentlemen give out their vague wishes as actualities. They obviously are not capable of understanding the self-evident fact that the friendly relations established between the Soviet Union and Germany as a result of the conclusion of a nonaggression pact are unshakeable by any rumors or trivial propaganda because they are based not on transitory motives but on the fundamental state interests of the Soviet Union and Germany.”

THURSTON

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740.0011 European War 1939/4261 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, June 28, 1940—8 p. m.

[Received 11 p. m.]

2189–2190. Despite the attitude adopted by the German press noted in my 2188, June 28, 7 p. m.,<sup>15</sup> there is no doubt of the resentment of the German Government over the occurrence at this time of the Russian move into Bessarabia and Bukowina. The real reaction

<sup>13</sup> Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union; official communications agency of the Soviet Government.

<sup>14</sup> For correspondence regarding the pressure put upon the Baltic States by the Soviet Union in 1939 to conclude pacts of mutual assistance, see *Foreign Relations, The Soviet Union, 1933–1939*, pp. 934 ff.

<sup>15</sup> Not printed.

towards the occurrence was scarcely disguised by a high official in conversation today although he insisted that in the negotiations of last fall Russia had made it known to Germany that it reserved freedom of action with regard to its territorial claims in this region and German press authorities are intimating to foreign correspondents here that Russia gave Germany advance notice of its action.<sup>16</sup> It is assumed, however, that the notice was brief since it is known that the Italian Ambassador<sup>17</sup> was summoned urgently to the Foreign Office 3 days ago to discuss the situation with State Secretary Weizsäcker. The Italian Ambassador indicated to me the belief that England had some connection with Russia's action but no such statement has been made by German contacts nor does this view find much credence in diplomatic circles.

The view is frequently expressed, however, that one of the principal reasons of German displeasure with Russia's present activity is fear lest it may encourage Britain to continue the war. In this connection it may be noted that the official above referred to denied any knowledge of British peace overtures, rumors of which are persistent here, stating that according to his latest information and to his regret Great Britain seemed determined to carry on the war, a decision which he attributed to the effect on the Government of British public opinion which he asserted had been misled and misinformed as to the gravity of the British military situation.

This official expressed the opinion that Russia would make no further moves at this time in the Balkans or against Turkey although he remarked that the Soviet Government was maintaining its refusal to permit the visit of the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs<sup>18</sup> to Moscow.

The Foreign Office he said was informed of Finnish anxiety over a possible repetition of Russian aggression, but he thought there was no ground for such anxiety. He also expressed doubt that Turkey had at present the ambition or was in a position to attempt to get back its former territories lost following the World War through the creation of mandates and independent kingdoms.

Repeated to Rome for Kirk.

HEATH

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<sup>16</sup> The Chargé in the Soviet Union stated in his telegram No. 770, June 28, 4 p. m., that a Secretary of the German Embassy had said that Ambassador von der Schulenburg had been advised of the Soviet Government's intentions against Rumania on June 23 (740.0011 European War 1939/4262). The Chargé had earlier reported in his telegram No. 762, June 27, 8 p. m., that the German Ambassador, however, had told some colleagues that he had been informed only on June 26 (740.0011 European War 1939/4220).

<sup>17</sup> Bernardo Attolico.

<sup>18</sup> Sükrü Saraçoğlu.



702.6261/37 : Telegram

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

Moscow, July 8, 1940—2 p. m.

[Received 2:47 p. m.]

831. A member of the German Embassy states that in accord with an agreement with the Soviet Government the German Government has sent a Consul General to Leningrad and is sending Consuls to Batum and Vladivostok.<sup>19</sup> The informant added that for the time being the opening of Consulates in Baku, Odessa and other places is not being considered. The Soviet Government, it is understood, is opening consular offices in Vienna, Hamburg and Koenigsberg.

THURSTON

740.0011 European War 1939/4823 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, July 24, 1940—11 a. m.

[Received 8:50 p. m.]

3128-3131. Aside from the pertinent passage in the Reichs Chancellor's speech<sup>20</sup> the strictest official reserve has recently been maintained with respect to German-Russian relations and rumors and speculation on this subject continue to be rife in Berlin.

The recent Soviet advances into Bessarabia and the Baltic States have been accompanied by persistent reports in Polish, German, and neutral circles to the effect that events of some importance may be in the making in German-occupied Poland. These reports agree that there have been in the past month extensive transfer of troops to Polish points especially in the southeast. Stories emanating from Warsaw stress growing Bolshevik sentiment there and in the country districts to the east. It is said that Communist propaganda has been circulating freely during the past few months and that it is not unusual to find the red flag hanging from destroyed houses and factories. Important elements of the city population particularly the church group fear and expect as imminent a Soviet occupation up to and including Warsaw. These rumors are steadily gaining currency in Berlin and certain circles believe that by an agreement between Berlin and Moscow the original [occupation?] line along the Vistula may shortly be reconstituted.

<sup>19</sup> A German Consulate General was established at Vladivostok previous to that established by the American Government. For correspondence concerning establishment of the American Consulate General, see vol. III, pp. 460 ff.

<sup>20</sup> Speech by Adolf Hitler before the German Reichstag on July 19, 1940, offering peace to Great Britain in a "final appeal to common sense." See the *New York Times*, July 20, 1940, p. 5.

Aside from laconic, inconspicuous press items concerning the final and formal bolshevization of each of the three Baltic States, the most frigid silence has been observed by the German press on this direct subject. No effort has been made to explain away these Soviet advances or to reconcile the public to them and there have been no intimations of satisfaction over them or attempts to portray them as part of the development toward a new order in Europe. It is not known that any decision has been taken with regard to the Baltic Legations in Berlin, but it is indicated in official statements that their role will be altered even if they do not disappear. Exiled Lithuanians profess to believe that Germany intends to take away from the Russians at least a small strip of Lithuanian territory along the German frontier and they cite stories of naval concentration at Memel as indicative of tension in that district but no confirmation of these rumors is available and the strong probability is that they are pure wishful thinking.

Although in Finland Russian influence appears to be successfully exerted recently in the matter of the demilitarization of the Aaland Islands<sup>21</sup> and in the direction of Finnish demobilization, Germany is reported to have insisted at Moscow that no further steps such as the recent ones in the Baltic States be taken. Furthermore, it is said that recently Germany requested and obtained from Moscow the withdrawal of troops along the German-Lithuanian frontier. Another minor source of German-Russian friction appears already to have arisen in the question of the future distribution of the output of the Petsamo nickel mines as the Russians resented and protested over Finnish plans to sell to Germany and the Germans resented the Russian protests. All in all the impression is gained that whatever the Russians may have been promised with regard to Finland in the agreements of last August the Germans now consider the promises to have been substantially fulfilled and further Russian advances in this area are, barring new arrangements with Germany, not probable.

Despite all these signs of uneasiness in the east, however, the German official position remains as the elated Chancellor defined it: namely, that everything done so far has fallen strictly within the scope of the existing agreements for the diversion [*division?*] of spheres of influence and that no grounds exist or need be anticipated for any conflict between the two countries in this generation. The concentration of German troops in Poland is explained in official German circles as due to the recall of surplus units from the west and the necessity of finding quarters for them pending demobilization and some observers even go so far as to predict that the development of the war against England will find Soviet and German forces eventually fighting together in the eastern Mediterranean district. The recent

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<sup>21</sup> See telegram No. 327, July 29, 3 p. m., from the Minister in Finland, p. 333.

departure for Moscow of a German official delegation which is to arrange for the resettlement within the Reich of the racial Germans in Bessarabia and north of Bukowina gives the impression moreover of German sanction of the territorial changes in Rumania.

The fact remains, however, that the thoroughness with which the Russians cashed in on the promises made to them last summer as well as the timing of their several moves which is said to have caused surprise in Berlin on certain occasions may well have served to deepen German consciousness in Berlin of the gravity of the sacrifices made to gain Russia's benevolent neutrality and there is evidence that the new neighborly proximity is giving rise to many new problems which may require solution other than by the usual diplomatic processes. Furthermore, it is not possible to exclude the contention that a policy of expansion to the east on the part of Germany will bring about armed conflict with Russia and that Germany's military machine must sooner or later find employment against the Soviets. For the moment, however, Germany's attitude toward the Soviet Union appears to be dominated by the supreme necessities of the present war and it would not seem that the time has yet come when the problems involved can be approached from the German side in its characteristic way or German policy determined from a long range point of view. This being the case, there would appear to be strong reason for Germany to maintain for the time being the present relations between the two great empires, at least insofar as outward appearances are concerned.

KIRK

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740.0011 European War 1939/5120 : Telegram

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

Moscow, August 14, 1940—10 a. m.

[Received 4:15 p. m.]

1015. The following views advanced as personal opinions concerning German policy in eastern and southeastern Europe and Soviet-German relations have been received from the source well-known to the Department.

The informant reiterated the opinion reported in the Embassy's 919, July 27<sup>22</sup> concerning the basic alteration of Hitler's policy in respect of eastward expansion and colonization and elaborated this opinion with the statement that Hitler had definitely abandoned any political interest in the Balkan States and that Germany's only interest in these regions is practical and economic such as access to Rumanian oil. He stated in this connection that at Salzburg<sup>23</sup> Hitler had refrained from taking any very active part in the negotiations in the

<sup>22</sup> Not printed.

<sup>23</sup> See telegram No. 96, July 30, 7 p. m., from the Minister in Bulgaria, p. 496; also footnote 23, p. 517.

sense of supporting the claims of one of the conferring Balkan countries against another and had refused to act as "broker", his influence having been confined merely to an endeavor to arrange as practical and peaceful a solution as possible; that the Hungarians' "disloyal" behavior in the period immediately following the occupation of Czechoslovakia<sup>24</sup> had not been forgotten, will receive little territorial compensation but will have to be content with the transfer of populations. Bulgaria on the other hand will receive southern Dobrudja the exact delimitation of which had not been fixed. The informant emphasized again that Germany would not intervene even diplomatically in political questions in the Balkans except in the event of a conflict between Italian and Russian interests in that area, in which case Germany would probably attempt to act as mediator in order to prevent friction between those two countries. In accordance with the present policy he stated Germany would in no way oppose any Soviet demands on Turkey even should such demands include actual physical control of the Dardanelles. In regard to Soviet policy he said that it was clear that the Soviet Union intended at an appropriate moment to incorporate all of Finland into the Soviet Union and he supposed that this process would be attempted when the expected German attack on England had seriously begun.

He made a definite statement that Germany would not oppose any action which the Soviet Union might undertake against Finland but [expressed?] the belief that any attempt at penetration into Sweden would be regarded very seriously by Germany. Other Soviet aspirations which he believed would be fulfilled were the acquisition of the lost provinces of Turkish Armenia; at least a deciding voice in the Regime of the Straits; and in respect of Iran, the southern coast along the Caspian and possibly a strip running down to the Persian Gulf to include the Iranian oil fields. He concluded that while it was impossible to state categorically in which order these aims would be realized by the Soviet Government he was strongly of the opinion that the incorporation of Finland would precede any direct action in the Black Sea area although it was possible that informal discussions had already occurred between Molotov and the Turkish Ambassador here.<sup>25</sup>

While the permanence and sincerity of alleged reorientation of German policy in respect of southeastern Europe and the Balkans is open to strong doubt, it is of interest that Hitler appears to have convinced officials of the German Government of the reality of that policy, a policy which it is clear could at the present time only be predicated on a decision by Hitler to launch a large scale offensive against England this summer. The apparent motive of the dis-

<sup>24</sup> For correspondence regarding the German occupation of Czechoslovakia and the subsequent tension in Europe, see *Foreign Relations*, 1939, vol. I, pp. 34 ff.

<sup>25</sup> Ali Haydar Aktay.

claimers in advance of any intention to oppose the Soviet penetration in the Black Sea area would appear to be dictated by a desire to have no distracting controversies while the military operations against England are in progress.

THURSTON

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661.6231/281 : Telegram

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

Moscow, August 21, 1940—10 a. m.

[Received 11:30 a. m.]

1045. Embassy's August 19, 10 a. m.<sup>26</sup> The source mentioned in my telegram under reference <sup>26a</sup> has stated that in addition to technical questions involved in the Soviet-German economic agreement of February, Schnurre, who is arriving in Moscow on August 28,<sup>27</sup> will also discuss the question of trade between the Soviet Union and the territories under German occupation as well as questions relating to trade with the Baltic States, Bessarabia and Bukowina. In regard to the latter it was stated that Schnurre will probably endeavor to have the Soviet Government continue as part of the Soviet-German economic agreement the trade which in the past existed between Germany and the territories recently incorporated into the Soviet Union.

Repeated to Berlin.

THURSTON

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740.0011 European War 1939/5456 : Telegram

*The Chargé in the Soviet Union (Thurston) to the Secretary of State*<sup>28</sup>

Moscow, September 10, 1940—11 a. m.

[Received September 11—12:52 a. m.]

1144. The source referred to in the Embassy's 1015, August 14, 10 a. m., has stated in strictest confidence that the German and Italian guaranty of Rumania<sup>29</sup> following the cession of part of Transylvania to Hungary came as an unpleasant surprise to the German Embassy here consequently was contrary to what the Ambassador had been given to understand was Germany's policy in southeastern Europe which was as set forth in the telegram referred to above. He said

<sup>26</sup> No. 1035, not printed.

<sup>26a</sup> The source mentioned was a member of the German Embassy.

<sup>27</sup> Dr. Schnurre and the German delegation arrived on this day "to discuss the half year's results of the fulfillment of the Soviet-German economic agreement."

<sup>28</sup> The Department of State's appreciation for the "valuable information" herein contained was expressed in its telegram No. 537, September 13, 4 p. m.

<sup>29</sup> See telegram No. 3827, August 30, 11 p. m., from the Chargé in Germany, p. 502.

that the German Ambassador had been requested on the eve of the announcement of the guaranty to inform the Soviet Government that the German and Italian Governments had been forced to take this step somewhat precipitously in view of the threatening situation in the Balkans resulting from the breakdown of the Hungarian-Rumanian negotiations and that while Molotov accepted this explanation he was obviously displeased with the action taken by Germany without prior consultation with the Soviet Government. The informant expressed the personal opinion which however he intimated was shared by the German Ambassador that the guaranty of Rumania was a mistake and that while the Soviet Government would undoubtedly accept the *fait accompli* it might in the future have a harmful effect on Soviet-German relations. He added that in his opinion it constituted the first violation of the spirit of the Soviet-German pact of August 1939. He stated that the Ambassador had so reported in substance to his Government and that should suggestions as to possible steps to remedy the situation be requested by the German Foreign Office the Ambassador here would probably recommend that compensation with German support be offered Russia either in respect of Finland or of Turkey and Iran.

The informant went on to say that the German Embassy has not sufficient information as to the motives which prompted the German Government to extend this guaranty, to enable it to judge whether it justifies a basic reversal of the policy outlined in the telegram referred to above or merely an isolated departure resulting from the acute situation which developed between Hungary and Rumania.

In this connection he added that Italy had given vigorous support to the Hungarian claim to all of Transylvania and that a compromise had been reached, the cession of a part in return for the German-Italian guaranty which Rumania desired as a *quid pro quo*. He added, however, that among the German motives undoubtedly was a desire to prevent any disturbances in the Balkans which would impair the delivery of Rumanian oil to Germany and said that the guaranty had a significance for the internal affairs of Rumania in that it might be expected to stabilize the disordered situation which prevailed in that country and that Germany would now feel [free?] to intervene should any disorders occur which might endanger Rumanian oil wells. The informant offered the personal opinion that perhaps it would have been better for Germany to have exerted pressure on Italy and Hungary in order to bring about a modification of Hungarian demands which would be acceptable to Rumania rather than run the risk of an impairment of Soviet-German relations.

He offered the opinion that the precipitous nature of the guaranty

bore the earmarks of Ribbentrop's work who, he stated, has a singular lack of understanding of the Russian mentality and apparently does not realize that the guaranty of Rumania while not necessarily directly aimed at the Soviet Union would be so interpreted by Stalin.

Whatever may have been the motives which impelled the German decision to guarantee Rumania it is of considerable interest that the German Embassy here is openly apprehensive as to the possible effect on Soviet-German relations. It is the first instance which has come to this Embassy's attention which might provide the grounds for friction between the two countries although it is apparent from the article appearing in *Pravda* yesterday on the reasons for King Carol's [abdication] <sup>30</sup> (see Embassy's 1139, September 9 <sup>31</sup>) that the Soviet Government will for the time being at least acquiesce in the German-Italian action in guaranteeing the integrity of Rumania.

THURSTON

762.9411/33 : Telegram

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

[Extract]

BERLIN, September 28, 1940—2 p. m.

[Received September 29—2:35 a. m.]

4189.

As regards Russia, the problem <sup>32</sup> in its nature is regarded as more obscure. It may be assumed that the event of yesterday had been regarded in the Kremlin as a possibility and, although the actual signature of the pact was unheralded, was known by the Soviets beforehand. Speculation therefore turns in general on whether Stalin has been a passive factor in the negotiations or has himself gained a free hand in parts of the Near East and in India, as has Japan in the Far East, and the Axis Powers in Europe and Africa. In that event the declaration of spheres of domination outside the Western Hemisphere would be complete, and the possibility of cooperative action among the dominating powers which now seems practically impossible insofar as aid to Japan is concerned would be assured. It is only through future developments, however, that this situation may receive clarification and at present there is no indication here that the underlying

<sup>30</sup> The abdication occurred on September 6, 1940.

<sup>31</sup> Not printed.

<sup>32</sup> i. e., the appraisal of the significance of the three power pact of assistance signed by Germany, Italy, and Japan at Berlin on September 27, 1940. For text of the pact, see League of Nations Treaty Series, vol. cciv, p. 386.

suspicion which is felt in regard to Soviet Russia has been allayed either in Berlin or Rome, or that Stalin himself has lent himself even ostensibly to a combination which he regards as capable of consolidating the power of his neighbors and of threatening his own.

KIRK

762.9411/36 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, September 28, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received September 28—2:15 p. m.]

1247. Embassy's 1244, September 28<sup>33</sup> which preceded this. Members of the German Embassy are quite frank in their statement that the present pact<sup>34</sup> will not be well received by the Soviet Government and a former member of the German Embassy who is in Moscow on leave from the Army has even stated that he fears that this pact indicates that German policy toward the Soviet Union is basically altered and in strictest confidence expressed the view that Germany might be at war with Russia by next spring. He added that there were at the present time an unnecessarily large number of German troops on the Soviet-German frontier and expressed the opinion that the signature of the pacts could only mean that Germany does not intend to attempt to invade England this fall. It was further stated that there had been no real prior consultation with the Soviet Government concerning the pact and that only on September 26 in the late afternoon had the German Chargé d'Affaires informed Molotov of the forthcoming event.<sup>35</sup>

STEINHARDT

740.0011 European War 1939/5837 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, October 2, 1940—6 p. m.

[Received October 3—4:25 a. m.]

1267. The Turkish Military Attaché,<sup>35a</sup> who in the past has proved to be a reliable observer and who has just returned from a trip to Sweden and Finland, told me yesterday that in his opinion there is

<sup>33</sup> Not printed.

<sup>34</sup> The three power pact of September 27, 1940.

<sup>35</sup> For analytical consideration by Ambassador Steinhardt of the changing German policy toward the Soviet Union, see his telegram No. 1268, October 2, 7 p. m., p. 615.

<sup>35a</sup> B. Türkmen.



considerable evidence that the Germans are concentrating large forces in areas which might serve as eventual bases of operation against the Soviet Union. He said he had obtained reliable information that at the present time the Germans have 79 divisions on the Soviet-German frontier supported by 3- to 4,000 first-line planes with 2,000 additional planes in reserve. In addition he stated that at least half of the more than 150,000 troops in Norway are in the northern area of Norway close to the Norwegian-Finnish frontier with many in the vicinity of Petsamo where an important German military base is in the process of construction and that roads in northern Norway leading to the Finnish frontier are being built by German troops.

The Attaché stated that while he was in Sweden the German Military Attaché there had told him with conviction that the Soviet-German Pact had served its purpose and that should the Soviets again attack Finland, Germany would without question go to the latter's assistance. He added that from the same source he had been informed that at a meeting with most of the German Military Attachés, Hitler had stated that the invasion of England might have to be postponed until next year. While I am unable to confirm the foregoing it is interesting as indicating the speculation which has been aroused in diplomatic circles in Moscow by the recent German diplomatic moves as to Germany's intentions in regard to the Soviet Union and particularly the conclusion of the military alliance with Japan. While the extent of the German forces bordering on the Soviet Union may be exaggerated it is of interest in connection with the information contained in my 1247, September 28, 4 p. m. from a German source.

STEINHARDT

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861.7762/5 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the  
Secretary of State*

Moscow, October 5, 1940—noon.

[Received 4: 15 p. m.]

1286. The press today publishes a communiqué reporting the signature on October 4 in Berlin of an agreement for passenger and freight rail communication between the Soviet Union and Germany. The communiqué states that the negotiations were carried out in a favorable atmosphere by the People's Commissar for Ways of Communication of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and by the Chief of the Administration of the German Railways.

Although the communiqué gives no details in regard to the proposed direct rail connection I am informed by a member of the German Embassy that the agreement will provide for two direct lines between

Moscow and Berlin: one, Moscow–Negoreloe–Warsaw–Berlin and the other, Moscow–Dvinsk–Tilsit–Koenigsberg–Berlin. Service on these roads it is stated will begin within the next few days.

Repeated to Berlin.

STEINHARDT

740.0011 European War 1939/6082: Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the  
Secretary of State*

Moscow, October 16, 1940—7 p. m.

[Received 8:30 p. m.]

1355. The press today publishes a Tass communiqué denying as “not in accordance with the facts” a report stated to have appeared in the Danish newspaper under [*sic*] *Politiken* from its Berlin correspondent to the effect that the Soviet Government was informed “in due time that German forces were to be sent to Rumania and that the Kremlin was informed as to the stand of these forces and as to the purposes for which they were sent to Rumania.”<sup>36</sup>

Repeated to Berlin and Bucharest.

STEINHARDT

740.0011 European War 1939/6083: Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the  
Secretary of State*

Moscow, October 16, 1940—8 p. m.

[Received 10:30 p. m.]

1356. The Tass denial reported in my No. 1355, October 16, 7 p. m. confirms the information previously reported from confidential sources that the recent German moves in the Balkans and particularly in Rumania beginning with the guaranty of that country by Germany and Italy have been made without prior consultation with the Soviet Government. By stating publicly through the medium of the Tass denial that the recent German moves in Rumania have not been undertaken with Soviet consent it is probable that the Soviet Government desires to reaffirm the existence of Soviet interests in that area in anticipation of the discussions which the German Ambassador who returned yesterday is expected to have with the Soviet Government.

STEINHARDT

<sup>36</sup> With regard to the presence of German troops in Rumania, see telegrams Nos. 579, October 7, 6 p. m., and 585, October 9, 5 p. m., from the Minister in Rumania, pp. 519 and 520, respectively.

740.0011 European War 1939/6128 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary  
of State*

Moscow, October 17, 1940—noon.

[Received 7 p. m.]

1359. A member of the German Embassy who has just returned from Berlin with the German Ambassador, states in the strictest confidence that Ribbentrop will not come to Moscow at this time but that the Ambassador has received instructions from the German Government to endeavor to disquiet [*allay?*] the elements of friction which admittedly have arisen between the Soviet Union and Germany as the result of recent German moves in the Balkans and the conclusion of the military alliance with Japan. My informant stated that the instructions were general in nature and were designed primarily to ascertain the wishes of the Soviet Government at the present time as well as to convey the willingness of the German Government to discuss in friendly consultation such aspirations as the Soviet Government may now entertain or any problems relating to Soviet-German relations. He said the Tass denial reported in my No. 1355 of October 16 had been somewhat surprising and was not reassuring as he now understood that the Soviet Ambassador in Berlin <sup>37</sup> had been informed by Ribbentrop prior to the entry of German troops into Rumania. It was possible, however, that the Soviet Government had confused the dispatch of German regular troops of which they were informed in advance with the departure of a military mission which had gone to Rumania somewhat earlier.

My informant stated that the German Ambassador would see Molotov today for the first exploratory conversation. This conversation would not deal with specific questions but should the Soviet attitude be favorable a variety of subjects might subsequently be discussed. What these subjects might be would depend on the Soviet reaction and the lengths to which the Soviet Government was prepared to go at the present time. He intimated, however, that the Ambassador would endeavor to ascertain the Soviet attitude toward the further development of Axis policy in the Balkans with particular reference to Turkey.

My informant said that while Germany would of course be pleased to have the Soviet Government adhere even indirectly to the German-

<sup>37</sup> Alexander A. Shkvartsev.

Italian-Japanese alliance he very much doubted that the Soviet Government could be induced to take such a positive step which would definitely align the Soviet Union with the Axis Powers. On the other hand he said that some form of Soviet-Japanese agreement which Germany had always encouraged would probably be forthcoming in the near future; that although he could not forecast the exact details of any such agreement it might well take the form of a non-aggression pact,<sup>38</sup> the cessation of Soviet aid to China with Soviet pressure on Chiang Kai-shek<sup>39</sup> to conclude peace with Japan; the recognition by Japan of the Mongolian People's Republic and possibly of a Soviet special interest in Tsinkiang.

My informant stated that he understood the departing Japanese Ambassador<sup>40</sup> had held general discussions along the above lines with Molotov but that the negotiations were now in abeyance pending the arrival of the new Japanese Ambassador.<sup>41</sup> The change of Japanese Ambassador at this time according to my informant was an error on the part of the Japanese Government as Togo had been *persona grata* with the Soviet Government.

My informant said that although the German Ambassador had been successful while in Berlin in bringing about the adoption of a conciliatory policy towards the Soviet Union at the present time, nevertheless there were influential groups in Germany whose anti-Soviet bias and whose conviction that sooner or later a Soviet-German war was inevitable were a complicating factor in the determination of German policy toward the Soviet Union. My informant frankly expressed concern as to the possible influence of these circles on Hitler. He said it was quite clear following his visit to Berlin that as a result of the apparent abandonment of an attempted invasion of England this autumn, German policy in Eastern Europe and in particular the German attitude toward Russia was more uncertain than at any time since the beginning of the war and that while for the moment the policy toward the Soviet Union was one of conciliation and not one of pressure or threats, the possibility of a sudden change in the German attitude could not be excluded. He added that in this regard the results of the Ambassador's coming talk with Molotov would be very important.

STEINHARDT

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<sup>38</sup> A neutrality pact between the Soviet Union and Japan was signed at Moscow on April 13, 1941; for text, see Department of State *Bulletin*, April 29, 1945, p. 812.

<sup>39</sup> Generalissimo; President of the Chinese Executive Yuan (Premier).

<sup>40</sup> Shigenori Togo.

<sup>41</sup> Lt. Gen. (retired) Yoshitsugu Tatekawa.

740.0011 European War 1939/6180 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the  
Secretary of State*

Moscow, October 21, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received 6:30 p. m.]

1379. Embassy's telegram No. 1359, October 17, noon. The source indicated in my telegram under reference has informed me that on the occasion of his first call on Molotov on October 18, the German Ambassador, in conformity with his instructions, took up no specific questions with Molotov and made no definite proposals, but merely suggested that the Soviet Government make known to the German Government its desires or aspirations and stated that the German Government would be willing to discuss any problems or matters in which the Soviet Government might be interested at the present time. My informant says that Molotov was noncommittal, promised "to convey the message to his Government" and added that a reply would be forthcoming within a few days. My informant emphasized that the nature of the Soviet reply would determine the questions, if any, which would be discussed as well as determine in large measure the probable future course of Soviet-German relations. My informant stated frankly that the German Embassy here had no indication as to the nature of the Soviet reply. He offered the personal opinion that it was doubtful the reply would contain any very positive suggestions.

STEINHARDT

761.62/754 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary  
of State*

Moscow, October 23, 1940—1 p. m.

[Received 2:52 p. m.]

1391. My 1359, October 17, noon. The Turkish Ambassador last night gave me the following details which he said he had learned from an extremely confidential source concerning the German Ambassador's talk with Molotov. He said that Schulenburg had assured the Soviet Government that from the point of view [of] the German Government there had been no change in Soviet-German relations which the Germans considered to be very good. He had informed Molotov that the German troops in Rumania had been sent there at the specific request of the Rumanian Government for the purpose of training the Rumanian Army and of protecting the oil fields and "for no other purpose" and had given assurances that the Soviet Govern-

ment would be represented on the Danube Commission. In addition Schulenburg had in effect offered the Soviet Government what amounted to a free hand in Iran and had expressed the desire of the German Government for the conclusion of a Soviet-Japanese pact.

STEINHARDT

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761.62/757 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, October 24, 1940—1 p. m.

[Received 2:42 p. m.]

1403. Personal for the President, the Secretary and the Under Secretary. My 1379, October 21, 4 p. m. The source indicated in my telegram under reference states that Molotov at a subsequent meeting with the German Ambassador informed the latter that the Soviet Government was prepared to discuss its desires as well as outstanding problems with the German Government and that the Soviet Government would within a few days submit a list of such desires and problems which might form the basis of discussion between the two countries. My informant said that the Soviet reception of the German approach had been more favorable than had been expected and that the Soviet Government had appeared satisfied with the German explanation of the reasons for the entry of German troops into Rumania. He added that the German Embassy here had no intimation of the specific matters the Soviet Government desired to discuss but offered as his personal opinion that they would in all probability relate to the Black Sea, Turkey and Iran. My informant stated that Schnurre would arrive in Moscow on October 30th for further economic conversation with the Foreign Office.

In respect of Soviet-Japanese relations my informant denied that Germany had recently exerted pressure on the Soviet Government for the conclusion of a Soviet-Japanese pact, observing however, that ever since the conclusion of the Soviet-German nonaggression pact in August 1939 the German Government had [not] concealed from the Soviet Government its desire for an improvement in relations between the Soviet Union and Japan. He added that although the negotiations between Japan and the Soviet Union had progressed far prior to the departure of Ambassador Togo, nevertheless there were now certain indications that the Soviet Government had not yet definitely decided exactly what type of agreement it desired with Japan. He said that information recently received here by the German Embassy indicated that the Soviet Union was at the moment less disposed to conclude a simple nonaggression pact with Japan as a preliminary step toward

the settlement of other and more important questions but was now more inclined to enlarge the scope of the negotiations and to settle all questions relating to Manchukuo, Outer Mongolia, Tsinkiang, etc. prior to the conclusion of a nonaggression pact. He expressed the opinion that the Soviet Government recognized that any agreement with Japan, however limited, would have an adverse effect on its relations with the United States and Great Britain and was therefore not disposed to incur this consequence except for the sake of an agreement from which the Soviet Union would obtain substantial practical benefits. He emphasized that a Soviet-Japanese pact could not be considered as certain until definitely concluded.

STEINHARDT

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661.6231/285 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, October 30, 1940—5 p. m.

[Received October 30—3:45 p. m.]

1452. Schnurre arrived in Moscow today accompanied by a delegation of 15. A member of the German Embassy has stated that Schnurre in addition to discussing current matters of a technical nature affecting Soviet-German economic relations will also take up with the Soviet economic officials the possibilities of an increase in the exchange of goods between Germany and the Soviet Union as the result of the acquisition or control of new areas since the conclusion of the commercial agreement of February 11, 1940.

Repeated to Berlin.

STEINHARDT

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761.62/769 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, October 31, 1940—10 a. m.

[Received 10:05 a. m.]

1456. My 1404, October 24, 2 p. m.<sup>42</sup> I was informed today that the conversations which the German Ambassador has had with Molotov have been "very favorable" and that the Soviet Government had given every indication of a desire to maintain its present friendly relations with Germany. It is, however, not yet known how far beyond the limits of the present relations the Soviet Union is prepared

<sup>42</sup> Not printed.

to go at the present time. It was stated that the specific questions which the Soviet Government desires to discuss with Germany have not yet been outlined and will probably not be presented for another week. The delay was attributed in part to caution on the part of the Soviet Government which, according to my informant, desires to watch future developments particularly in the Balkans before involving itself in discussions of concrete and definite problems. My informant added that the effect of the Italian invasion of Greece<sup>43</sup> on the Soviet people could not yet be foreseen and that the Soviet Government had given no intimation thus far of its reaction thereto. My informant added that there was evidence that the Soviet Union was exercising the same caution in respect of an agreement with the Japanese and that while the general attitude in this regard remained favorable he did not believe that the Soviet Government was interested in expediting the matter.

STEINHARDT

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761.62/774 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, November 10, 1940—11 p. m.

[Received November 11—2:30 a. m.]

1516. The announcement of Molotov's impending visit to Berlin was made on the radio last night<sup>44</sup> while the British Ambassador was my guest at dinner. Sir Stafford Cripps frankly stated that he was not only surprised but shocked by the news. In reply to my inquiry as to whether he had not prepared his Government for a continuation of Soviet-German collaboration he admitted that he had persistently hoped that some measure of success might be achieved by him<sup>45</sup> and that in consequence he feared his Government was not fully prepared. He then said the possibility could not be excluded that should Molotov's visit to Berlin result in more extensive collaboration between the Soviet Union and Germany influential circles in Great Britain might begin to press for peace with Germany on an anti-Soviet basis.

The Rumanian Minister<sup>46</sup> who was also present was equally depressed and said that in his opinion the psychological effect of Molo-

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<sup>43</sup> The invasion of Greece by Italy began on October 28, 1940. For correspondence regarding the Graeco-Italian war, see vol. III, pp. 524 ff.

<sup>44</sup> People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs Molotov, with a suite of 32 persons, left Moscow by special train at 6:45 p. m., on November 10. They arrived at the Anhalter Bahnhof in Berlin soon after 11:00 a. m., on November 12 and stayed at the Bellevue Palace Hotel.

<sup>45</sup> For correspondence on the relations of the United Kingdom and France with the Soviet Union, see pp. 539 ff.

<sup>46</sup> Grigore Gafencu.



tov's visit to Berlin would be bad especially among the smaller nations and particularly Turkey.

The Department will have observed from my telegrams during the past month that the course of events leading up to the announcement of Molotov's visit to Berlin very closely parallels that which led to the Soviet-German Nonaggression Pact of August 1939, and that British diplomacy has again failed to evaluate properly the basic factors motivating Soviet foreign policy since early in 1939. The decision of the Soviet Government to send Molotov to Berlin at this time and thereby publicly to demonstrate loyalty to its existing relationship with Germany supports the view expressed in my previous telegrams, that so long as the German Army remains intact and unengaged there can be little expectation of a basic alteration in Soviet policy toward Germany. In consequence it should have been apparent that any attempt to change the existing Soviet-German relationship through proposals such as those put forward by the British Government, or by means of unilateral concessions, not only would be futile but would tend to impair in Soviet eyes the prestige of the government making such proposals.

The Soviet Government has shown itself very adroit in exploiting any attempt to bring about a change in its relations with Germany, using such attempts to obtain concessions of practical value to it without the slightest intention of deviating from that relationship. As viewed from Moscow it would appear to be inadvisable for us to make any concessions to the Soviet Government in respect of administrative or commercial matters, or even to put into effect those which are under discussion,<sup>47</sup> at least pending the outcome of Molotov's negotiations in Berlin. The greater economic and political Soviet collaboration with Germany which may be expected to result from the conference at Berlin would materially increase the prospect that the Soviet Union would endeavor to utilize its purchases in the United States for the purpose of defeating the British blockade.

STEINHARDT

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761.62/783 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the  
Secretary of State*

Moscow, November 11, 1940—4 p. m.  
[Received 6:38 p. m.]

1518. My 1512, November 9, 5 p. m.<sup>48</sup> The following information concerning the background of Molotov's visit to Berlin was received in

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<sup>47</sup> For correspondence on the difficulties affecting relations between the United States and the Soviet Union and the discussions concerning their alleviation, see vol. III, pp. 244 ff.

<sup>48</sup> Not printed.

strict confidence from the source previously disclosed to the Department. The informant in question has accompanied the German Ambassador to Berlin with Molotov. He stated that although the outcome of Molotov's visit to Berlin could not be predicted in view of the importance of the consultations which would take place, no prior political agreement had been reached by the Soviet and German Governments and no program of the specific questions to be discussed in Berlin had been arranged. My informant was quite specific on this point. He stated, however, that without question the entire range of Soviet-German relations, both political and economic and questions relating thereto, would be discussed but that it was not now contemplated that any new political agreement would be signed and announced during Molotov's visit to Berlin. He stated that the visit was of course of great importance in that it indicated a decision in principle by the Soviet Government and was designed to emphasize Soviet-German friendship, as well as to lay the foundations for closer collaboration, both political and economic. In respect of economic matters, he stated that although Molotov would only remain in Berlin for 2 days, it was possible but not certain that the economic experts who accompanied him would remain there for some time. Concluding, my informant emphasized that the outcome of the conversations in Berlin would depend on the conversations themselves and that no prior agreement in the political field has been reached.

STEINHARDT

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761.62/789 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, November 12, 1940—1 p. m.

[Received 9:40 p. m.]

4670-4673. Kirk's 3128, July 24, 11 a. m. The following considerations are outlined as of possible value as background in connection with Molotov's arrival in Berlin today.

The German desire for a visit of Molotov to Berlin would probably find its explanation in one or both of two principal factors.

The first of these is the obsession of certain German circles—probably those around Von Ribbentrop—with the belief that if only a sufficiently imposing array of solidarity could be mustered between Germany and other powers in Europe and Asia, then the United States—impressed and disturbed—would become hesitant in its support of England and that the British [would become] disheartened to the point of considering a compromise peace.

It was an analogous line of reasoning which contributed to the establishment of the German-Russian understanding in the first in-

stance, and it appears never to have lost its fascination for the makers of German policy.

The second factor is the increasing probability that the British position in the Near East will not be seriously threatened without direct German intervention and the natural German desire to have a reassuring understanding with a power which would command the flank of any large scale German military operation in that area.

There is little doubt, therefore, that the immediate impetus for the visit springs from the German side and that Russian consent to it—a consent which had been withheld for an entire year—represents an important Soviet concession to German wishes, even though it was not, as Berlin had hoped, given in time for the visit to take place before the American election. This concession would not be made unless the Russians had hopes of thereby achieving—or fears of otherwise not achieving—certain important objectives, and the fact of the visit may be taken as an indication that the Soviet Government, which has shown itself determined to lose no opportunity to profit by the preoccupation of others in order to improve its own future strategic position through territorial acquisition, now has its eyes on some further possibility along these lines.

But the border from the Baltic to the Black Sea may now be regarded as settled and for further acquisitions Russia would presumably have to look north of the Gulf of Finland or south of the Danube delta.

It should be borne in mind in this connection that in coming to Berlin, Molotov will be interested primarily in those territories or facilities which may be said to be at Germany's effective disposal. It must be doubted whether Russian aims in eastern Turkey or in Iran<sup>49</sup> would play any great part in inducing the Kremlin to send Molotov to Berlin. When the time comes and when there is some intimation of preoccupation of Turkey in other quarters, it must be assumed that Russia will take what she feels she advantageously can in that part of the world without asking leave of the Germans or paying tribute for the privilege. These more easterly territories may to be sure, be formally assigned to a Russian sphere of influence as a result of these discussions but they will not be the main point in question.

Russia's most serious territorial aspirations connected with Molotov's visit would therefore seem to boil down to Finland or the area around the Dardanelles. In Finland the Russians are going to encounter far greater inhibitions in German circles—particularly the Army—against further Russian penetration than was the case eight

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<sup>49</sup> For indications of pressure upon Iran by the Soviet Union, see vol. III, pp. 621 ff.

months ago. Through their conquest of northern Norway the Germans now have a stake in that part of the world which is important to them not only from considerations of military operations but also of military prestige. The advent of the Russians into northern Finland would not only render problematical the present supplying and reinforcing of these German troops over Finnish territory but would also confront these German forces in Norway for the first time with the proximity of a powerful and—in view of the strategic situation—potentially dangerous foreign land force.

This must not be taken to mean that there is no possibility that the Germans will toss the remainder of Finland to the Russian bear in order to facilitate their aims in the New [*Near?*] East. Ribbentrop, whose personal prestige is considerably involved with the German-Russian understanding, has on former occasions obtained Hitler's consent to serious sacrifices in order to preserve this understanding and he may succeed in doing so again.

But the opposition to be overcome will be severe and if the German Army yields in Finland its demands will surely be stiffer with respect to the Near East.

Rumor has it that the Germans are prepared to concede to the Russians the entire Dardanelles area. If it be remembered that the Russians made this one of the prices of their cooperation with the Allied Powers in 1915 and were promised it in the event of a victorious conclusion of hostilities<sup>50</sup> it would not be surprising if they should turn out to be asking for it again and the possibility of obtaining it would be one of the few conceivable explanations for the visit. Recent in-

<sup>50</sup> The Russian political aspirations for Constantinople and the Straits were formulated in a memorandum of February 19/March 4, 1915, by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sergey Dmitriyevich Sazonov. A translation in French is printed in *Un livre noir: Diplomatie d'avant-guerre et de guerre d'après les documents des archives russes (1910-1917)*, (Paris, n. d.), vol. III, août 1914-avril 1915, pp. 122-123. A summary is contained in Sazonov's telegram of that date to the Ambassador in France, Alexander Petrovich Izvolsky, and to the Ambassador in Great Britain, Count Alexander Benckendorff, with English translation, printed in *Mezhdunarodniye otnosheniya v epokhu imperikalizma: Dokumenty iz arkhivov tsarskogo i vremennogo pravitelstv 1878-1917 gg.* [International Relations in the Epoch of Imperialism: Documents from the Archives of the Tsarist and Provisional Governments 1878-1917], (Moscow and Leningrad, 1935), series III, 1914-1917, vol. VII, part 1, No. 299, pp. 392-393. (There is a German translation, edited by Otto Hoetzsch, *Die internationalen Beziehungen im Zeitalter des Imperialismus: Dokumente aus den Archiven der Zarischen und der Provisorischen Regierung*, series II, Vom Kriegausbruch bis zum Herbst 1915 [Berlin, 1935], vol. VII, part 1, No. 299, p. 280.) The French acceptance of the Russian aspirations was conveyed on February 23/March 8, 1915, *ibid.*, No. 330, pp. 424-425 (German translation, p. 301); and the British agreement came on February 27/March 12, 1915, *ibid.*, No. 351, p. 452 (German translation, p. 318), accompanied by a memorandum of observations, *ibid.*, No. 352, pp. 452-455 (German translation, pp. 318-320). See also E. L. Woodward and Rohan Butler (eds.), *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939*, First Series, vol. IV, 1919, pp. 635-638; H. W. V. Temperley, *A History of the Peace Conference of Paris*, vol. VI, pp. 4-9, and *Foreign Relations, 1917*, supp. 2, vol. I, pp. 493-507.

formation here has not indicated any progress in Russian-Turkish relations which would preclude the pursuance of such aims on Russia's part.

On the other hand if the Germans are planning to use this territory in the near future as a channel of expansion toward the Near East it would be difficult to conceive of any satisfactory arrangement which could be concluded just at this time. There can scarcely be any desire on the German side to conquer this area and then turn it over at once—or parts of it—to the Russians leaving the latter virtually sitting on the German line of march. Even an arrangement for a division of the area giving the German[s], say the Dardanelles and the Russians the Bosphorus would have this effect. And it is not likely that the Russians would be interested in any promises of future delivery which would involve an interim consented [*consent?*] to occupation.

An arrangement could more easily be envisaged if the Germans were prepared to keep their own hands off the area in question during the coming months. A passage of German armed forces through Bulgaria to Greece might well have the effect of producing hostilities between Turkey and Bulgaria. In this situation it might be left to the Russians to take what action they might wish against Turkey on the understanding that if they were to succeed in seizing the Dardanelles area Germany would impose no objection to their retaining it. In incurring some obligation of this nature which would amount initially to an agreement on spheres of influence the Germans might not be entirely impervious to the thought that the Russians might possibly become so seriously bogged down in eastern Turkey and Iran that an actual seizure of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles during the coming winter would be improbable and that the German commitment might thus eventually in view of changed circumstances become meaningless. Such a plan would have the added advantage in the German view of keeping the Russians occupied with the Turks at a time when if idle they might be a constant source of worry on the German flank.

In return for any concessions of this nature which might be made in the Near East the Germans would probably demand first and foremost as indicated above a demonstrative association of the Soviet Union with the establishment of an anti-British "new order" in Europe and Asia or at least some gesture of acquiescence in this conception. They might also seek a deepening and widening of the present economic cooperation between the two countries designed not only to contribute to the propaganda effect of any political arrangements which may be made but also to render Germany less dependent during the coming months on the reserves and substance of the territories she has occupied or dominated in Europe. Any such development would presumably imply greater German efforts to meet the Russian need

for up-to-date military equipment, a factor which may explain in part the inclusion of certain high officials of Soviet industry in the delegation.

It would be dangerous, however, to attribute the presence of so many high Russian officials solely to the need for the elaboration of the technical details of an increase in the exchange of goods between the two countries. The German expert Schnurre has been in Moscow a great deal recently and all such details could presumably be more conveniently worked out there at leisure. It is more likely that the size and composition of the delegation was conceived for its external effect. Ribbentrop took an imposing delegation to Moscow with him last year and it is possibly a dictate of the Russian Cossack prestige that Molotov should travel to Berlin with no less pomp and circumstance.

In conclusion it may be worth noting that whatever the more important decisions which may be finally sealed or arrived at through this visit it is not likely that they will find expression in the published result of the meeting. It is more probable that abstract intimations of Russian acquiescence in the German new order, mutual professions of recognition of the other party's interest in certain undefined vital areas and professions of high intent with respect to the intensification of economic cooperation will all be put forward to mask the bolder details of the arrangements until such time as the latter can find their expression in the practical application of military and diplomatic policy.

Repeated to Moscow.

MORRIS

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761.62/795 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, November 13, 1940—5 p. m.

[Received 11:50 p. m.]

4700. My 4684, November 12, 6 p. m.<sup>51</sup> Molotov was the guest of honor at a party given by Ribbentrop last night at the Kaiserhof Hotel for members of the Soviet delegation and Embassy and German officials. Today he was received for a long conversation by Goering and also called upon Hess.<sup>52</sup> He is scheduled to depart for Moscow tomorrow morning.

According to a German official the party was a great success and Molotov who speaks some German made an excellent impression on

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<sup>51</sup> Not printed.

<sup>52</sup> Rudolf Hess, member of the German Reichstag, Minister without Portfolio; Chairman of the Central Committee of the Nazi Party.

the Germans. The source said that all of the Russians gave evidence of being sincerely pleased and satisfied with current developments in Russo-German relations. He remarked that announcements of startling agreements or new treaties should not be expected, and added this is only the beginning.

Repeated to Moscow.

MORRIS

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761.62/800 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the  
Secretary of State*

Moscow, November 14, 1940—3 p. m.

[Received 9:20 p. m.]

1539. In view of the widespread speculation concerning the purposes and probable results of the visit of Molotov to Berlin, I note an increasing tendency in the Diplomatic Corps in Moscow to view the visit more in the light of a gesture reaffirming the solidarity of existing Soviet-German relations and as a prelude to closer collaboration in the future, than as the actual [result of?] negotiations already completed and to be consummated in Berlin in the form of a definite and far-reaching agreement between the two countries. It should be borne in mind that the visit is taking place following the first friction in the relations between the two countries since the conclusion of the Soviet-German Nonaggression Pact in August 1939. This friction, as previously reported, resulted from the German-Italian guaranty of Rumania, Finnish troop transit agreement and the tripartite pact all of which according to the new ministry [*sic*], were effected by Germany without prior consultation with the Soviet Union.

Under the circumstances, and especially in view of the recent British attempts to drive a wedge between the Soviet Union and Germany which have received great publicity abroad, it is natural that Germany should desire a public reaffirmation of Soviet loyalty to its existing agreements with Germany, particularly as the outcome of the election in the United States has heartened all of the actual or potential adversaries of Germany. The visit of Molotov from the German point of view thus serves the purpose of proclaiming to the world that if Britain can count on the continued and increasing support of the United States, Germany can count on that of Soviet Russia.

The foregoing view of the fundamental purpose of Molotov's visit at a time selected by Germany as essentially a gesture to reaffirm the stability of existing Soviet-German relations and to lay the foundation for closer collaboration in the future between the two countries, does not in any sense indicate that the discussions in Berlin

will not be of the utmost importance and productive of far-reaching agreements in the future. The opinion, however, that Molotov's visit to Berlin was not for the purpose of concluding there a definite political agreement is supported by the information reported in my No. 1518, November 11, 4 p. m., which indicates that no agreement had been arrived at prior to Molotov's departure from Moscow. If this information is correct I doubt that Molotov has sufficient plenipotentiary powers to conclude a definite agreement or secret understanding. The personal direction of Stalin in all fields and especially in that of foreign affairs is so absolute that I doubt he would permit even Molotov, despite his high offices as Prime Minister of Russia and member of the Political Bureau to bind the Soviet Union to any definite agreement as the result of negotiations in which Stalin himself had not personally participated.

Furthermore while the known Soviet territorial aspirations cited in Berlin's No. 4670 of November 12 undoubtedly were fully discussed in the course of the Berlin talks, the price which Germany may have demanded for an agreement to recognize these territorial aspirations must be considered in its relation to the main line of Soviet foreign policy. Should this price require abandonment by the Soviet Union of its present position of technical neutrality and a definite alignment with the Axis Powers, there would in my opinion be little chance of acceptance by the Soviet Government of these terms. However, should the German Government be content with increased Soviet economic assistance to Germany and the conclusion of some form of Soviet-Japanese agreement in exchange for German connivance at Soviet acquisition of one or more of the desired areas, such an arrangement would present less difficulty from the Soviet point of view and is I believe the maximum which may be expected to result from the Berlin talks.

Repeated to Berlin.

STEINHARDT

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761.62/801 : Telegram

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

BERLIN, November 14, 1940—4 p. m.  
[Received November 15—5:20 a. m.]

4708. My 4700, November 13, 5 p. m. After having been entertained at lunch yesterday by Hitler and having had a long conversation yesterday evening with Ribbentrop, Molotov left for Moscow this forenoon.

The following communiqué has been issued with reference to the Soviet-German conversations.



"During his stay in Berlin on the 12th and 13th of November of this year the President of the Council of People's Commissars and Foreign Commissar, W. [V.] M. Molotov, had conversations with the Führer and with the Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs, Von Ribbentrop.

The exchange of opinions took place in an atmosphere of reciprocal trust and led to mutual agreement in all important questions that interest Germany and the Soviet Union."<sup>53</sup>

MORRIS

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761.62/804 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, November 15, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received 11:07 p. m.]

1547. As of interest in its relation to the significance of Molotov's visit to Berlin I have learned from a number of sources that recently party propaganda orators in addressing local party meetings have adopted a line which is noticeably less favorable to Germany. From two sources which I believe reliable I have learned that at a local party meeting in Moscow before the November 7 celebration the speaker emphasized the success of the British air raids on Germany and the extent to which these raids were affecting German war industry; that at the present time the German chances of winning the war are progressively receding and that the only country that would really "win the war" would be the Soviet Union. Of even greater significance, if true, is a report which I have from a reliable source that on November 7 new instructions were issued to the underground Communist Party organizations in Germany and the other countries occupied by German forces. These new instructions, according to this report, directed the party cells inside Germany to work against the German Government and those within the occupied countries, including Austria, to work for the liberation of those countries from German dominance and that there was no longer any reason to conceal from foreign Communists that Soviet-German relations were no longer what they had been during the past year.

While it is of course impossible to verify the accuracy of this report some credence is given thereto by the fact that contrary to custom no article by Dimitrov,<sup>54</sup> the Secretary General of the Communist Inter-

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<sup>53</sup> German accounts of the conversations held during Molotov's visit in Berlin are published in *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941*, pp. 217-255.

<sup>54</sup> Georgy Dimitrov, a Bulgarian, defendant in the Reichstag fire trial in 1933, elected Secretary General of the Executive Committee of the Communist International (the Third International founded in Moscow by the Bolsheviks in March 1919) at the VII Congress held at Moscow, July 25-August 20, 1935. For correspondence concerning the American protest against the activities of this Congress, see *Foreign Relations, The Soviet Union, 1933-1939*, pp. 218 ff.

national, was published this year for the November 7 anniversary, a possible indication that there has been some change in Comintern policy which, since the beginning of the war and up to the present as the Department is aware, has been largely devoted to antiwar propaganda in the countries opposing Germany and in neutral countries. It would be appreciated in this connection if the Department would inform me whether there has been any noticeable change in the official line of the American Communist Party with respect to the war in general and the question of assistance to Great Britain.

While the foregoing information, if true, has definite significance it should not in my opinion be construed as foreshadowing any imminent change in the official Soviet attitude or policies toward Germany, but as an interesting manifestation of the duality of Soviet conduct of foreign affairs.

STEINHARDT

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761.62/807 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the  
Secretary of State*

Moscow, November 16, 1940—3 p. m.

[Received 5:27 p. m.]

1563. Shortly after 7 o'clock last night the Italian Ambassador<sup>55</sup> who in the absence of the German Ambassador is *doyen* of the Diplomatic Corps in Moscow telephoned me to say that at the request of the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs he was advising all Chiefs of Mission that Molotov would arrive at midnight thereby conveying the unmistakable desire of the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs that Chiefs of Mission present themselves on the station platform to welcome Molotov. As a similar "invitation" was not extended at the time of Molotov's departure and as I could see no reason for evidencing any enthusiasm over the result of his visit to Berlin and particularly in view of his continuing failure to receive me I did not go to the station.

I have learned this morning that the British, French, Turkish and Iranian Ambassadors and the Swedish, Belgian, Finnish and Greek Ministers pursued the same course. The staff of the German Embassy, the Italian, Chinese and Japanese Ambassadors and the Hungarian, Rumanian, Bulgarian, Yugoslav, Norwegian, Danish and Slovakian Ministers were present.

In connection with the refusal of Molotov prior to his departure for Berlin to receive the British Ambassador and myself I have now learned that he also declined to receive the Turkish Ambassador.

STEINHARDT

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<sup>55</sup> Augusto Rosso.

761.62/815 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the  
Secretary of State*

Moscow, November 19, 1940—1 p. m.

[Received 8:46 p. m.]

1577. For the President, the Secretary, and the Under Secretary. My No. 1518, November 11, 4 p. m. The following information concerning Molotov's conversations in Berlin has been obtained in the strictest confidence from the source referred to in my telegram under reference.

My informant stated that no conclusive agreements were reached in Berlin and that none had been contemplated. With respect to the background of the visit, he reiterated that while its primary purpose from the German point of view had been to publicly emphasize and reaffirm the continuation of Soviet-German friendship and cooperation it also had been a continuation of the talks in Moscow between the German Ambassador and Molotov. He explained that when Molotov had finally decided to go to Berlin, the Soviet Government had preferred to have him present directly to Hitler and Von Ribbentrop the specification of important Soviet aspirations and desires which the German Ambassador had, under instructions from his Government, invited the Soviet Government to present. He added that the German Ambassador would shortly resume his conversations with Molotov on the basis of the Berlin talks and before discussing the outcome of the Berlin conversations my informant pointed out that it was more than a year since there had been any personal contact between the Soviet and German Foreign Ministers, and that during that period far-reaching and fundamental changes resulting from German victories had taken place throughout Europe and the world and that, in consequence, it was desirable that a clarification of the respective positions of Germany and the Soviet Union be undertaken, especially in view of Soviet apprehensions and suspicions of Germany's future intentions which had resulted from the actions of Germany in regard to Rumania and Finland and the conclusion of the tripartite pact.

My informant then continued to the effect that Molotov had gone to Berlin exceedingly well prepared and apparently with precise instructions as to the specific aims and aspirations of the Soviet Union in all parts of the world and had set them forth with great frankness and complete realism. Although my informant was unwilling to disclose the Soviet aims and aspirations in detail, he made it quite clear that they referred almost exclusively to territorial acquisitions and by implication indicated that they related to Finland, the Black Sea

area, especially the Dardanelles, eastern Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan and the Far East. He said that the character of the Soviet aspirations and the frankness with which they had been presented clearly revealed that the Soviet Government understood that under present conditions the only agreements of any value in international affairs were those providing for the acquisition of territories of strategic or economic importance. He said that Molotov had made an excellent impression in Berlin and that Hitler and other German officials had met his frankness with equal frankness and had made it quite clear to him that Germany was prepared to take into consideration any legitimate Soviet territorial aspiration in any part of the world. Although my informant again emphasized that no agreement as to territorial acquisitions or spheres of influence had been definitely agreed upon in Berlin, he said that each Government now thoroughly understood the interests and desires of the other and that as a result of the exchange of views in Berlin, any future negotiations with regard to specific areas of interest to either or both Germany and the Soviet Union would be facilitated and the task of reconciling any conflict of interests in any particular area would be greatly simplified. My informant added that the far-reaching nature of the conversations was best exemplified by the fact that they had dealt not only with the immediate problems arising out of the war but with matters affecting postwar settlements as well, such, for example, as the German intimation that while German troops would be stationed in Rumania during the progress of the war with England, it was very unlikely that they would remain there after the establishment of peace.

With respect to the Far East, my informant stated that Molotov had indicated clearly and definitely the terms on which the Soviet Union would conclude an agreement, which he described as far-reaching, with Japan and had asserted that if the Japanese desired such an agreement, they would have to "pay the price". Although unwilling to disclose the exact "price", my informant intimated that it called for specific territorial concessions which, he added, were entirely logical and consistent with the general lines of Soviet policy. He believes that the Japanese, under German advice, will accept. He added parenthetically that contrary to general expectation, China would not suffer seriously from any such Soviet-Japanese agreement. He does not anticipate any immediate developments in Soviet-Japanese relations since the negotiations may be complicated and continue for some time.

My informant said that in economic matters, the German Government, aside from an increase in Soviet grain deliveries to Germany, had not expressed a desire for any important changes in the existing economic agreement and that Molotov had discussed with Goering

the delay in the delivery of certain German machinery and equipment to the Soviet Union. He added that economic matters had not played an important part in the six and a half hours of discussion between Molotov and Hitler. There was, however, one German desire in the economic field, namely, the continuation of German trade with the former Baltic States on the basis of the German trade agreements with those countries. He regards this desire as difficult of realization as he does not see how the Soviet Union can make so important an exception to its foreign trade monopoly in respect of areas which have formally been made an integral part of the Soviet Union.

My informant summed up the results of the Berlin conversations as follows: (1) the position of both countries has been sufficiently clarified to preclude any misunderstanding as to their respective interests and aspirations; (2) the German Government is now entirely confident that at least in the immediate future, the Soviet Union will continue its present policy of good relations with Germany and thus assure the latter tranquility on its eastern frontier and in the Balkans, which he characterized as still the main object of German policy in its relations with the Soviet Union; (3) there will be no change in the general line of Soviet foreign policy in respect of the war in the immediate future, and in this connection he stated that no attempt had been made in Berlin to induce the Soviet Government to abandon its position of technical neutrality or to adhere to the tripartite pact since Germany realized that any such attempt at the present time would be unlikely to succeed; (4) the establishment of a solid foundation for future collaboration and a basis for negotiations and joint consultations in regard to any specific area in the world of interest to both the Soviet Union and Germany, such, for example, as Turkey and the Black Sea area.

The foregoing information clearly indicates that although some definite agreement may have been reached in Berlin, Molotov's conversations were on a frankly imperialist basis and that Molotov and Hitler in effect discussed the division of certain areas of the world. I do not believe that there will be any immediate developments or early positive moves on the part of the Soviet Union as the discussions were apparently only of a preliminary nature. I am of the opinion, however, that a greater rather than a lesser degree of Soviet-German collaboration must be anticipated in the immediate future. In regard to the Far East, the "price", evidently embodying territorial concessions by Japan, which the Soviet Government will demand in return for an agreement is not clear. Such possibilities as the return of the southern half of Sakhalin and perhaps certain of the more northern of the Kurile Islands suggest themselves in addition to the demands the Soviets may present with respect to the mainland.

661.6231/286 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the  
Secretary of State*

Moscow, November 22, 1940—5 p. m.

[Received 8:17 p. m.]

1590. I was informed by Schnurre yesterday that the trade negotiations which he is conducting are proceeding in general to his satisfaction. He stated that Soviet deliveries under the February 1940 agreement have been "astonishingly good" and that he feels that German deliveries to the Soviet Union about which, as reported, complaint has been made by the Soviets, will begin by February of next year to come up to the desired level. His explanation of the German failure to deliver on schedule thus far, in contrast to the Soviet performance, is that the Soviets are delivering raw materials while the Germans are required to deliver manufactured products. It has therefore taken some time to get the German deliveries under way. He emphasized that Germany is not endeavoring to buy from the Soviet Union everything which that country can furnish but is limiting its purchases to articles which are really essential to Germany. In the case of oil, for example, he stated that the stocks which Germany had acquired through the occupation of France and other countries made its needs less so far as the Soviet Union is concerned. As regards fodder, on the other hand, this is an item of particular interest at the present time. He stated that he expected to be in Moscow for several weeks to continue the present talks.

STEINHARDT

701.6162/33 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the  
Secretary of State*

Moscow, November 24, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received November 24—1:05 p. m.]

1604. My 1603, November 24, 3 p. m.<sup>56</sup> The appointment of Dekanosov,<sup>57</sup> who accompanied Molotov to Berlin, to the post of Ambassador to Germany is presumably the result of the visit to Berlin and probably indicates a desire on the part of the Soviet Government to have a more vigorous Ambassador in Berlin and one who may more authoritatively reflect the views of the Kremlin. Dekanosov, prior to his appointment as Assistant Commissar for Foreign Affairs in

<sup>56</sup> Not printed.

<sup>57</sup> Vladimir Georgevich Dekanozov left for Berlin on November 26. He was received by Ribbentrop on December 12; he did not present his letter of credence to Hitler until December 19, a delay which caused comment in diplomatic circles in Berlin. At the same time, Dekanozov retained his position as Assistant People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union.

June 1939 was as reported in despatch Number 2449, July 6, 1939,<sup>58</sup> Commissar of Internal Affairs of the Georgian Republic, a position in the Soviet Union which could not be occupied by anyone not enjoying the special confidence of Stalin. Insofar as this appointment has any significance apart from the obvious implication of dissatisfaction with the work of the previous Ambassador it would appear to strengthen the diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Repeated to Berlin.

STEINHARDT

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740.0011 European War 1939/6996 : Telegram

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

Moscow, December 4, 1940—2 p. m.

[Received December 4—12:15 p. m.]

1671. The following from the Military Attaché<sup>59</sup> for the War Department: It has been ascertained from a heretofore reliable source that there has recently been effected a withdrawal of Soviet troops from the Soviet-German frontier and as a result the divisions are disposed as follows, which should be compared with the disposition previously reported. The following places are fronts and not military districts and the figures refer to infantry divisions and air divisions (4 to 6 squadrons): Leningrad, infantry 21, air 6; Baltic 18, 4; Poland 32, 11; Rumania 17, 4; Caucasus 10, 3; Far East, no change; general reserve 23, 6. It will be noted that the divisions withdrawn from the frontier have been apparently moved into the interior to form a general reserve and have not been moved to other borders.

THURSTON

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761.62/828 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, December 11, 1940—5 p. m.

[Received 6:15 p. m.]

1709. Embassy's 1696, December 9, 2 p. m.<sup>60</sup> Schnurre informed me this afternoon that his present negotiations with the Soviet authorities related specifically among other matters to the incorporation of German commerce with the former Baltic States into the framework of the Soviet-German economic agreement of February 1940 and that he anticipated this trade would be so included, beginning with the commencement of the second year of the agreement.

In response to an inquiry with respect to the nationalization of firms in the former Baltic States which were German-owned or in

<sup>58</sup> *Foreign Relations, The Soviet Union, 1933-1939*, p. 770.

<sup>59</sup> Maj. Ivan D. Yeaton.

<sup>60</sup> Not printed.

which Germany had a sizeable interest,<sup>61</sup> he stated that certain disadvantages were encountered by firms not nationalized in respect of the obtainment of raw materials, the assurance of engagement of workers, and the assessment of taxes so that Germany was disinclined to insist that such interests be not nationalized. I refer in this connection to my summary November 11, 6 p. m.<sup>62</sup>

STEINHARDT

661.6231/294 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, December 23, 1940—1 p. m.

[Received 1:28 p. m.]

1768. My 1759, December 21, 2 p. m.<sup>63</sup> A member of the German Embassy has stated in confidence that while the economic negotiations with the Soviet Government have been completed and the agreement is ready for signature at the last moment a number of minor questions of a technical nature had arisen which had to be submitted to Berlin and for this reason the anticipated communiqué will be delayed until a reply is [received?]. He repeated his previous assertion that the agreement in the main would be a renewal of the February 11, 1940 agreement, but that the quantity of Soviet grain broken [taken?] would be considerably increased under the forthcoming agreement.<sup>64</sup>

Repeated to Berlin.

STEINHARDT

#### V. WARTIME ATTEMPTS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM AND FRANCE TO OBTAIN CLOSER RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION<sup>65</sup>

751.61/313 : Telegram

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

PARIS, January 11, 1940—noon.

[Received January 11—9:18 a. m.]

58. There has been a considerable demand from the Right in France recently for the breaking of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union.

<sup>61</sup> For information regarding Soviet offers of adequate compensation for property nationalized in the Baltic States and the report of an agreement with Germany, see telegram No. 1731, December 14, 6 p. m., from the Ambassador in the Soviet Union, p. 442.

<sup>62</sup> Telegram No. 1520, p. 440.

<sup>63</sup> Not printed.

<sup>64</sup> The new agreement was signed on January 10, 1941.

<sup>65</sup> For previous correspondence on Anglo-French-Soviet negotiations attempting to reach an agreement against aggression, see *Foreign Relations*, 1939, vol. I, pp. 232 ff.



Coulondre<sup>66</sup> stated to me yesterday that Daladier<sup>67</sup> had now decided not to break relations with the Soviet Union but to use the present wave of emotion against the activities of the Soviet Union to crush the Communist agents of the Soviet Union in France.

BULLITT

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761.6211/320: Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the  
Secretary of State*

Moscow, February 2, 1940—5 p. m.

[Received 6:55 p. m.]

130. My telegram 114, January 30, 11 a. m.<sup>68</sup> During a farewell visit this morning the French Ambassador<sup>69</sup> informed me that although the official reason ascribed for his departure is to take a vacation by reason of his ill-health, he is definitely not returning to Moscow. Expressing himself with great vigor and feeling he stated that for the past 6 weeks he had repeatedly reported to his Government that Soviet-German cooperation<sup>70</sup> was complete in every respect and amounted to collaboration under which Germany was gaining all of the benefits at present describable from an actual military alliance without the disadvantages of having its ally at war and that it was his considered opinion that the collaboration between the two countries will become stronger and more effective rather than weaker as the war progresses. He told me in the strictest confidence that he had advocated to his Government a complete rupture of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union and that it was his personal opinion that Great Britain and France should declare war on the Soviet Union since he was convinced that they would eventually have to do so and that no purpose was being served by giving Germany the benefit of vitally essential imports from neutral countries via the Soviet Union in the meantime. The Ambassador added, however, that he did not believe the French Government at the present time was prepared to take such extreme measures and that unfortunately considerable additional experience would be necessary before the French and British Governments would fully realize that the Soviet Union was in reality an ally of Germany equally bent on defeating England and

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<sup>66</sup> Robert Coulondre, Director of the Cabinet of the Minister for Foreign Affairs; formerly French Ambassador in Germany, 1938-39.

<sup>67</sup> Édouard Daladier, President of the French Council of Ministers until his resignation on March 20, 1940.

<sup>68</sup> Not printed.

<sup>69</sup> Adm. Paul-Emile Naggiar.

<sup>70</sup> For correspondence on the wartime cooperation between Germany and the Soviet Union, see pp. 539 ff.

France and already participating in the war to the extent at present desired by Germany. He attributed this divergence between the views of the French Embassy here and its Government to the fact that no one who has not lived in the Soviet Union and had direct dealings with the Soviet authorities could possibly credit the utterly unprincipled character of the present leaders nor grasp the cold-blooded duplicity and opportunism of their policies and practices. He added in this connection that he felt France and Great Britain had had a lucky escape in having their attempts to conclude an alliance with the Soviet Union fail, as the effect of the inevitable Soviet betrayal after the war had begun would have been extremely bad for the morale of the French and British people. He concluded with the statement that he wished to emphasize that while he entertained these views very strongly and would endeavor to press them on his Government, he doubted that the policies he advocated in regard to the Soviet Union would be followed at least for some time. He added that it was his opinion shared by the entire French Embassy here that the Achilles heel of Germany was now the Soviet Union and that in the last analysis France and England could not defeat Germany within a reasonable period of time unless they succeeded in impairing Soviet direct and indirect assistance to Germany, not necessarily through a military defeat of the Soviet Union but by measures which would so weaken the already fragile Soviet economic system as to make it impossible without risk of internal collapse for the Soviet Government to concentrate on aid to Germany.

In view of the fact that the necessary cables which would permit direct communication with Paris have not yet been received I would appreciate it if the Department would repeat the foregoing to Paris for the information of Ambassador Bullitt.<sup>71</sup>

STEINHARDT

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851.00B/225 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, February 8, 1940—11 a. m.  
[Received 11:05 a. m.]

151. A Tass <sup>72</sup> communiqué published in the press this morning states that on February 5 one hundred plain-clothes men of the French police

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<sup>71</sup> Shown to Ambassador Bullitt on his return to Washington.

<sup>72</sup> Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union; an official communications agency of the Soviet Government.

raided the quarters of the Soviet Trade Delegation in Paris and after holding the employees under temporary detention made a thorough search of the premises and removed a quantity of papers. Similar raids are asserted to have been made on the office of Intourist<sup>73</sup> and on a former Soviet school in Paris. The communiqué states that following the failure of the police to evacuate the premises and return the seized documents on the demand of the Soviet Ambassador,<sup>74</sup> the latter on the same date lodged a protest with the French Government against the action of the police authorities and demanded the termination of the search and the return to the Trade Delegation of all of the seized documents.

Repeated to Paris.

STEINHARDT

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740.0011 European War 1939/1786 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, March 9, 1940—8 p. m.

[Received 8:22 p. m.]

265. A member of the Embassy has been informed by a personal friend who is a Soviet Army officer that an extensive movement of Soviet troops from Moscow to the Caspian Sea area will begin tonight. Included in equipment which will accompany these forces are some 60 large tanks which were personally seen by the members of the Embassy staff in question. The informant further stated that Voroshilov<sup>75</sup> left for the Caspian area on March 6 and advanced as the explanation for these activities the fear which is entertained by the Soviet Government of some act of aggression on the part of the British and French, especially with respect to the Baku oil fields and pipe lines.

The connection between Soviet concern in regard to the Black Sea and Caucasus areas which I have previously reported and the decision to negotiate with Finland<sup>76</sup> would appear to be obvious.

STEINHARDT

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<sup>73</sup> All-Union Corporation for Foreign Tourism in the Soviet Union; the official Soviet travel agency.

<sup>74</sup> Yakov Zakharovich Surits (Suritz).

<sup>75</sup> Marshal Kliment Efreimovich Voroshilov, People's Commissar for Defense in the Soviet Union.

<sup>76</sup> For correspondence regarding relations between Finland and the Soviet Union, the Winter War, and the Peace of Moscow, see pp. 269 ff.

751.61/322 : Telegram

*The Chargé in France (Murphy) to the Secretary of State*

PARIS, March 19, 1940—3 p. m.

[Received March 19—10:38 a. m.]

360. Hoppenot<sup>77</sup> confirms to me the information contained in Steinhart's telegram to the Department 305, March 18, 6 p. m.,<sup>78</sup> adding that Souritz's telegram to Molotov<sup>79</sup> was dispatched from Paris on March 15 *en clair* in the French language. Hoppenot said that the telegram contained language intentionally provocative and insulting regarding both France and England. It congratulated Molotov over the peace with Finland and expressed Souritz's pleasure over the allied failure to "create another theater of war" in Finland branding France and England as instigators of the present war with Germany. The language employed was "eighty teur forty million de guerre".<sup>80</sup>

Hoppenot said that London was consulted immediately and Cadogan<sup>81</sup> said that Maisky<sup>82</sup> had not sent a similar message but if he did the British Government would certainly ask for his recall.

The French Government accordingly instructed Payart<sup>83</sup> on March 16 to inform the Soviet Government that because of Souritz's personal provocative and insulting attitude his continued presence in France could serve no useful purpose, that he was *persona non grata* and should be recalled.

Hoppenot added that if the Soviet Government failed to act, Souritz would be asked to leave the country and would be escorted to the frontier.

Hoppenot said that he has no information regarding the purpose which Souritz may have hoped to achieve by his action. Hoppenot is inclined to think that it is personal with Souritz who may have hoped to impress certain French labor elements and that it is not part of a concerted plan under Moscow's direction. The Foreign Office does not consider that the incident has an important effect on Franco-Soviet relations. He said that the French Government has no thought of severing relations with the Soviet Union.

Repeated to Moscow.

MURPHY

<sup>77</sup> Henri Étienne Hoppenot, member of the French Foreign Office (Under Director for European Affairs).

<sup>78</sup> Not printed.

<sup>79</sup> Vyacheslaw Mikhailovich Molotov, People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union.

<sup>80</sup> This passage is obviously garbled.

<sup>81</sup> Sir Alexander Cadogan, British Permanent Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>82</sup> Ivan Mikhailovich Maisky, Ambassador of the Soviet Union in Great Britain.

<sup>83</sup> Jean Payart, French Chargé in the Soviet Union.

701.6151/47: Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, March 27, 1940—noon.

[Received March 27—10:25 a. m.]

331. An announcement by the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs published in the Soviet press today states that on March 19th the French Chargé informed the People's Commissariat [*Commissar*] for Foreign Affairs, Molotov, that the French Government considered a telegram sent by Suritz, Soviet Ambassador to Paris, to Stalin<sup>84</sup> in connection with the conclusion of the treaty of peace with Finland to be "interference by the Ambassador in the internal political life of France."<sup>85</sup> The announcement, after stating that according to the communication of the French Chargé d'Affaires the French Government considered certain expressions contained in the telegram as "improper" in respect of the French Government, quotes the passages in question which contain a reference to the forestalling by [the] Soviet Union of the "plans of the Anglo-French incendiaries of war" and a statement that in the future the Soviet Union will continue to disrupt the "dark conspiracies of the enemies of Socialism", and adds that although this telegram was not passed by the French censorship the French Government has declared that Suritz is no longer *persona grata* and expresses the hope that he will be recalled by the Soviet Government.

According to the announcement the reply of Lozovski,<sup>86</sup> the Assistant Commissar for Foreign Affairs, transmitted to the French Chargé on March 26th states:

"(1) The Government of the Soviet Union does not in essence find any grounds on which the French Government can no longer consider the Ambassador, Mr. Suritz, *persona grata* by reason of the contents of the telegram to Moscow in which the French Government is not even mentioned.

(2) However, in view of the fact that the French Government has raised in regard to Mr. Suritz a formal question of confidence, the Government of the Soviet Union states that Mr. Suritz is being relieved of his duties as plenipotentiary representative of the Soviet Union in France."

Repeated to Paris.

STEINHARDT

<sup>84</sup> Iosif Vissarionovich Stalin, Secretary General of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks); member of the Politburo and Orghuro of the Party, etc.

<sup>85</sup> In telegram No. 323, March 23, 11 a. m., Ambassador Steinhardt reported that the French Chargé had said that he had seen Molotov on March 21 to request the recall of Suritz (701.6151/46).

<sup>86</sup> Solomon Abramovich Lozovsky.

761.62/641 : Telegram

*The Chargé in France (Murphy) to the Secretary of State*

PARIS, March 27, 1940—4 p. m.  
 [Received March 27—4 p. m.]

395. Steinhardt's telegram No. 324, March 23 noon.<sup>87</sup> Hoppenot told me this morning that the Foreign Office is informed that Molotov has canceled his visit to Berlin. One of the reasons attributed by the Foreign Office to this cancellation is the Souritz affair. Hoppenot said that French policy in regard to the Soviet Union is designed to prove to the latter that its present relationship with Germany is a mistake. He said that every time there is an incident such as the Souritz case the French Government will take pains to convey to Moscow that the reason therefor is not hostility to the Soviet Union but only the latter's affiliation with Germany. He said for example that it might even come to pass that Soviet cargoes of metals and other Soviet supplies for Germany might be interfered with or sunk and that should such occasions arise the Allies will always emphasize that their action is directed against Germany rather than against the Soviets.

Hoppenot said that the Foreign Office is convinced that Russian mentality is best adapted to that sort of language.

Repeat to Moscow.

MURPHY

701.6151/48 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, March 28, 1940—noon.  
 [Received 3:55 p. m.]

335. My telegram No. 323, March 23, 11 a. m.<sup>87</sup> The French Chargé told me in strict confidence yesterday that in delivering to him the reply of the Soviet Government on March 26 concerning the recall of Suritz, Molotov had inquired why the French Government had chosen to receive [*seize?*] upon the incident of the telegram and had implied that in the opinion of the Soviet Government there were motives of policy behind the request for the recall of Suritz. When the Chargé d'Affaires had told him that in his opinion it was simply that because of this incident Suritz had become personally unac-

<sup>87</sup> Not printed.

ceptable to the French Government, Molotov appeared distinctly relieved at the intimation that the request for Suritz's recall had not been motivated by reason of policy.

As of possible interest in connection with the general subject of the present trend of Soviet maneuvers in regard to England and France a member of the British Embassy has stated in confidence that according to the latest reports from London, Maiski has been very active in attempting to convince the British Government that the Soviet Union is genuinely neutral in regard to the European war and that the relations between the Soviet Union and Germany are not in reality as close as they may appear. According to my informant, Maiski has urged upon the British Government the desirability of adopting a more friendly attitude toward the Soviet Government in order to avoid pushing that country "into the arms of Germany."

The foregoing constitutes increasing evidence of support of the view previously reported (see my telegram No. 328, March 25, 2 p. m.<sup>89</sup>) that the Soviet Government will endeavor to avert or at least forestall any rupture with England and France which might lead to hostilities with those countries by a resumption of attempts to hold out the hope of an alteration in Soviet policy toward Germany. While it may be accepted that the Soviet Government, following the termination of hostilities with Finland, in its own self-interest will endeavor to avoid too great a degree of dependency upon Germany, the transference of any maneuver designed to convey the impression of a basic alteration in its policy toward Germany is obvious. All the evidence at my disposal indicates that in reality the policy of collaboration with Germany will continue and as previously reported I have reason to believe, based on statements from members of the German Embassy here, that Germany, far from discouraging any attempt of the Soviet Union to relieve the strain on its relations with England and France, may well have advised such a course.

In connection with the foregoing it is regarded as probable that Molotov's speech at the forthcoming session of the Supreme Soviet<sup>90</sup> will lay emphasis on the "neutrality" of the Soviet Union and a desire on the part of the Soviet Union for good relations with all countries.

STEINHARDT

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<sup>89</sup> Not printed.

<sup>90</sup> The substance of Molotov's speech before the Supreme Council (Soviet) on the evening of March 29 was reported and commented upon by the Chargé in the Soviet Union in his telegrams No. 337, March 29, No. 338, March 30, and No. 341, April 1, vol. III, pp. 191, 192, and 193, respectively.

740.0011 European War 1939/1911 : Telegram

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

LONDON, March 29, 1940—8 p. m.  
[Received March 29—4:43 p. m.]

778. Personal for the Secretary. I have just seen Halifax.<sup>91</sup> Regarding the meeting yesterday of the Supreme War Council, he said that they had quite a session. He said he found no unanimity among them on all questions. First of all it was very apparent that Daladier did not have to resign; that nobody expected he would, and that the Chamber were more shocked than anybody else when he took the step.

Some of the French want action, but when asked what kind of action they have not a very satisfactory reply. The French strangely enough do not want universal bombing to start as they do not want to have it in their own backyard. They advocate some action against the Russians particularly in Baku, but Halifax said he told them that Maisky had come to him 2 days ago with direct instructions from Stalin to tell him that he would like to make some trade arrangements with England and might possibly entertain a trade agreement. Halifax said he told Maisky that sounded very strange, but since England was now dedicated to licking Germany, the only kind of an agreement they could enter into with Russia would be one that had the defeat of Germany in the background and one of the first things they would have to have before taking action would be an understanding and agreement that their ships could be stopped for contraband that might be going to Germany. When Maisky admitted that this did not shock him Halifax said, "Well, at any rate, let's see what suggestions you have." Halifax said he was stalled 6 months by Maisky and the Russians and did not want to be stalled again. However, some of the French were therefore anxious that England pursue this policy with Russia because they felt that if Russia could be won away that would be the end of Germany. Others of the French regarded it all as eye-wash and did not think there was anything to it. I think that Halifax feels that Russia does not want to be on the side of Germany and that there is better than an even chance that they might work out something with them. I asked him if the French action in sending the Soviet Ambassador home indicated that they were dedicated to a policy that might mean

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<sup>91</sup> Edward Wood, Viscount Halifax, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.



trouble between the two countries and he said that now the French would not do anything unless the British came along.

As to the Balkan situation both they and the French have made up their minds that they do not want any fighting in the Balkans.<sup>92</sup> Halifax thinks that all the Balkan States have made up their minds to the same thing.

He said one place where things are going very much better for the British is in Japan. They still hope to work out the silver agreement in a manner that will not be unsatisfactory to the United States.<sup>93</sup>

The Allied Supreme Council is convinced that Germany will start a much more energetic campaign of bombing ships, but that she will not bomb London or any important cities. They think that Hitler's<sup>94</sup> advisers, who are on top at the moment, are saying, "Keep on irritating the neutrals and spreading propaganda, which you do much better than the democracies, and it will get you much better results."

He sensed some difficulty for the Reynaud<sup>95</sup> government on the ground that they had pledged a more aggressive war policy, but Halifax does not see just where the issue is to be joined up.

It really looks to me like the real complaint the British have against Hitler is that he is not cooperating with them in helping the British win the war.

KENNEDY

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641.6131/208 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, April 22, 1940—5 p. m.

[Received 8 : 02 p. m.]

428. With reference to a British radio report concerning the possibility of renewed trade negotiations between the Soviet Union and Great Britain I am of the opinion that the Soviet authorities are quite willing to enter into such negotiations provided any agreement arrived at would not interfere with Soviet commitments to Germany. Nothing on the subject has thus far appeared in the Soviet press.<sup>96</sup>

STEINHARDT

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<sup>92</sup> For correspondence concerning the activities of the Soviet Union in the Balkans, see pp. 444 ff.

<sup>93</sup> For correspondence regarding this negotiation, see vol. iv, pp. 840 ff.

<sup>94</sup> Adolf Hitler, Führer and Chancellor of the German Reich from January 30, 1933; Chief of State from August 2, 1934.

<sup>95</sup> Paul Reynaud, President of the French Council of Ministers from March 21, 1940.

<sup>96</sup> The Under Secretary of State, Sumner Welles, noted in a memorandum of April 22, that the Marquess of Lothian, the British Ambassador, had called to tell him that the Soviet Government "had taken the initiative in proposing a trade agreement" with Great Britain. "The British Government had replied that before giving any indication it would have to obtain from the Soviet Government a clear statement of the bases for such proposed trade agreement together with assurances that the latter Government would not permit supplies covered by the trade agreement to reach German hands." (641.6131/209)

740.0011 European War 1939/2485 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, April 25, 1940—5 p. m.

[Received 5:28 p. m.]

449. In the course of a conversation yesterday with the British Chargé,<sup>97</sup> he expressed the view that there has been no fundamental change in Soviet foreign policy since the conclusion of the Soviet-Finnish peace. He gave it as his opinion that for the time being at least the Soviet Government would continue to pursue a policy of close cooperation with Germany insofar as concerns deliveries under the recent commercial agreements<sup>98</sup> and would lend its active political and diplomatic support to Germany while at the same time endeavoring to placate England and France insofar as the latter objective does not in any manner impair the existing relations between Germany and the U. S. S. R.

The French Chargé on the other hand is of the opinion that little importance should be attached to any apparent attempt by the Soviet Government to placate England and France as he suspects the ulterior motive at German instigation of persuading England and France into the mistaken belief that a wedge can ultimately be driven between Germany and the Soviet Union thereby according Germany substantial advantages in the prosecution of the war.

STEINHARDT

641.6131/211 : Telegram

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

LONDON, May 14, 1940—noon.

[Received May 14—6:30 a. m.]

1198. Personal for the Secretary. My 778, March 29, 8 p. m., second paragraph, and 1057, April 26, 1 p. m., last paragraph.<sup>99</sup> In conversation with Halifax he told me the British had handed their

<sup>97</sup> John H. LeRougetel.<sup>98</sup> An economic agreement between Germany and the Soviet Union was signed at Moscow on February 11, 1940. For a summary of its terms, see memorandum of February 26, by Dr. Karl Schnurre, Head of the Eastern European and Baltic Section of the Commercial Policy Division of the German Foreign Office, printed in Department of State, *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941* (Washington, 1948), p. 131. See also telegram No. 172, February 13, 1 p. m., from the Chargé in the Soviet Union, and telegram No. 186, February 18, 5 p. m., from the Ambassador in the Soviet Union, *ante*, pp. 544 and 546, respectively.<sup>99</sup> Latter telegram not printed. Ambassador Kennedy here reported that "Halifax feels that it is extremely unlikely that anything will come from the talks with the Russians regarding a trade agreement because the basic demand of the British is that the Russians cut down their trade with Germany." (740.0011 European War 1939/2497)

note to Maisky on the Russian trade situation. Maisky was very indignant with the strict rules and therefore Halifax is convinced they will get a very sharp turndown from the Russians. Then they have two alternatives: either not to play with the Russians at all and call it all off or agree to a barter deal, letting the contraband situation stand as is. I think at the present time the Foreign Office feels it might be just as well to try and keep from an open break with Russia but events may change this in a comparatively short time.

KENNEDY

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740.0011 European War 1939/3198 : Telegram

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

PARIS, May 21, 1940—noon.

[Received May 21—9:16 a. m.]

785. I was introduced to the new Secretary General of the French Foreign Office, François Charles Roux, this morning by Charvériat.<sup>1</sup> In the course of the conversation which followed, Charvériat and Roux stated that the British Government believed that the present moment was an appropriate one to suggest to the Soviet Government that the German armies were overrunning Europe with such speed that it would not be long before they might be able to turn against the Soviet Government and that the Soviet Government in its own interest should diminish supplies to Germany.

They then asked me if the American Government might not get in contact with the Soviet Government and suggest that as two great neutral peoples who might some day be menaced by Germany, the American Government and the Soviet Government should withhold any supplies possible from Germany.

I expressed extreme skepticism as to the utility of any such *démarche*.

The new Secretary General and Charvériat nevertheless asked me if I would transmit this suggestion to my Government. I said that I would do so.

In my own opinion such a *démarche* would be worse than useless but I should be glad to have your opinion on this subject.

BULLITT

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740.0011 European War 1939/3198 : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, May 21, 1940—6 p. m.

429. Your 785, May 21, noon. We fully approve the attitude which you assumed with respect to this request. We are convinced

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<sup>1</sup> Émile Charvériat, Director of Political and Commercial Affairs in the French Foreign Office.

on the basis of such information as we possess regarding the present position of the Soviet Union that a *démarche* such as that suggested would serve no useful purpose just now.

HULL

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740.0011 European War 1939/3238 : Telegram

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

PARIS, May 22, 1940—4 p. m.  
[Received May 22—1:44 p. m.]

815. Pierre Cot, former Minister of Air, has been ordered by Paul Reynaud to proceed to Moscow this evening in order to attempt to persuade the Bolsheviks to reduce their deliveries of supplies to Germany.

He called on me this afternoon and asked me whether or not the United States would be disposed to make deliveries of commodities that the Bolsheviks might want greatly if the Bolsheviks should promise to reduce their deliveries to Germany.

I replied that we were not so induced as to consider that a Bolshevik promise was worth anything. I thought, however, that if during the period of the next 6 months the Bolsheviks should reduce greatly their deliveries to Germany we might regard them with a less clear eye.

BULLITT

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641.6131/212 : Telegram

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

Moscow, May 23, 1940—1 p. m.  
[Received 9 p. m.]

574. The Moscow press of May 22 published a lengthy Tass communiqué stating that incorrect reports have been appearing in the foreign press misrepresenting the progress and character of the preliminary Soviet-British trade negotiations and that accordingly Tass has been authorized to make a statement on the subject.

The communiqué states that in the autumn of 1939 Halifax informed Maiski of the British Government's desire to institute trade negotiations with the Soviet Government, and that in reply the latter expressed agreement in principle on the conduct of such negotiations. It remarks that, however, such British measures as the cancellation of Soviet orders for equipment, the detention of Soviet merchant vessels, the hostile attitude displayed toward the Soviet Union during the Soviet-Finnish war and the leading role played by the British in bringing about the exclusion of the Soviet Union from the League

of Nations,<sup>2</sup> were not conducive to the satisfactory development of these negotiations.

On March 18, 1940, after the conclusion of the Soviet-Finnish peace treaty, the communiqué continues, the British Foreign Office again proposed to Maiski that trade negotiations be commenced, and on March 27 Maiski informed Halifax that the Soviet Government was willing provided the British Government would express its actual readiness to seek a favorable solution to questions of Anglo-Soviet trade and, in particular, prior to the institution of negotiations, release the Soviet vessels *Selenga* and *Mayakovski*.

On April 19, 1940, according to the communiqué, Halifax handed a reply to Maiski wherein the British Government, besides expressing the desire to learn the concrete proposals of the Soviet Government concerning a trade agreement, demanded guarantees that the goods imported by the Soviet Union would be intended for consumption in the Soviet Union and not for Germany, and furthermore connected the question of the conclusion of a Soviet-British trade agreement with the limitation of trade relations between the Soviet Union and Germany. On April 29, Maiski communicated to Halifax the Soviet reply to these proposals, which pointed out that the Soviet Union has traded and will continue to trade with both belligerent and neutral countries on the basis of its own requirements as regards imports and exports; that the Soviet Union has a trade agreement with Germany which it is fulfilling and will continue to fulfill and which it does not consider as a permissible subject of negotiations with third countries; that the Soviet Government is agreeable to a restoration of trade relations with England on the basis of reciprocity and as long as such an agreement will not require violation of the trade obligations of either party toward other countries; that the Soviet Government has in mind negotiations concerning an agreement by which the Soviet Union assures imports of goods from England for Soviet needs and not for export to other countries; and that the release of the vessels above mentioned would be the best condition for the commencement of negotiations and the conclusion of an agreement.

In reply, the communiqué states, Halifax gave Maiski a memorandum on May 8 in which, instead of making concrete proposals concerning trade negotiations, the British Government raised a whole series of new questions concerning Soviet-German trade relations, made merely formal reference to fact that the Soviet vessels mentioned had been transferred to the French Government, and proposed the conclusion of an agreement for the control of contraband. The

<sup>2</sup> For correspondence concerning the exclusion of the Soviet Union on December 14, 1939, from the League of Nations, see *Foreign Relations, The Soviet Union, 1933-1939*, pp. 800-806.

memorandum reemphasized the British Government's wish to subordinate Soviet-British trade relations to the tasks of the war being conducted by England.

On May 20, the communiqué continues, Molotov dispatched the Soviet reply to this memorandum which emphasized the fact that the Soviet Government could not subordinate Soviet trade policy to the war tasks of one foreign state or another. The Soviet reply also stated that:

"The Soviet Union as a sovereign state, will conduct its foreign trade with both belligerent and neutral countries on the principles of complete equality of the parties and the reciprocity of obligations.

"The new questions set forth in the memorandum of May 8, 1940, of Mr. Halifax concerning trade between the Soviet Union and Germany belong entirely and completely within the jurisdiction of the Soviet Government and cannot be a subject of discussion in trade negotiations between the Soviet Union and Britain. The Soviet Government has already declared on April 29, 1940, that it intends to import goods from Britain for Soviet needs and not for export to other countries.

"The explanations of the British Government regarding the detention of the Soviet ships *Selenga* and *Mayakovski* cannot be acknowledged as convincing and the Soviet Government considers the British Government to be responsible for the detention of the said ships.

"The Soviet Government notes that the fact itself of the British Government's raising for discussion questions belonging exclusively to the jurisdiction of the Soviet Government does not indicate the existence of a desire on the part of the British Government to conduct trade negotiations with the Soviet Union."

The principal interest of the foregoing communiqué at the present time lies in the indication which it gives that an exchange of communications between the Soviet and British Governments, concerning trade negotiations has continued down to date.

THURSTON

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641.6131/214

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Adviser on International  
Economic Affairs (Feis)*

[WASHINGTON,] May 23, 1940.

Mr. Butler, Counselor of the British Embassy, called in order to give the Department certain information in connection with reports of possible discussions between the British and Soviet Governments for a trade agreement. He said that the British Government had approached the Soviet Government with a view to seeing whether an agreement was possible. He said that the British had had three ideas in initiating this effort:

(1) To try if possible to get an agreement whereby if Great Britain furnished supplies to Russia they would be assured they would not go into Germany or replace Russian production that went into Germany.

(2) To get supplies from Russia that otherwise might be sent to Germany.

(3) To try to get an agreement for controlling the traffic through Vladivostok.

He said that the Soviet Government had stated that the form in which it might be willing to consider it was a "barter agreement". The Russian Government avoided other aspects of the matter. He said at the same time the Russian Government had indicated a wish for "personal contact" and had hinted that the establishment of personal contact might be useful for the discussion of political questions as well as of economic. Accordingly Sir Stafford Cripps was being sent. He said however that Cripps was being sent merely for preliminary exploration and without any authority to sign an agreement.

Mr. Butler promised to keep the Department informed.

I thanked him for this information and said that I had no comment to make, certainly not before consulting other Divisions of the Department. One American interest which I knew we would feel it important for Great Britain to bear in mind was to avoid impairment of our normal sales to Russia, especially of our agricultural products.

The Counselor then asked whether we have received word from London regarding conversations between the British and Japanese Governments along the lines that Ashton-Gwatkin<sup>3</sup> had explained the British Government had in contemplation. I said that so far as I knew no word had been received from London. He explained that as a matter of fact the discussions had not actually assumed any importance up to the present. The Counselor of the Japanese Embassy in London<sup>3a</sup> had been authorized to discuss the question with the Ministry of Economic Blockade and had had one talk. In that talk the Japanese Counselor had stated that Japan would be more interested in the type of payments agreement that the British Government was suggesting if the whole Empire were included. The British Government had replied that this would raise problems of Imperial relationships and would be very difficult. The Japanese Counselor is now awaiting further instructions.

The Counselor promised to keep the Department further informed on this subject so far as he could.

<sup>3</sup> Frank Trelawny Arthur Ashton-Gwatkin, Policy Adviser in the British Ministry of Economic Warfare.

<sup>3a</sup> M. Okamoto.

741.61/890: Telegram

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

Moscow, May 29, 1940—11 p. m.

[Received May 29—8: 25 p. m.]

600. Embassy's telegram No. 584, May 25.<sup>4</sup> A Tass despatch was issued tonight stating that Molotov has instructed Maiski to advise the British Government that the proposed mission to Moscow of Sir Stafford Cripps is unacceptable to the Soviet Government and that if the British Government desires to conduct trade negotiations with the Soviet Government "and not simply confine itself to talk of a nonexistent change in the relations between England and the Soviet Union" it can do so through its Ambassador at Moscow, Mr. William Seeds,<sup>5</sup> or in the event that he is not returning to his post, through his successor.

THURSTON

701.4161/38: Telegram

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

Moscow, June 5, 1940—10 a. m.

[Received June 5—8 a. m.]

624. The press today publishes the following Foreign Office statement:

"On June 4, Mr. Le Rougetel, the British Chargé d'Affaires, called on Comrade Molotov, the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the U. S. S. R., and informed him of the intention of the British Government to replace Mr. Seeds in the post of British Ambassador to the U. S. S. R. by Mr. Cripps, who will have the rights of an ordinary Ambassador without any extraordinary functions. Comrade Molotov replied that the Soviet Government does not object."<sup>6</sup>

With regard to final phrase of the foregoing statement a Secretary of the British Embassy has informed a member of the Embassy staff in strict confidence that the Soviet Government was requested to accept Sir Stafford Cripps as a special Ambassador but declined to do so. The same informant stated, however, that he did not expect that Cripps would remain in Moscow as Ambassador for more than a brief period.

THURSTON

<sup>4</sup> Not printed.<sup>5</sup> Sir William Seeds, British Ambassador to the Soviet Union since January 1939, who left after the outbreak of the Finnish-Soviet war.<sup>6</sup> On the same day the French Chargé informed Molotov of the desire to replace Admiral Naggiar as French Ambassador by Erik Labonne, to which Molotov foresaw no objection.



740.0011 European War 1939/3643 : Telegram

*The Minister in Bulgaria (Earle) to the Secretary of State*

SOFIA, June 10, 1940—5 p. m.

[Received 8:40 p. m.]

59. Have had a conversation with Sir Stafford Cripps, new British Ambassador to Russia, passing through en route to Moscow.

He says there has been tremendous change in the last 2 weeks in the attitude of Russia toward France and Great Britain. He states he has real hope of something "very constructive" being arranged.

He believes Russia at last realizes that Germany's war machine in the event of conquest of France and Britain will not be disbanded until Russia is crushed.

EARLE

740.0011 European War 1939/4031 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State*

MOSCOW VIA TOKYO, June 20, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received June 20—7:45 a. m.]

The following telegram has been received from Moscow for transmission to the Department.

"713. June 19, 6 p. m. The newly appointed British Ambassador, Sir Stafford Cripps, informed me this afternoon that he has tentatively taken up with Molotov the subject of a switch in Soviet policy away from Germany to active support of France and Great Britain. While this approach was made several days ago, prior to the breaking of the French Army, and was supported by Labonne, the new French Ambassador, it is Cripps' intention to follow it up and he is awaiting a new appointment with Molotov for that purpose. He stated that he has suggested to his Government that the British Ambassador at Washington be instructed to say to the President or the Secretary that it would be helpful if the Government of the United States would intimate to the Soviet Government that it would welcome such a shift.<sup>7</sup> The principal argument put forward by the British and French Ambassadors apparently was that it is in the immediate self-interest of the Soviet Government to prevent German domination in Europe as it has been reported by British and French agents in Germany that once the Allied forces operating in Europe have been disposed of Germany will turn against the Soviet Union. Molotov apparently did not reject the argument.

The Ambassador also stated that he has discussed with the Turkish Ambassador here<sup>8</sup> the advisability of the formation of a Soviet-Turkish association for the preservation of the *status quo* in the

<sup>7</sup> See the memorandum of June 18 by the Under Secretary of State of a conversation with the British Ambassador, vol. III, p. 321.

<sup>8</sup> Ali Haydar Aktay.

Balkans. The Turkish Ambassador seemingly acquiesced but pointed out that the present pro-German Government in Rumania would vitiate such an association and that moreover he is inclined to believe that the Soviet Government may decide this week to move against Bessarabia.<sup>9</sup> Thurston.”

GREW

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740.0011 European War 1939/4112 : Telegram

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

Moscow, June 22, 1940—midnight.

[Received June 22—11:02 p. m.]

732. The Tass communiqué reported in my 731<sup>10</sup> would appear to confirm statements made to me this evening by the Counselor of the Italian Embassy, Mr. Mascia, that Ambassador Rosso had inquired of Molotov with respect to the activities of the new British and French Ambassadors. Molotov replied that Labonne “appealed” for help of the Soviet Union in preserving European equilibrium and that he had informed Labonne coldly that the preservation of “French equilibrium” was not a matter of concern to the Soviet Government. Cripps, according to Molotov, had suggested that Soviet interests lay with those of the Allies and that the Soviet Union should assume [the] role in the Balkans to which it is entitled. Molotov’s reply to Cripps, while less abrupt, is said to have conveyed the intimation that the Soviet Government does not require assistance in judging where its interests lie. Further confirmation may perhaps be inferred from the fact that Molotov has not yet granted Cripps the further interview he requested several days ago.

Despite the foregoing, however, it is generally believed here that the Soviet Government is in fact disturbed by the prospect of an early German victory. It is also believed to be true that Soviet forces in considerable strength have been distributed to cover the western frontier. Moreover, whether as a result of loquacity on the part of the British and French Embassies (members of each of which have informed members of this Embassy of the general trend of the British and French efforts and may have informed others thereof as well) or merely because it is a logical assumption, the impression has become general in Moscow that an attempt is being made to bring about a shift in Soviet policy. It is probable, therefore, that the communiqué cited is largely designed to mollify the German Government.

THURSTON

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<sup>9</sup> For correspondence regarding the seizure of Bessarabia by the Soviet Union, see pp. 444 ff.

<sup>10</sup> June 22, 10 p. m., p. 556.

740.0011 European War 1939/4765 : Telegram

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

Moscow, July 20, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received 6 : 20 p. m.]

884. Secretary Thayer<sup>11</sup> was present at a small dinner in the British officer's residence last night during which Hitler's speech to the Reichstag<sup>12</sup> was listened to and commented on by the British Ambassador. In view of Sir Stafford Cripps' political associations, it is believed that Mr. Thayer's report may be of interest to the Department.

"After listening to Hitler's speech, the Ambassador characterized it 'excellent and very clever' and said that it would undoubtedly cause much heart searching in England, even among Cabinet members confronted with the question of the advisability of coming to terms with Hitler. He said that he believes the chief difficulty in coming to terms would be the divergence of opinion in London as to British war aims—as among the members of the War Cabinet, two could not be found who would agree on the definition of these aims.

Commenting on Hitler's statement that attempts to drive a wedge between Russia and Germany were doomed to failure, Sir Stafford said: 'I cannot of course agree with that.' He remarked subsequently that if Russia were willing to put 3000 tanks into action, the Red Army could be in Berlin within 3 weeks and expressed the opinion that the success of the Russian action in the Baltic<sup>13</sup> was evidence of Germany's high opinion of Russian military strength and added that there could be no doubt that Berlin was 'incensed' by the Soviet invasion of that area."

While it is possible that the British Ambassador may have some justification for his implied optimism with respect to the vulnerability of the present German-Soviet association (both the British Embassy and the press department of the Soviet Foreign Office refuse to comment on a recent B. B. C.<sup>14</sup> announcement of an extended interview between Sir Stafford and Stalin<sup>15</sup>) it may safely be asserted that he overestimates the might of the Soviet Army.

THURSTON

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<sup>11</sup> Charles Wheeler Thayer, Vice Consul and Third Secretary of Embassy in the Soviet Union.

<sup>12</sup> Speech of July 19, 1940, offering peace proposals to Great Britain. See the *New York Times*, July 20, 1940, p. 5.

<sup>13</sup> For correspondence concerning the occupation of the Baltic States and their incorporation into the Soviet Union, see pp. 357 ff.

<sup>14</sup> British Broadcasting Corporation.

<sup>15</sup> This meeting occurred on July 1, 1940. For text of the memorandum of this conversation given by Molotov to the German Ambassador, Friedrich Werner, Count von der Schulenburg, see *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941*, p. 166.

811.24544/1 : Telegram

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

Moscow, August 19, 1940—noon.

[Received 3 : 15 p. m.]

1037. Referring to the Embassy's telegram 1038 which follows.<sup>16</sup> While such comment has been critical of the "imperialist" motives and intentions of the United States, the reiteration of the view that the United States has determined to support England and to continue to oppose Nazi Germany even should England be defeated may indicate that such a prospect is not entirely displeasing to the Soviet Government.

THURSTON

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641.6131/216 : Telegram

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

Moscow, August 22, 1940—11 a. m.

[Received 11 : 30 a. m.]

1051. I am informed in confidence by a member of the British Embassy that yesterday Mikoyan,<sup>17</sup> the Commissar for Foreign Trade, unexpectedly invited the British Ambassador and the British Commercial Secretary here to come to see him today for the purpose of discussing general questions relating to Soviet-British trade. The informant stated that Mikoyan's request was of interest inasmuch as during the last few weeks discussions concerning Soviet-British trade had been allowed to lapse and there had been no indication from London of any new developments in that field. In addition the informant stated that as of interest in connection with the foregoing the Soviet Military Attaché in London had been very anxious to obtain confirmatory evidence of German air losses claimed by the British Government and had asked to be shown the wreckage or other evidence of the planes brought down.

THURSTON

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<sup>16</sup> Not printed. In this telegram the Chargé reported that a number of articles in Soviet periodicals "have uniformly expressed the view that the United States is moving rapidly in the direction of more active assistance to Great Britain and is doing everything in its power to encourage England to continue the war in order that the United States may establish its hegemony over Latin America while the war in Europe is in progress." (811.24544/2)

<sup>17</sup> Anastas Ivanovich Mikoyan.

741.61/898 : Telegram

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

Moscow, August 27, 1940—11 a. m.

[Received 3:30 p. m.]

1078. I am informed in strict confidence by a member of the British Embassy that the meeting between Mikoyan and the British Ambassador was not "encouraging" and that Mikoyan had merely said that the Soviet Government was interested in obtaining certain specific and restricted categories of material from England and would exchange for an equivalent amount of Soviet products. Mikoyan, however, was unable to give any assurances in regard to reexport to Germany and refused to admit that there could be any connection with or restrictions on Soviet trade with Germany as a result of unsuitable [*a suitable?*] arrangement with England. In this connection he referred vaguely to the political situation as not being propitious. According to the informant while conversations might be continued there appeared to be little prospect of modification in the immediate future of Soviet attitude toward its economic commitments to Germany.

With reference to the attempts of Sir Stafford Cripps in Moscow to bring about an improvement of British-Soviet relations and to draw the Soviet Union away from Germany, from the same source I have learned in the strictest confidence that when Cripps saw Stalin some weeks ago (see Embassy's 884, July 20, 4 p. m.) he pointed out at great length that Russia's real interest lay with England since in the event of a complete German victory Russia would alone almost certainly have to fight Germany; by this time Stalin while admitting that everything was possible in international affairs made it quite clear that he did not feel in a position to risk a conflict with Germany's Army at the present time and appeared to prefer the possibility of a future war with Germany to the very real risk of a military defeat at the present time. While the foregoing interview took place some six weeks ago, it is believed to be of considerable interest. Stalin's statement in the opinion of the Embassy is a very frank and realistic statement of the attitude of the Soviet Government in the present situation. As of possible interest in relation to the foregoing it has been ascertained from a foreign newspaper source that Stalin is believed to have been very much annoyed that the report of the meeting with Cripps had leaked out into the foreign press and that this may be one of the reasons why he has shown no disposition to see the British Ambassador since that time.

THURSTON

741.61/899 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, September 22, 1940—6 p. m.  
[Received September 23—10 : 32 a. m.]

1202. The British Ambassador called on me yesterday and in the course of an extended and I believe very frank conversation discussed the entire field of British-Soviet relations, various negotiations with Soviet officials and his personal views concerning present Soviet policy. Sir Stafford's remarks on the more important subjects touched upon may be summarized as follows:

1. Conversation with Stalin: The Ambassador informed me that Stalin had been extremely frank, realistic and outspoken during his interview with him and although the conversation had been confined to a general evaluation of the present European situation with no proposals being advanced by either side, Stalin had made it quite clear that his present policy was designed to avoid the involvement of the Soviet Union in the war and, in particular to avoid a conflict with the German Army. Stalin had admitted that Germany constituted the only real threat to the Soviet Union and that a German victory would place the Soviet Union in a difficult if not dangerous position but he felt that it was impossible at the present time to invite the certainty of a German invasion of the Soviet Union by any alteration of Soviet policy. Stalin had said that he preferred to run the risk of war with Germany without allies in the event of a British defeat, because he believed (a) that even should Germany be victorious over Great Britain, German military power would be appreciably weakened, and (b) after the efforts involved in the present war it would be very difficult for the Nazi leaders to persuade the German people to embark on a new major military objective.

2. Trade negotiations with Soviet officials: The Ambassador stated that in contrast to the frankness and realism of Stalin, other Soviet officials, notably Molotov, Mikoyan and latterly Vishinski,<sup>18</sup> with whom he had dealt, had been evasive and noncommittal in their dealings with them [*him*] on the question of a trade agreement between the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics and Britain. He stated that following his arrival here at the end of June<sup>19</sup> the negotiations had apparently begun rather auspiciously, but that during the last 10 weeks the Soviet Government had allowed these negotiations to

<sup>18</sup> Andrey Yanuaryevich Vyshinsky, Assistant People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union.

<sup>19</sup> Sir Stafford Cripps had arrived in Moscow on June 12, 1940.

lapse, a change in attitude which he attributed in part to the collapse of France<sup>20</sup> and the consequent elimination of the only other continental army which might have opposed Germany. He confirmed the fact that recently Mikoyan had proposed an agreement for a limited exchange of British rubber for Soviet flax. The Ambassador said that he had told Mikoyan that Great Britain was not interested in a limited exchange of specific commodities but only in a general trade agreement. The Ambassador said that in his most recent interview with Vishinski he had expressed his dissatisfaction with the evasive tactics of Soviet officials on the question of a general trade agreement and that Vishinski had finally said to him that the Soviet Government was not disposed to continue the negotiations, unless the British Government would release the gold and ships which had been sequestered following the incorporation of the Baltic States. The Ambassador added in this connection that he had been informed by his Foreign Office that the British refusal to release the gold of the Baltic States had been taken at the instance of the American Government, and went on to state that in his opinion there was no necessity for the British Government to continue to accede to this request, inasmuch as it was quite possible for the British Government, being at war, to pursue one policy [in] this matter for obvious reasons without impairing the position adopted in principle by the United States. I received a strong impression that one of Sir Stafford's purposes was to enlist my support in suggesting to the Department that it reconsider its request of the British Government on the subject of the withholding of the gold of the Baltic States.

3. Soviet-Turkish relations: The Ambassador told me that Stalin had dwelt at length on Soviet-Turkish relations and had made clear his desire to obtain for the Soviet Union a voice in the régime of the Dardanelles. He said he had gained the impression that while Stalin's preference would be for joint Soviet-Turkish control of the Straits and possibly one or more bases in the vicinity, he would be satisfied with a commitment on the part of the Turkish Government to consult the Soviet Union before taking any action under the Montreux Convention.<sup>21</sup> The Ambassador gained the impression that Stalin was seeking to enlist British support to achieve his objective.

Sir Stafford was extremely outspoken in his criticism of previous British statesmanship and diplomacy as well as the internal régime

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<sup>20</sup> For correspondence concerning the invasion of France by Germany and the collapse of French resistance, see pp. 217 ff.

<sup>21</sup> Signed July 20, 1936; for text, see League of Nations Treaty Series, vol. CLXXXIII, p. 215. For correspondence regarding the conference on the Straits held at Montreux June 22–July 20, 1936, see *Foreign Relations*, 1936, vol. III, pp. 503 ff.

in England. He said that even now, although certain important and needed changes had been made since the formation of the Churchill Cabinet,<sup>22</sup> the retention of Chamberlain<sup>23</sup> and other diehards continued to operate as a brake on the fullest development of Britain's war effort.

In conclusion the Ambassador admitted to me quite frankly that he was extremely [gloomy] and disappointed as a result of his efforts in Moscow and felt that he had accomplished virtually nothing since his arrival. He said that he had reached the very definite conclusion following his conversation with Stalin and his contact with other Soviet officials that any alteration of Soviet policy toward Germany would only occur when the military power of Germany had been sufficiently impaired to obviate the possibility of a German invasion of Russia and that consequently any hope of even indirect Soviet assistance in the immediate future would depend on the ability of Great Britain to withstand the German attack and by so doing to seriously impair German military power.

STEINHARDT

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741.61/899 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the Soviet Union*  
(Steinhardt)

WASHINGTON, September 25, 1940—8 p. m.

586. Information contained in your 1202 of September 22, 6 p. m., appreciated. The British Ambassador apparently has been misinformed by his Foreign Office. This Government has never requested or suggested that the British Government refuse to release the gold. In response to queries from members of the British Embassy, members of the Department on several occasions have endeavored to explain the position of the American Government in this regard. They have made it clear, however, that since the international situation of Great Britain is quite different from that of the United States each country must feel free in situations of this kind to adopt such policies as it may deem most likely to serve its interests. This information is for your own personal use and background.

HULL

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<sup>22</sup> The government formed by Winston S. Churchill as Prime Minister and Minister of Defence took office on May 10, 1940.

<sup>23</sup> Neville Chamberlain was Prime Minister until May 10, 1940, remaining as Lord President of the Council in the Churchill Cabinet until his resignation on October 3, 1940.



762.9411/81: Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, October 2, 1940—10 a. m.

[Received 4:21 p. m.]

1262. The British Ambassador called on me this afternoon by appointment to discuss the possible consequences of the German-Italian-Japanese alliance.<sup>24</sup> He said that he feared that the Soviet Government would shortly be compelled to join the alliance or take a position inconsistent with the Soviet-German pact.<sup>25</sup> He said he was convinced that a drive would shortly be made by Germany to bring about a Soviet-Japanese *rapprochement* and that it was in his opinion essential that a counterdrive be instituted by Great Britain which would be more effective if supported by the United States. He then elaborated his point of view by saying that as he saw it the main contribution that Great Britain could make at the present time would be the reopening of the Burma Road. He said that during the past two months he had been urging his Government to reopen the Burma Road and also to authorize him to discuss this subject with the Soviet authorities but that his Foreign Office up to the present had refused to sanction any such course. He now anticipated, however, that he would shortly receive instructions to discuss this subject with the Soviet authorities and he felt that it would be highly desirable for the United States to lend its assistance in effect to dissuade the Soviet Union from entering into any alliance with Japan.

He added, however, that it was his intention to discuss the matter in the course of the next day or two with the Chinese Ambassador<sup>26</sup> and that he was hopeful that simultaneous approaches by the United States, Great Britain and China might have the effect desired on the Soviet Government.

From the nature of the Ambassador's remarks and his statement that he had sent copies of his recent telegrams to the British Ambassador in Washington, I judge that the Department will shortly hear from the British Ambassador on this general subject.<sup>27</sup> I refrained from expressing any opinion concerning the Ambassador's suggestion and made it clear to him that I could do no more than report his observations to my Government, pointing out to him that I was not competent to take any action of [the] kind suggested, however in-

<sup>24</sup> The three power pact of assistance signed at Berlin on September 27, 1940, League of Nations Treaty Series, vol. ccrv, p. 386.

<sup>25</sup> Treaty of nonaggression signed at Moscow on August 23, 1939; for text, with secret additional protocol, see *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, series D, vol. vii, pp. 245-247.

<sup>26</sup> Shao Li-tzu.

<sup>27</sup> See memorandum by the Secretary of State, September 30, vol. iv, p. 159.

formal, without specific instructions from the Department. A separate telegram <sup>28</sup> will follow this one in which I am undertaking to summarize the present position here and in so doing comment on the British Ambassador's suggestion.

STEINHARDT

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762.9411/93 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, October 2, 1940—7 p. m.  
[Received October 4—10:55 a. m.]

1268. My 1262, October 2, 10 a. m. In connection with the suggestion of the British Ambassador, reported in my telegram under reference, I believe that the following observations of the present position of the Soviet Union may be of interest to the Department.

As I have reported and insofar as it is possible to assess such a development in Moscow embodied in recent connected indications, German policy toward the Soviet Union is in the process of change. These indications are the German-Italian guaranty of Rumania <sup>29</sup> without prior consultation with the Soviet Union, the German-Finnish agreement concerning the passage of German troops through Finland <sup>30</sup> and more recently the conclusion again without prior consultation with the Soviet Union of the German-Italian-Japanese pact.

Although not possible on the basis of information available in Moscow to determine the lengths to which this apparent change in German policy may be carried, it is, however, important to note that the recent diplomatic events referred to above, whatever their portent for the future, have unquestionably introduced an element of discord into Soviet-German relations and have been entirely subordinated to German initiative, in no way provoked by any positive Soviet action or change of policy. On the contrary these German diplomatic moves have taken place at a time when the Soviet Government was giving every indication of its intention faithfully to adhere to its various agreements with Germany and had publicly, on the occasion of the anniversary of the Soviet-German nonaggression pact, given the most direct and outspoken public affirmation of this intention which has been made in the past year.

To this should be added the fact that despite these diplomatic moves on the part of Germany which even members of the German Embassy

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<sup>28</sup> *Infra.*

<sup>29</sup> See telegram No. 3827, August 30, 11 p. m., from the Chargé in Germany, p. 502.

<sup>30</sup> See telegram No. 416, September 26, 1 p. m., from the Minister in Finland, regarding the German-Finnish exchange of notes on September 22, 1940, p. 347.

here frankly admit in private are incompatible with the spirit of the Soviet-German agreements of last year the Soviet Union has not insofar as I am aware been aroused to any retaliatory action nor has it chosen to give public expression to the resentment which it presumably feels and thereby has indicated that Soviet policy is still basically motivated by an intense desire to avoid involvement in the European war which in view of geographic factors means avoidance of war with the Axis Powers. The tripartite pact between Germany, Italy and Japan can only have accentuated rather than diminished the Soviet fear of an armed conflict with Germany and as a result thereof the Soviet Union is now faced with a real possibility of war on two fronts.

In consequence of the foregoing it is difficult to envisage any concession made ostensibly to the Soviet Union in respect of the opening of the Burma Road or for that matter any concession in the Far East which would have a material bearing on the general course of Soviet policy, as the greatest potential threat to the Soviet Union remains the possibility of an attack by the German Army in the west.

The fundamental error of Allied, and subsequently British, diplomacy in respect of the Soviet Union has been that it has at all times been directed toward attempting to persuade the Soviet Union to undertake positive action which if not leading immediately to an armed conflict with Germany would at least involve the real risk of such a contingency. On the other hand up to the present time German policy has been directed toward assuring the neutrality of the Soviet Union and the adoption by that country of a passive role in the present war. This, in my opinion, is the explanation of why British diplomacy has thus far failed and German diplomacy succeeded in their respective approaches to the Soviet Union.

From the point of view of the Kremlin, I am persuaded that the Soviet Union now will look into the following contingencies: Either the change in German policy referred to above is limited to a desire to impede further Soviet expansion in the west and at the same time assure Germany of means of pressure on the Soviet Union for increased economic assistance in anticipation of a long war and does not presage an armed attack; or Germany and Italy in conjunction with Japan are definitely planning offensive military action against the Soviet Union. In the event that the first alternative is correct it is most unlikely that the Soviet Union will through any serious negotiations or agreement with Great Britain provoke the very event which its entire policy is designed to prevent, namely, involvement in war against the Axis Powers. Should the second alternative prove correct I assume that the Kremlin realizes that in the event of an attack by Germany the Soviet Union would automatically become an ally of Great Britain even without prior understanding.

Having defined present Soviet policy as I understand it to avoid involvement in the war it seems obvious that the longer the Soviet Union can defer an armed attack by Germany and Japan with both of these nations engaged in major wars elsewhere the greater becomes the prospect for a successful resistance. The only discernible advantage to the Soviet Union that might accrue as the result of a prior agreement with Great Britain in anticipation of a German-Japanese attack would be in its relationship to the possibility of a separate peace. I believe the Soviet Russian Government would attach little value to a prior agreement with Great Britain as a guaranty against a negotiated British-German peace at the expense of the Soviet Union.

It is of course impossible for me in Moscow to assess with any degree of accuracy the real intentions of Germany vis-à-vis the Soviet Union at the present time. However, I can assert with reasonable assurance that, as in the past, the initiative lies with Germany. Soviet policy will, in a large measure, be determined by the future attitude and actions of Germany. In my opinion the Soviet Union will endeavor to retain its present policy of neutrality although as previously reported it might not be adverse to a bilateral agreement with Japan probably along the lines of the Soviet-German pact of non-aggression. The Soviet Union will, however, in my opinion endeavor to resist openly joining the Italian-German-Japanese alliance and will only do so as a result of extreme pressure backed by the threat of military force on the part of Germany.

STEINHARDT

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741.61/901 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union. (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, October 5, 1940—6 p. m.

[Received 11 : 34 p. m.]

1293. The British Ambassador called on me this morning to acquaint me with the subject of a conversation which he had with Molotov. He had called on Molotov to inform him of the decision of the British Government to reopen the Burma Road on October 17. The Ambassador read me his telegrams to the British Foreign Office reporting his conversations with Molotov, the substance of which may be briefly summarized as follows:

At the Ambassador's request Molotov had reaffirmed that the Soviet Union had a common interest with Great Britain in continued Chinese resistance to Japanese aggression although at first Molotov endeavored to minimize the effect of the reopening of the Burma Road

and in so doing had displayed to the Ambassador's astonishment the fact that he [thought] the Burma Road was a railroad; but upon being enlightened by the Ambassador that it was not a railroad but a well constructed motor highway capable of transporting 600 tons per day, had recognized that the Burma Road as a medium of furnishing supplies to China was superior in every respect to the route via Sinkiang. In reply to a request from the Ambassador, however, for additional Soviet supplies to China to be sent via Rangoon, Molotov was noncommittal. The Ambassador then dwelt at great length on the desire of the British Government to adopt a strong position vis-à-vis Japan in the Far East as the result of the German-Italian-Japanese alliance but only provided the British Government was assured of the wholehearted support of the United States in the Far East which in turn to some extent would be affected by the position of the Soviet Union. The Ambassador expressed to Molotov the view that the present southward course of Japanese aggression would not remove a future threat to the Soviet Union and Soviet interests on the continent of Asia which a powerful Japan would present and added that in the event the Soviet Union were to conclude a pact with Japan designed to direct Japanese activities to the south and away from the Soviet Union any such agreement would unquestionably affect the United States to the extent that should Japanese aggression at some time in the future be directed toward the Soviet Union it was not likely that the United States would feel called upon to take a strong position against Japan.

The Ambassador, on the basis of his exposition of the situation in the Far East, expressed the opinion to Molotov that the Soviet Union should consult and cooperate with Great Britain and the United States at the present time in respect of Far Eastern matters. Molotov replied that inasmuch as Great Britain and the United States on the one hand and the Soviet Union on the other have been unable to agree on minor and relatively unimportant matters he did not see how they could find any basis of agreement on questions of major policy in the Far East. Despite the noncommittal nature of his reply, Molotov gave the Ambassador the impression that the Soviet Government would welcome an opportunity to eliminate minor controversies existing between the Soviet Union on the one hand and Great Britain on the other if we could clear the way for the policies in the Far East. The Ambassador added orally to me that Molotov had appeared quite nervous when he referred to the subject of consultation with the British Government and had appeared obviously relieved when the Ambassador had said that he referred primarily to the question of increased assistance to China.

The Ambassador then reverted to his previous argument (see my telegram No. 1262, October 2, 10 a. m.) that since the Soviet Union,

in his opinion, would shortly be under extreme German pressure to reach an agreement with Japan it was important that Great Britain and the United States take steps to counteract this pressure.

From the Ambassador's detailed account of his conversation with Molotov I received the distinct impression that he had throughout spoken of a joint move on the part of Great Britain and the United States and while I appreciated his frankness I was somewhat surprised by the facile convictions which he had expressed to Molotov in respect of the present and future policy of the United States in the Far East. The Ambassador in conclusion informed me that a full account of his conversation with Molotov had been sent to the British Ambassador in Washington who will presumably discuss the matter with the Department.

STEINHARDT

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741.61/903 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, October 23, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received October 24—9:05 a. m.]

1393. For the President, the Secretary and the Under Secretary. My 1390, October 22, 5 p. m.<sup>31</sup> The British Ambassador told me last night that having been unable to obtain an appointment with Molotov he had seen Vishinski yesterday afternoon who had offered no explanation of the failure of Molotov to receive the Ambassador. The Ambassador said that he had prefaced the submission of the proposals contained in his instructions by informing Vishinski that Great Britain was now confident of ultimate victory particularly as the most powerful industrial country in the world, the United States, was coming more and more to the aid of Great Britain. Vishinski brought out comments on this statement by inquiring of the Ambassador what the Diplomatic Corps in Moscow was saying with reference to recent diplomatic "maneuvers," to which Cripps replied that it was the consensus of opinion in diplomatic circles that a Soviet-Japanese pact would be signed shortly after the arrival of the new Japanese Ambassador,<sup>32</sup> to which Vishinski replied "reports of such a pact are perhaps greatly exaggerated." Cripps told me that from Vishinski's reply he had deduced that some form of Soviet-Japanese pact would be signed but that it might well be more limited in scope than had previously been expected.<sup>33</sup> Cripps then outlined to Vishinski the

<sup>31</sup> *Post*, p. 667.

<sup>32</sup> Lt. Gen. (retired) Yoshitsugu Tatekawa.

<sup>33</sup> A neutrality pact between Japan and the Soviet Union was signed at Moscow on April 13, 1941; for text, see Department of State *Bulletin*, April 29, 1945, p. 812.

proposals which he had been authorized by his Government to make as follows:

That the British Government would bind itself in writing (1) to conclude no peace without consulting the Soviet Union; (2) to conclude no anti-Soviet agreement with any third nation; (3) to give definite assurances that no attack would be made by Great Britain against Baku or Batum; and (4) to conclude a commercial agreement with the Soviet Union for the delivery by Great Britain of rubber, tin and other commodities required by the Soviet Union.

In reply to my inquiry Cripps stated that the British Government would not require guarantees from the Soviet Union that the commodities referred to in number (4) above or their equivalents would not be reexported to Germany since in conformity with the recent declarations of avoiding any appearance of suspicion in its relations with the Soviet Union, his Government has informed him that the acceptance of the proposals of the British Government as a whole would eliminate the probability of reexport.

In return for the foregoing proposals the British Government would require (1) that the Soviet Union observe genuine neutrality in the present war between Germany and Great Britain; (2) that in the event of the involvement of Turkey or Iran or both in war with the Axis Powers the Soviet Union would adopt a policy of benevolent neutrality toward these countries; (3) that there should be no cessation of aid to and support of China; and (4) that subsequent to the conclusion of the commercial agreement referred to above and at a propitious time in the future a nonaggression pact should be concluded between Great Britain and the Soviet Union.

The Ambassador informed me that after he had set forth the foregoing proposals to Vishinski, the latter had asked him whether these proposals and terms had been communicated by the British Government to the Government of the United States, to which Cripps had replied in the affirmative.<sup>34</sup>

With further reference to Soviet-Japanese relations, Cripps took occasion to tell Vishinski that a Soviet-Japanese pact which contained the implication of cessation of Soviet aid to China would probably result in the collapse of China's resistance, in which event the Japanese armies on the continent of Asia would be "free for other purposes".

The Ambassador told me that he had given Vishinski renewed assurances that there would be no publicity emanating from Great Britain concerning the proposals which he had just submitted on behalf of his Government or any negotiations resulting therefrom.

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<sup>34</sup> Information about these proposals and terms was given to the United States by the British Chargé, N. M. Butler, in a conversation on October 18, 1940, with Under Secretary of State Welles.

In conclusion the Ambassador said that Vishinski on the whole, except for his question as to whether the Government of the United States had been informed of the British proposals, had been entirely non-committal and had merely promised to submit the proposals to his Government.

STEINHARDT

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741.61/902 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, October 23, 1940—7 p. m.

[Received 9 : 25 p. m.]

1394. My 1393, October 23, 4 p. m. The refusal of Molotov to see the British Ambassador and his reception by Vyshinski lead me to believe that the Soviet Government at least for the time being has adopted a policy of having Molotov deal with the Axis Powers and Vyshinski with Great Britain. I regard this policy [as] due to a desire not to compromise Molotov in his relations with the German Ambassador and to avoid placing him in the position of conducting two contradictory and inconsistent conversations or negotiations. This view is supported by the fact that at the time the Soviet Government protested to the German Ambassador concerning the exclusion of the Soviet Union from the Danube Commission the protest was made by Vyshinski and not by Molotov.<sup>35</sup> The foregoing view would also explain the difficulties which I am encountering in obtaining an interview with Molotov and the suggestion of his secretary that I should see Lozovski.

STEINHARDT

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641.6131/217 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, October 24, 1940—6 p. m.

[Received October 25—3 : 25 a. m.]

1408. A member of the British Embassy who has been intimately connected with trade negotiations between Great Britain and the Soviet Union last night furnished the following details in the strictest confidence :

Last June the British Embassy submitted to the Soviet authorities a list of the commodities which, in the opinion of the British Government, might constitute the basis for a trade agreement. The Soviet

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<sup>35</sup> Regarding this protest, see telegrams No. 1156 and No. 1157, September 13, from the Chargé in the Soviet Union, p. 507.



Government replied proposing separate barter arrangements for the exchange of one commodity against another. This counterproposal was rejected by the British Ambassador who insisted that all of the commodities to be exchanged be incorporated in a single agreement. Subsequently the Soviet authorities appeared to acquiesce in the British view and on October 16, in the course of a discussion of other matters, Mikoyan told the Ambassador that the Soviet Government was prepared to acquire wool, jute, rubber and tin in exchange for chrome ore, flax, lumber, lubricating oil and rifles. Although the British had previously indicated the amounts of these and other items which they were prepared to exchange, Mikoyan has at no time specified either the amounts desired by the Soviet Government or the amounts the Soviet Government was prepared to offer in return.

My informant refrained from disclosing the British figures other than to state that they had incorporated an offer to purchase 70,000 tons of lubricating oils and 40,000 tons of chrome ore and added that the British had little hope of obtaining more than 10,000 tons of lubricating oils. He stated that when the question had been put to Mikoyan as to whether the Soviet authorities would be able to provide ammunition with the rifles, the latter had replied that as the possibility of selling rifles to Great Britain had only recently occurred to him the question of ammunition had not been given any consideration as yet. In conclusion my informant observed that he did not regard the negotiations as proceeding satisfactorily although he considered the apparent willingness of the Soviet authorities to discuss a general agreement covering commodities as somewhat encouraging.

I am of the opinion that the failure of the Soviet authorities to refer to specific quantities in the course of conversations which have extended over a period of more than 4 months and Mikoyan's comment respecting ammunition constitute a strong indication that these negotiations have not yet been taken very seriously by the Soviet Government.

STEINHARDT

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741.61/903 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the Soviet Union  
(Steinhardt)*

WASHINGTON, October 25, 1940—5 p. m.

691. Your 1390, October 22, 5 p. m.,<sup>36</sup> and 1393, October 23, 4 p. m. For your strictly confidential information, this Government does not

<sup>36</sup> *Post*, p. 667.

share the view that an agreement, if reached, between Japan and the Soviet Union at this time would "probably bring about a collapse of Chinese resistance." You may in your discretion so inform your British colleague.

HULL

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741.61/905 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, October 28, 1940—7 p. m.

[Received 11:44 p. m.]

1433. My 1393, October 23, 4 p. m. The British Ambassador informed me today that Vyshinski had asked him to come to the Foreign Office on Saturday<sup>37</sup> and had stated that the proposals submitted by the British Government were "fundamental" and regarded by the Soviet Government as of such importance that it wished to have two of the British proposals clarified. The first point as to which Vyshinski desired clarification related to the proposed agreement by the British Government to consult the Soviet Government at the end of the war, qualified however, by a paragraph to the effect that such consultation would not mean that the British Government would consider itself bound *a priori* to accept the point of view of the Soviet Government. The second point as to which Vyshinski desired clarification related to the proposed undertaking by the British Government not to enter at the end of the war into any anti-Soviet agreement with other countries and apparently arose from difficulties in translation. At this point the Ambassador showed me the original draft which contains the provisions as outlined in my telegram under reference with an additional paragraph whereunder the British Government proposes to give *de facto* recognition to the Soviet acquisition of the three Baltic States, Eastern Poland, Bessarabia and Bukowina pending the consultations provided for at the end of the war. In examining the text of the proposals with Cripps he invited my attention to the paragraph concerning which Vyshinski had asked clarification and stated that he had opposed the inclusion thereof as meaningless and legalistic, since, as he pointed out, an agreement to consult does not obligate or even imply acceptance in advance of the point of view of the other power but that his Foreign Office had insisted thereon. He remarked that it was just such a legalistic and distrustful attitude that he had attempted to avoid in dealing with the Soviet Government at the present time. The Ambassador con-

<sup>37</sup> October 26.

tinued that he felt he had satisfactorily explained any ambiguity concerning the two proposals but that nonetheless Vyshinski had specifically requested him to submit the Soviet inquiries to the British Government and obtain a clarification from the Foreign Office by telegram. Cripps expressed to me his opinion that the insistence on confirmation from the British Government was due to the Soviet belief that the proposals as submitted represented Cripps' personal desiderata and to a desire to avoid any possibility that the British Government might assert at some time in the future that Cripps had exceeded his instructions. He said this impression was supported by Vyshinski's statement when he handed him the original document that the Soviet Government was aware that the Ambassador had long sought an agreement of this character. In conclusion the Ambassador stated that he was not at all clear as to whether the Soviet request for clarification was merely a device to gain time, or whether it indicated a favorable attitude toward the proposals but he felt that in any event and whatever the outcome they were receiving real consideration. He added that he had informed Vyshinski that at the present time the British Government recognizes that the Soviet Government is in no position to take any step which would even appear to be incompatible with its agreements with Germany but believes it possible to establish an understanding with the Soviet Government which could perhaps be made effective at some time in the future.

STEINHARDT

861.6363/393

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

[WASHINGTON,] November 2, 1940.

Mr. A. D. Marris, First Secretary of the British Embassy, came in to see me this morning for the purpose of giving me the attached memorandum<sup>28</sup> which he said outlined the present British policy with regard to oil. Mr. Marris remarked that the British Government was beginning to feel some concern at the amount of oil which was going forward to the Soviet Union. The Embassy was of the opinion that if oil shipments should continue to the Soviet Union at the present pace, it would be wise for some steps to be taken to curtail shipments. The British concern with respect to lubricating oil was even greater than with regard to gasoline. It was hoped that the American Government could find some way of preventing large quantities of lubricating oil from going to Vladivostok.

<sup>28</sup> Not printed.

Mr. Marris also stated that the British Government also hoped that some way could be found to prevent machinery and equipment from getting into the hands of the Soviet Government which would tend to increase Soviet oil production. His Government believed in a long range view of the matter. Equipment which might result in increased Soviet oil production two or three years from now might play an important role in strengthening Germany and German-controlled continental Europe against Great Britain.

Mr. Marris said that the memorandum and his oral statements were of a preliminary character. The Embassy would approach the Department again perhaps in the future in case continued Soviet purchases of oil and oil products should give it cause for still more grave concern. In the meantime it was hoped that the American Government would be considering ways and means of preventing important increases of exports of oil and oil products to the Soviet Union.

I thanked Mr. Marris for the information furnished and said that he could be sure that his statements would be given appropriate consideration in the Department. I added that the problems connected with our trade with the Soviet Union were by no means simple. The attitude displayed in this regard by the British Government reflected some of the complications of the situation. On the one hand, British officials were approaching us from time to time suggesting that we take steps to improve our relations with the Soviet Union<sup>39</sup> and that we make use of improved relations for the purpose of endeavoring to persuade the Soviet Government from taking certain steps in Europe and Asia which might be prejudicial to Great Britain and the democratic powers. On the other hand, we were receiving at intervals intimations from the British Government to the effect that it would be helpful if we could prevent certain commodities from being exported to the Soviet Union. The Soviet Government was, of course, using the desire shown by the British Government and the American Government to improve relations as a lever to obtain special consideration in trade matters. It would be difficult to make much progress in improving relations with the Soviet Union if we should continue not only to adhere to present restrictions on exports to that country but would take steps to curtail other exports. I said that the suggestions contained in the memorandum, which he had made to me orally, seemed to me to be somewhat in contradiction to the policies which Sir Stafford Cripps was preaching and following in Moscow and which apparently had the support of the British Government.

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<sup>39</sup> For correspondence on efforts to alleviate the difficulties affecting relations between the United States and the Soviet Union, see vol. III, pp. 244 ff.

870.811/220 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, November 4, 1940.

[Received November 4—3:30 p. m.]

1479. An announcement of the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs published in the Soviet press this morning states that on October 29th the British Ambassador in Moscow transmitted a note to the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs in which the British Government protested against the decision of the Soviet Government concerning the creation of a new Danube Commission and the participation of representatives of the Soviet Government in the conversations in Budapest [*Bucharest?*] with representatives of Germany, Italy and Rumania. The announcement states that in its note the British Government declared that since it considered the actions of the Soviet Government as a violation of neutrality the British Government could not recognize any agreements which might violate existing treaties and that it must reserve all its rights in the matter. The announcement continues that on November 2nd the Assistant Commissar for Foreign Affairs Vyshinski received the British Ambassador and handed him in the name of the Soviet Government a note

"in which the Government of the Soviet Union declares that it is forced to recognize as incorrect the assertion of the British Government to the effect that the recognition by the Soviet Government of the necessity of creating a new Danube Commission and the participation of the Soviet Union in the conversations with Bucharest constitute a violation of neutrality. The formation of a Danube Commission with the participation of the Soviet Union and also of the states bordering on the Danube or close to the Danube constitutes the reestablishment of justice which was violated by the Versailles<sup>40</sup> and other treaties by virtue of which the Soviet Union was eliminated from the composition of not only the International but also of the European Danube Commissions.<sup>41</sup>

The Danube Commission must naturally be composed of the representatives of the states bordering on the Danube or closely connected with the Danube or utilizing the Danube as a channel for trade (for example Italy).

It is understandable that Great Britain separated from the Danube by thousands of kilometers cannot be counted among the number of such states. It is also understandable that the question of the composition of the Danube Commission has no relation whatsoever to the

<sup>40</sup>Treaty of Peace between the Allied and Associated Powers and Germany, signed at Versailles on June 28, 1919; for text, see *Foreign Relations*, The Paris Peace Conference, 1919, vol. XIII, p. 57.

<sup>41</sup>See footnotes 93 and 94, pp. 500 and 501, respectively.

question of neutrality. In view of the foregoing the Soviet Government is unable to entertain the protest declared by the British Government in its note of October 29th."

STEINHARDT

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870.811/221 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, November 4, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received 10 p. m.]

1482. The publication of the Soviet rejection of the British protest concerning Soviet participation in the new Danube Commission and especially the gratuitous statement contained therein of primary British responsibility for the "injustice" of excluding the Soviet Union from the former Commission is of interest as perhaps reflecting the Soviet attitude toward the British proposals reported in my 1393, October 23, 4 p. m. It is unlikely that were the Soviet Union seriously contemplating the acceptance of these proposals that the British protest concerning the Danube Commission would have been selected as an opportunity to give publicity to an anti-British statement.

I am not clear as to why the British Government chose to protest the Soviet action as a breach of neutrality when a legal question involving treaty rights would appear to have been the ground of protest and it is probable that the introduction of this element of neutrality was particularly distasteful to the Soviet Government by Great Britain.

STEINHARDT

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741.61/907 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, November 9, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received November 9—2 p. m.]

1507. My 1393, October 23, 4 p. m. The British Ambassador told me last night that he had heard nothing further from the Soviet Foreign Office concerning the proposals which he had [submitted] on October 2 and that at his last interview with Vyshinski the latter had been extremely noncommittal. The Ambassador, who appeared very discouraged, indicated that he had almost given up hope of a favorable reaction to the British proposals at the present time.

STEINHARDT

761.62/792 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, November 13, 1940—noon.  
[Received November 13—11:40 a. m.]

1524. I am informed in strict confidence by a member of the British Embassy that the British Ambassador sought and obtained an interview with Vyshinski on November 11 in order to discuss with him the effects on Soviet-British relations of Molotov's visit to Berlin.<sup>42</sup> According to my informant the Ambassador made no attempt to conceal from Vyshinski his displeasure at the visit and inquired of Vyshinski whether it was to be regarded as the reply of the Soviet Government to the various proposals both political and economic which had been made by the Ambassador during recent weeks. The Ambassador challenged what he termed "the peculiar Soviet interpretation of the word neutrality" pointing out in this connection that it was hardly a neutral act for the Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs to have been accessible to the Axis Ambassadors during the past month while at the same time refusing to receive the British Ambassador. The Ambassador told Vyshinski that in the face of the visit of Molotov to Berlin it was difficult for him to escape the conclusion that the Soviet Government was not interested in improving Soviet-British relations. According to my informant Cripps stated in conclusion that the British offer to consult the Soviet Government in respect of any peace settlement following the war could not be held open indefinitely and warned Vyshinski that should no reply be received the British Government would consider its offer withdrawn, adding that Britain was certain of victory in the war and following victory would remember which nations had been friendly or hostile during the progress of the war and would act accordingly. My informant said that Vyshinski had appeared to be somewhat disturbed at the Ambassador's remarks and in reply had referred to the number of unsettled problems existing between Great Britain and the Soviet Union, particularly the question of Baltic gold and ships.

STEINHARDT

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<sup>42</sup> Molotov visited Berlin November 12-14, 1940.

741.61/908 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, November 17, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received 5 : 40 p. m.]

1568. For the President, the Secretary, and the Under Secretary. In the course of a conversation with the British Ambassador, I referred to the announcement yesterday morning by the British Broadcasting Corporation of the proposals submitted by the British Government to the Soviet Government [over] 3 weeks ago (reported in my 1393, October 23, 4 p. m.) and the failure of the latter to make any reply thereto, and inquired of him how this public announcement could be reconciled with the assurances given by him to the Soviet Government that the negotiations would be kept strictly confidential. The Ambassador stated that he had not been informed of the intention to publicize the British proposals and that he had immediately protested to his Foreign Office. He displayed deep resentment at the action taken in London. He received the explanation that the disclosure had been made by the Soviet Ambassador in London to Frederick Kuh, an American correspondent, and had found its way through this channel to the B. B. C. and he assumed that the failure of subsequent broadcasts to carry the same announcement resulted from action by the Foreign Office in response to his protest. He said that this was the second flagrant breach in London of assurances regarding nonpublicity given by him to high Soviet officials and that he now regarded his position as untenable, but that if he were to leave Moscow at this time, the Germans would boast that they had "driven the British Ambassador out of Moscow". When I pointed out to him that the consequences of the publicity might be the opposite of what he feared, since the Soviet Government would unquestionably regard the publicity as having been the studied act of the British Government, and might well construe it to be designed to give notice to the Soviet Government of a stiffening of the British attitude, the Ambassador stated that unfortunately he had already sent a letter to Vyshinski "explaining" how the publicity had occurred.

In his anger at the position in which he has been placed, the Ambassador intimated that he was suspicious of "sabotage" in the British Foreign Office, saying that there were individuals in the British Government who were so hostile to the Soviet Union that they would prefer to risk the Empire rather than permit a *rapprochement* to take place. I pointed out that in the present instance the publicity appeared to have emanated from the Soviet Embassy and that the For-



eign Office consequently could not be blamed. Cripps replied that even so, the Foreign Office had failed in its duty to supervise the announcements of the British Broadcasting Corporation.

The Ambassador said that he assumed the Soviet Government would now find it necessary to make some form of public reply to the British proposals and that he feared the reply would be of an "unpleasant" nature. When I suggested that the Soviet Government might regard the B. B. C. announcement as tantamount to a withdrawal of the proposals to which no reply was necessary, the Ambassador, to my surprise, said that it was his intention "in a week or so" to insist upon a reply. He added that while he was considering withdrawing his proposals for a trade agreement, he had never regarded a political understanding as a prerequisite for the conclusion of a trade agreement.

The Ambassador said he was entirely uninformed as to what has taken place at the meeting between Molotov and Hitler, but that he was under the impression that some political understanding had been arrived at. When I suggested to him that any understanding arrived at in Berlin might have been more economic than political, he intimated that he attached less importance to Soviet economic assistance to Germany than to a political agreement in view of the efficacy of the British blockade. On the other hand, he told me that British shipping losses had recently averaged 200,000 tons per week which he regarded as extremely grave.

STEINHARDT

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741.61/909: Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, November 23, 1940—6 p. m.

[Received 7:32 p. m.]

1601. A member of the British Embassy has stated in confidence that the recent call of the British Ambassador on Vyshinski had not dealt with the general subject of the British proposals (reported in my No. 1393, October 23, 4 p. m.) but had been primarily for the purpose of informing the Soviet Government that the Baltic ships which heretofore had been considered as under sequestration had now been requisitioned by the British Government and consequently would be available for use by the British authorities. My informant further stated that although in conformity with Halifax's statement in the House of Lords on November 21<sup>43</sup> concerning the British proposals to the Soviet Union, these proposals would not be withdrawn,

<sup>43</sup> *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Lords, 5th series, vol. 118, col. 24.

it was very doubtful if any reply other than perhaps mere acknowledgement would be received from the Soviet Government. With reference to Halifax's statement in the House of Lords, it is of interest that no reference thereto has thus far appeared in the Soviet press.

STEINHARDT

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741.61/910: Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, November 27, 1940—7 p. m.

[Received 7:16 p. m.]

1630. My 1601, November 23, 6 p. m. The British Ambassador informed me today that he had received no reply to the British proposals submitted by him over a month ago to Vyshinski and that he was no less of the opinion that no reply would be received. Cripps added that since the interview reported in my telegram under reference he has had no further talks with Vyshinski or anyone in the Foreign Office and that he had decided as a matter of tactics not to press the subject for the time being especially as he feels that his position has been seriously prejudiced as a result of the publication by the British Broadcasting Corporation of the British terms, which he had solemnly assured Vyshinski would not be made public. The Ambassador today was more inclined to direct his charge of "sabotage" against the British Broadcasting Corporation rather than his Foreign Office since he said that almost all "leaks" in regard to Soviet-British relations had been given currency by that organization. In this general connection he informed me that he had sent several strong telegrams to the British Foreign Office concerning the fantastic report put [out] by the British Radio of my alleged visit to Sofia.

The Ambassador said that he had heard reports which indicate that certain Soviet airplane factories were working day and night producing planes for export to Germany.

In respect of the recent visit of the Secretary General of the Soviet Foreign Office to Sofia,<sup>44</sup> Cripps is inclined to the view that the Soviet Government intervened diplomatically with the object of preventing Bulgaria from joining the Axis. He also told me that according to his information King Boris had gone to Berlin<sup>45</sup> to ask Hitler not to

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<sup>44</sup> Concerning the visit of Arkady Alexandrovich Sobolev to Sofia on November 25, see telegrams No. 188 and No. 189, December 18, from the Minister in Bulgaria, p. 537.

<sup>45</sup> Regarding the visit of King Boris to Berlin on November 17, see telegram No. 165, November 21, 4 p. m., from the Minister in Bulgaria, p. 529.

compel Bulgaria to join the tripartite pact at the present time because of the possible consequences that such adherence might produce in the Balkans especially in the relations between Bulgaria and Turkey.

STEINHARDT

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741.61/915: Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, December 16, 1940—6 p. m.

[Received 6:13 p. m.]

1737. The British Ambassador told me today that he has not seen any of the officials of the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs "for nearly a month"; that he has adopted a policy of "aloofness" and that the British Government is now "shutting down" on Soviet imports.<sup>46</sup> He expects that as a result of this policy the Soviet Government will within a reasonable period of time approach him on the subject of the resumption of trade negotiations. He said he had finally become convinced that the Soviet authorities are more amenable to retaliatory action than to the customary diplomatic methods.

STEINHARDT

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<sup>46</sup> The Chargé in London, Herschel V. Johnson, had reported in his telegram No. 3993, December 7, 11 p. m., that during an interview on December 5, with Lord Halifax, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, "he expressed some encouragement at the development of British relations with Russia and, said he, they were not going too badly and that the sum of all their reports indicates Hitler got little if anything out of the visit of Molotov to Berlin." (740.0011 European War 1939/7044)

## RELATIONS OF JAPAN WITH THE AXIS POWERS AND WITH THE SOVIET UNION<sup>1</sup>

861.77 Chinese Eastern/1442 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary  
of State*

Moscow, January 2, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received 4:50 p. m.]

7. The Soviet press on January 1st published the text of the following agreements reached between the Soviet and Japanese Governments on December 31, 1939:

(1) An agreement providing for the measures of the last installment due to the Government arising out of the sale of the Chinese Eastern Railway to which the Japanese Government guarantees immediate payment to the Soviet Government by "Manchukuo" of the sum of roughly 5,800,000 yen.<sup>2</sup> A "Manchukuo" claim of some 1,200,000 yen against the Soviet Government is to be discussed in Tokyo in connection with certain Soviet counter claims. The agreement provides that two-thirds of the sum paid by the "Manchukuo" Government shall be used by the Soviet Government for the purchase of Japanese Manchurian products provided the types of products desired by the Soviet Government are available at normal prices.

(2) A protocol extending the fisheries agreement of April 2, 1939, based on the convention and the supplementary extensions thereto until December 18, 1940, unless superseded before the expiration of that period by a new convention, negotiations for which are to be carried on between the two Governments.

The press likewise publishes the text of a note from Molotov<sup>3</sup> to the Japanese Ambassador<sup>4</sup> setting forth in detail certain lots and canning factories which are to be granted the Japanese under the extended agreement, and method of payments therefor.

An article in *Izvestiya* in referring to these agreements refrains from comment with the exception of the statement that "the significance of the agreements is obvious from the extent and character of the questions which were regulated."

The agreement as published appears to constitute a moderate success for the Soviet Union in that without direct compensation the

<sup>1</sup> Continued from *Foreign Relations*, 1939, vol. III, pp. 1-102; see also *Foreign Relations*, Japan, 1931-1941, vol. II, pp. 164-181, and Department of State, *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941* (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1948), pp. 195 ff.

<sup>2</sup> In telegram No. 23, January 5, 3 p. m., Ambassador Steinhardt advised that Moscow press reports stated that this payment had been made (761.94/1179).

<sup>3</sup> V. M. Molotov, Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>4</sup> Shigenori Togo.

Japanese Government guarantees payment of the final installment by "Manchukuo" arising out of the sale of the Chinese Eastern Railway and as will be recalled from the Embassy's despatch No. 2251, April 13, 1939,<sup>5</sup> the fisheries agreement of April 2, 1939, which is now extended without change was made on terms more favorable to the Soviet Union than Japan. Although the Japanese Ambassador and members of the Japanese Embassy here have been quite specific in their statements that no political questions have been discussed between the Soviet and Japanese Governments in the course of the recent conversations, the political importance of the progressive settlement of the various questions which have disturbed Japanese-Soviet relations for quite some time, is sufficiently obvious to require no elaboration. The impossibility in a country such as the Soviet Union of separating economic and political matters renders the discussion of specific economic questions a matter of policy and while it may be true that questions of a political nature have not been raised by either side in the course of the discussions between the Japanese Ambassador and Molotov, the political significance and implications are undoubtedly fully appreciated by both sides. As I have previously reported, the future development of Soviet-Japanese relations appears to depend primarily upon the attitude of the Japanese Government. I have no reason to alter my opinion that the Soviet Government has been for some time and still is prepared to conclude a general settlement along political lines with Japan. It is extremely probable, however, that recent events in Finland<sup>6</sup> have increased Japanese reluctance to risk the further impairment of its relations with Great Britain and the United States for the sake of "friendship" with a country whose military weakness and incapacity have now been publicly demonstrated. Consequently it may be that the Soviet Union would now find itself faced with the necessity of paying a higher price for an agreement with Japan involving among other things the cessation of Soviet aid to China.

STEINHARDT

761.9315 Manchuria/205 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, January 4, 1940—6 p. m.

[Received January 4—5: 50 p. m.]

16. The Chinese Ambassador<sup>7</sup> called on me this afternoon and told me that he is leaving Moscow on January 12 to return to China

<sup>5</sup> Not printed.

<sup>6</sup> For correspondence on the Finnish-Soviet war, see *Foreign Relations*, 1939, vol. I, pp. 952 ff. See also *ante*, pp. 269 ff.

<sup>7</sup> General Yang Chieh.

to resume his military career as a member of Chiang Kai Shek's<sup>8</sup> staff. The Ambassador informed me in the strictest confidence that up to the present Soviet military supplies to China have been continuing and that Molotov had recently renewed to him promises of further Soviet aid. The Ambassador stated, however, that he does not place much reliance on these promises inasmuch as in his opinion although there are no immediate indications thereof, a general political agreement between the Soviet Union and Japan is not improbable. He stated in this connection that although he understood the original gesture had come from the Soviet Union the initiative in respect of the agreements thus far achieved between the two countries had come from Japan and that in the settlement of the Mongolian-Manchurian boundary dispute Japan had made substantial concessions. He added that the entire boundary dispute had been disposed of at Chita and the meeting still to be held at Harbin would be a mere formality. The Ambassador expressed the opinion that as the Soviet Union is now seriously engaged in Finland and Japan has for some time been desirous of transferring the troops along the Siberian border for use in China, a political agreement which would permit the mutual withdrawal of troops along the Siberian-Manchurian border would be in the interest of both countries. In conclusion the Ambassador stated that it is his opinion that the Soviet Government is becoming nervous over the possible international consequences of its venture in Finland and that this might be a contributory factor leading to an agreement with Japan.

STEINHARDT

761.94/1187: Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Japan (Grew)*

WASHINGTON, January 6, 1940—5 p. m.

11. There is repeated below for your strictly confidential information that portion relating to the Far East of a telegram from London of January 4,<sup>9</sup> in which there is reported a conversation between Lord Halifax<sup>10</sup> and the American Chargé d'Affaires:<sup>11</sup>

"Referring briefly to the Far East he mentioned a report that had been sent by Lord Lothian<sup>12</sup> of a talk with the Under Secretary<sup>13</sup> (Department's instruction 1854 of December 4, 1939<sup>14</sup>) and said that this statement of the United States Government's views was in fact a

<sup>8</sup> Generalissimo Chiang, President of the Chinese Executive Yuan (Premier).

<sup>9</sup> Telegram No. 26; for another portion of telegram, see p. 269.

<sup>10</sup> British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>11</sup> Herschel V. Johnson, Counselor of Embassy in the United Kingdom.

<sup>12</sup> British Ambassador in the United States.

<sup>13</sup> Sumner Welles.

<sup>14</sup> Not printed; it transmitted memorandum of November 21, 1939, printed in *Foreign Relations*, 1939, vol. III, p. 321.

statement of his own views better than he could have made. He agreed entirely with what Mr. Welles had said in regard to the probabilities [possibility rather than probabilities]<sup>15</sup> of formal agreement being reached between Japan and Soviet Russia. I gathered that he does not attach altogether the same importance to Wang Ching-wei<sup>16</sup> as apparently the British Ambassador at Tokyo<sup>17</sup> does (Tokyo's despatch 4229, November 8, 1939<sup>18</sup>). Lord Halifax said that Wang's sole importance is his uncompromising anti-Soviet attitude and that if his utility from this point of view evaporated he would simply disappear. Lord Halifax also apparently attaches no permanent or great importance to the recent announced agreements between Japan and Russia in regard to the Sakhalin fisheries and delimitation of frontiers. These he feels are *ad hoc* arrangements which will not greatly affect the fundamental relations between the two countries. Great Britain who now has her hands full in the west desires only friendly relations with Japan. If the Tientsin incident<sup>19</sup> can be liquidated satisfactorily Great Britain is prepared to do everything reasonable to further these good relations. There are, however, certain limits which cannot be passed. Great Britain cannot let Chiang Kai-shek down and she must keep in step with the Far Eastern policy of the United States; from the purely British viewpoint Lord Halifax hopes that American-Japanese relations can progress favorably. He said that he thought the recent strong stand taken by the United States vis-à-vis Japan had been helpful and he welcomed it referring particularly to the speech made by Mr. Grew shortly after his return from America.<sup>20</sup> I had the impression from Lord Halifax that the Far Eastern situation is not causing him any acute anxiety in the sense that he fears it is likely to become any worse than it already is. It seems that he has had information from trusted sources that the Japanese Government is frankly favorable to the Allied cause in the present European war and that the Japanese military had never had a more profound shock than when they received word of Hitler's agreement with Soviet Russia.<sup>21</sup> They detest the Russians anyhow and now they have no longer any trust in Germany."

Naturally, it is gratifying to the Department to know that Lord Halifax's estimate of the situation as thus reported coincides so substantially with ours.

HULL

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<sup>15</sup> Brackets appear in the original.

<sup>16</sup> Formerly deputy leader of the Kuomintang (Nationalist Party) at Chungking, who departed for Occupied China in December 1938.

<sup>17</sup> Sir Robert L. Craigie.

<sup>18</sup> Not printed.

<sup>19</sup> See vol. iv, pp. 840 ff.; see also *Foreign Relations*, 1939, vol. iv, pp. 163 ff.

<sup>20</sup> The Ambassador in Japan spoke October 19, 1939, before the America-Japan Society at Tokyo. For text of his address, see *Foreign Relations*, Japan, 1931-1941, vol. II, p. 19.

<sup>21</sup> Treaty of nonaggression between Germany and the Soviet Union signed at Moscow, August 23, 1939; for text, with secret additional protocol, see *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, series D, vol. VII, pp. 245-247. See also telegram No. 464, August 24, 1939, 9 a. m., from the Ambassador in the Soviet Union, *Foreign Relations*, 1939, vol. I, p. 342.

761.94/1185 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State*

Tokyo, January 11, 1940—2 p. m.

[Received January 11—7:50 a. m.]

13. 1. My British colleague informs me in strict confidence that Macchi, First Secretary of the Italian Embassy, called yesterday on the Counselor of the British Embassy and said that pursuant to instructions from the Italian Government the Italian Ambassador<sup>21a</sup> had stated to the Japanese Minister for Foreign Affairs<sup>22</sup> on January 8 that an accord between Japan and the Soviet Union would not fail adversely to affect the cordial relations now existing between Japan and Italy.

2. According to Craigie, Macchi, who gave the impression that he spoke with the knowledge and approval of his Ambassador, said that even to adopt normalization of Japanese-Soviet relations would strengthen the position in Europe of the Soviet Union and would serve to encourage Soviet aggression in the Balkans. It was his view that the adjustment by Japan and Soviet Russia of certain outstanding problems even if only of a nonpolitical character would be bound to add to the Soviet sense of security and thus have important international political repercussions. Macchi then suggested as a possibility a collective *démarche* in Tokyo on the part of the United States, Great Britain, France and Italy with a view to discouraging Japan from strengthening its relations with Soviet Russia.

3. Craigie is not impressed, nor am I, by the practicability of the Italian suggestion as set forth in the preceding paragraph. Nevertheless, if the normalization of relations between Japan and the Soviet Union would damage Italian-Japanese relations, it is interesting to speculate on the extent to which relations between Italy and Germany have been prejudiced by the working arrangement between Germany and the Soviet Union.

4. I have not been approached by the Italian Ambassador.

GREW

761.9315 Manchuria/210 : Telegram

*The Counselor of Embassy in China (Lockhart) to the Secretary of State*

PEIPING, February 1, 1940—3 p. m.

[Received February 1—1:55 p. m.]

Following from Harbin to Peiping:

"4, January 31, 3 p. m. My telegram No. 3 of January 28, noon.<sup>23</sup> According to Rogov, the Acting Soviet Consul General, the conference

<sup>21a</sup> Giacinto Auriti, Italian Ambassador in Japan.

<sup>22</sup> Adm. Kichisaburo Nomura.

<sup>23</sup> Not printed.



ended in failure yesterday afternoon after its 18th meeting with absolutely nothing accomplished. The Soviet-Outer Mongolian delegates who were refused permission by Moscow to accept an invitation to visit Hsinking left for home this morning.

The Japanese Consul General cannot be seen until tomorrow morning at which time Rogov says a statement will be released to the press.

Rogov now states that he misinformed me as to dimensions of the section of the border to be demarcated which he insists was accepted in principle by the Supreme Council at Moscow in advance. This line which is occupied by Russian troops includes the one described in my telegram No. 31 of December 28, 6 p. m., and my despatch No. 190 of January 2,<sup>24</sup> but extends from Lake Buir almost 200 kilometers toward Halunarshan to a point where the Nuringol River flows into the Halha and reaches into Manchurian territory in places as far as 60 kilometers. Such a line would, of course, have been much more difficult for the Japanese to accept than the one previously described.

Although not worried about any contingencies Rogov is extremely discouraged regarding Soviet-Japanese relations in general. He is convinced, for example, that there is no possibility of reaching a trade agreement at this time and predicts a recrudescence of boundary incidents in the spring.

Repeated to Tokyo and Moscow."

Repeated to Chungking.

LOCKHART

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761.9315 Manchuria/212 : Telegram

*The Counselor of Embassy in China (Lockhart) to the Secretary of State*

PEIPING, February 2, 1940—2 p. m.

[Received February 2—7: 13 a. m.]

Following from Harbin to Peiping:

"5, February 1, 4 p. m. My telegram No. 4, January 31, 3 p. m. The Japanese Consul General attributes the failure of the conference to a sudden stiffening of the attitude of the Soviet-Mongol delegation dictated by Moscow after the *Asama Maru* incident.<sup>25</sup> He does not believe that hostilities will be resumed at this time and says that the demarcation of the Nomonhan border will be left to a general border commission, the establishment of which was recently proposed by Tokyo and is now being considered by the two Governments.

Repeated to Tokyo and Moscow."

Repeated to Chungking.

LOCKHART

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<sup>24</sup> Neither printed.

<sup>25</sup> This incident, which occurred on January 21, involved the boarding by British naval authorities of the Japanese steamship *Asama Maru* in the East China Sea and the removal therefrom of a number of Germans.

124.936/320 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Counselor of Embassy in China  
(Lockhart), at Peiping*

WASHINGTON, March 26, 1940—5 p. m.

48. The American Naval Attaché at Peiping,<sup>26</sup> in a telegram dated March 12 to the Navy Department reported that the Soviet Consul General had looked him up for the purpose of obtaining from him information regarding the distribution in North China of Japanese troops.

The Department is confident that the Naval Attaché and all American diplomatic and consular officers in China realize that they should be very much on guard in conversations with Soviet or Japanese officials to avoid imparting to such officials any military information of a confidential or quasi-confidential character relating to the Soviet Union or Japan, and that in any discussion with such officials of Soviet-Japanese relations they should maintain an attitude of discreet impartiality.

Sent to Peiping. Repeated to Chungking.

HULL

761.94/1202 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State*

TOKYO, April 19, 1940—10 p. m.

[Received April 19—1:15 p. m.]

266. Our 257, April 18, 1 p. m.<sup>27</sup> My Turkish colleague<sup>28</sup> told me today in confidence that he called yesterday on the Foreign Minister<sup>29</sup> to inquire as to the accuracy of press reports that the Soviet Government had recently proposed to the Japanese Ambassador in Moscow the commencement of negotiations to cover the whole field of Soviet-Japanese relations. Mr. Arita replied that these reports were greatly exaggerated and that the Soviet proposal related only to the reopening of negotiations for a treaty of commerce which had been broken off. The Turkish Ambassador then asked the Foreign Minister whether he thought that these negotiations would prove successful, to which Mr. Arita replied in the negative. According to informant, Mr. Arita expressed to him the belief that the Soviets have made this gesture merely with a view to keeping Soviet-Japanese relations on a conciliatory basis while the Soviets are faced with other problems in Scan-

<sup>26</sup> Comdr. John M. Creighton.

<sup>27</sup> Not printed.

<sup>28</sup> Ferid Tele.

<sup>29</sup> Hachiro Arita.

dinavia, the Balkans and the Near East, and that their alleged desire to conclude a treaty of commerce is without "sincerity".

No repetition.

GREW

761.94/1203 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State*

TOKYO, May 5, 1940—6 p. m.  
[Received May 5—6:38 a. m.]

307. During an informal conversation after lunch on May 1 at the Embassy, the Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs <sup>30</sup> stated to High Commissioner Sayre <sup>31</sup> that there was no possibility whatsoever of an alliance or special political understanding between Japan and Soviet Russia. He said that the Japanese people are confirmed anti-Communists and would never tolerate any such arrangement between the Japanese and Soviet Governments.

GREW

894.00/909 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State*

TOKYO, June 7, 1940—5 p. m.  
[Received June 7—7:15 a. m.]

423. My British colleague tells me that according to reliable information the local agent of the German DNB <sup>32</sup> News Bureau recently stated to an informant that the German Embassy has been working steadily to bring about the adoption of a single political party system in Japan and is now congratulating itself on the forthcoming success of its efforts. The agent also boasted to informant that the German Embassy had furthermore been successful in keeping relations between Japan and the United States as bad as possible. The Embassy, according to agent, has been telling the Japanese that as soon as Germany has achieved [success?] over the Allies in Europe the Germans will then turn against Soviet Russia and at that time they will enlist Japan's support which will give Japan a clear field against the Soviets. It was, therefore, far more in Japanese interests to maintain good relations with Germany than with the democracies, including the United States.

The British Ambassador yesterday told the Foreign Minister of this conversation and expressed his surprise the Japanese Government

<sup>30</sup> Masayuki Tani.

<sup>31</sup> Francis B. Sayre, High Commissioner in the Philippines, on a visit to Japan.

<sup>32</sup> Deutsches Nachrichten Büro.

was willing to tolerate such interference on the part of a foreign embassy in Japanese domestic affairs. The Ambassador furthermore tells me that he is passing the foregoing information on to the British Embassy in Moscow so that it may be brought to the attention of the Soviet Government.

Repeated to Moscow.

GREW

761.9315 Manchuria/229 : Telegram

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

Moscow, June 10, 1940—11 a. m.

[Received 1:40 p. m.]

653. *Pravda*<sup>33</sup> this morning publishes the following Foreign Office statement:<sup>34</sup>

“As a result of negotiations which have recently taken place between V. M. Molotov, the People’s Commissar for Foreign Affairs, and Mr. Togo, the Japanese Ambassador, with respect to mutual recognition of the interests of both the Soviet-Mongolian and the Japanese-Manchukuo parties, which have come to an understanding, an agreement was reached on June 9 concerning the question of delineation of the boundary in the region of last year’s conflict, a question which was not decided by the Soviet-Mongolian and Japanese-Manchukuo mixed commission for delineation of the boundary in the said region and which constituted an obstacle to the regulation of relations between the United States and<sup>35</sup> U. S. S. R. and Japan as well as between the Mongolian People’s Republic and Manchukuo.”

Repeat to Embassy at Tokyo.

THURSTON

761.9315 Manchuria/231 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State*

TOKYO, June 11, 1940—8 p. m.

[Received June 11—1:11 p. m.]

436. Our 435, June 11, 7 p. m.<sup>36</sup> Soviet-Japanese agreement concerning delimitation of Manchurian-Outer Mongolia border near Nomonhan. A member of the Foreign Office has informed us in addition to confirming the report of the agreement, that it was merely initialed by Molotov and Ambassador Togo at Moscow and must now be referred to the Mongolian and Manchurian Governments for their

<sup>33</sup> Official organ of the Central Committee and Moscow Committee of the All-Union Communist Party.

<sup>34</sup> A press release was also issued at Tokyo by the Japanese Foreign Office.

<sup>35</sup> The words “United States and” were apparently inserted by mistake.

<sup>36</sup> Not printed.

approval. He anticipated no difficulty in this respect, however, and added that the Soviet Union has been adamant about the necessity of settling this border issue before proceeding to take up other outstanding problems such as the conclusion of a long term fisheries agreement and Russian interference with Japanese interests in Soviet Sakhalin. The Japanese press although pleased emphasizes that the settlement of the Nomonhan question constitutes only one of the many problems confronting the two countries.

GREW

761.94/1207 : Telegram

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

Moscow, July 2, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received 8:14 p. m.]

791. A member of the Japanese Embassy, responding to a cautious inquiry addressed to him by a member of this mission today with respect to a possible *démarche* before the Soviet Government designed to bring about a cessation of Soviet assistance to the Chinese Government in line with similar representations already made to the French and British Governments, remarked that Soviet-Japanese negotiations are at present in progress concerning the fisheries and Manchurian boundary questions, the former being regarded as presenting considerably greater difficulty than the latter, and that "Molotov has refused to give any consideration to the question of Soviet aid to China until the pending fisheries and Manchurian boundary questions have been settled with Japan".

The representative of this Embassy did not consider it advisable to explore the subject further and it is not of course clear from the foregoing just what representations may have been made. It is presumed, however, that the Japanese Ambassador here has been instructed to discuss the question of a curtailment of Soviet aid to China with Molotov, with the results implied in the preceding paragraph.

THURSTON

762.94/469 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State*

Tokyo, August 21, 1940—8 p. m.

[Received August 21—10:35 a. m.]

725. The following is a paraphrase of a telegram recently sent by my British colleague to London :

In some Japanese quarters there are signs that irritation with Germany is growing, according to a reliable official source. Many

Japanese are convinced that the establishment of German interests in China would result from a German victory and that Germany still wishes Chiang Kai-shek to win. The failure of the rapidly increasing German colony in Japan to register and report their movements is causing dissatisfaction with the police. In the event of a German victory possible German designs on the Netherlands East Indies are also causing anxiety.

I may add that in official circles there is a growing sense of irritation at the constant activities of the German Embassy in Tokyo in trying to influence the Japanese Government in problems of purely domestic concern and in its efforts to embroil Japan with Great Britain and the United States. The opinion is expressed that Germany is overplaying its hand.

GREW

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761.94/1209 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State*

TOKYO, August 26 [25], 1940—3 p. m.

[Received August 26—5:58 a. m.]

746. After meeting Ambassador Steinhardt<sup>37</sup> at dinner at the Embassy on August 23, the Foreign Minister<sup>38</sup> asked him to call the next morning and talked to him for over an hour with extraordinary frankness. The following is a brief résumé of some of the principal points which emerged in the conversation. A full memorandum of the conversation will be sent to the Department in the next pouch.<sup>39</sup>

1. Mr. Matsuoka has long advocated a Japanese-Soviet *rapprochement* but was heretofore unable to make his views prevail on his Government. He still favors a nonaggression pact. He believes an eventual conflict inevitable but is unable to estimate even an approximate date. If Russia and Japan were able to compose their differences, the Japanese position in the Far East today would be "much easier". He did not think that the difficulties arising out of the oil concessions on Sakhalin would ever be overcome because the Russians are trying to be "as discreet as possible". He questioned Mr. Steinhardt as to the strength of the Soviet Army and was told that the Army is strong and effective. The Ambassador gained the general impression that up to the present, little if any progress has been made towards an amelioration of the strain on Russo-Japanese relations, and that the Minister has little hope of accomplishing a *rapprochement* in the near future. The Minister tried to explore past rumors of alleged Soviet efforts to bring about a Soviet-American alliance.

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<sup>37</sup> Ambassador Steinhardt was temporarily on leave from his post in the Soviet Union.

<sup>38</sup> Yosuke Matsuoka.

<sup>39</sup> Despatch No. 4967, September 12, not printed.

2. The Minister observed that the war with China had created serious problems for Japan which he "as a man of peace" recognized must be dealt with "at some time"; he said that northern China could not be "put on a proper basis" without American capital and American engineers, whose qualifications he extolled, and he hoped that American capital could be interested. The Ambassador replied, "as an American capitalist" that had been so badly treated in the Far East and other parts of the world, that Americans were not disposed to risk their savings until adequate guarantees were forthcoming. Matsuoka realized this situation and said he was thinking more of the future than the present. He thought that the rivers of China could be used for agricultural and power purposes but that this could never be accomplished on a large scale without American help.

3. The Minister expressed his dissatisfaction with Ambassador Togo's representation of Japan in Moscow and said in strict confidence that he intended to replace him with a General Tatekawa. Ambassador Steinhardt hoped for close and cordial relations and frank discussions with the new Japanese Ambassador. The Minister concurred. Matsuoka said that he was recalling many diplomats because they had "gone western" and had lost touch with the Japanese point of view.

4. The Minister said that when he accepted his present post he had obtained a promise from Prince Konoye<sup>40</sup> that the latter would remain in office for not less than 10 years and that both he and the Prime Minister expected to "get a firm grasp on the army" although he fully realized the difficulties ahead and that he would be called "weak". He had already heard rumblings to that effect and he felt reasonably certain that both he and Prince Konoye would be assassinated "within a year" but that this probability would not deter him from his firm determination to endeavor to bring about peace in the Far East.

5. When the Minister turned to discuss relations with the United States Ambassador Steinhardt said that he was not in a position to express any views whatever but that he would report Matsuoka's views to me. Matsuoka recognized this fact. He said he had entire confidence in my "frankness and sincerity" and that he felt it imperative to impress me with his own "frankness and sincerity."

Mr. Steinhardt drew the impression that one of the Minister's objects in seeking this conversation was to induce the Ambassador to convey to me the view of a deeply sincere and frank statesman whose principal object it will be to restrain the Japanese military and to bring about a solution of Far Eastern problems without harm to the interests of the United States, and with the bait of the "privilege" of inviting

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<sup>40</sup> Japanese Prime Minister since July 22, 1940.

American capital in northern China or Siberia at some time in the remote future. The Minister spoke with bitterness of the failure of the military to heed the civil government, of the uncontrollable Japanese rabble ignorant of international affairs, and of the irresponsible exaggerations of the press in Japan and in other countries including the United States as the source of most international evils.

6. The Minister, probably on purpose, avoided any controversial subjects and refrained from discussing Japanese-American relations in view of Ambassador Steinhardt's caution that he could not with propriety approach that subject.

Sent to the Department via Shanghai.

GREW

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761.94/1210 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State*

TOKYO, August 26, 1940—2 p. m.

[Received August 26—9 : 45 a. m.]

748. Following is paraphrase of memorandum prepared by Ambassador Steinhardt of significant conversation with Soviet Ambassador Smetanin after recent dinner at the Embassy :

On his own initiative and without prompting the Soviet Ambassador expressed the opinion that at the present time there could not be anticipated an improvement of relations between Soviet Russia and Japan. He could see little basis upon which an understanding between the two countries could be reached and he unburdened himself with respect to the vexations and difficulties which confronted him here. Either unaware that the Japanese and other Embassies in Moscow operate under similar conditions or [ignoring] the humorous aspects of his objections, he complained with bitterness of the surveillance which he and his staff [were] subjected to in [Japan]. He gave the general impression that he was discouraged since he had been unable to obtain the slightest satisfaction in his recent discussions with the Japanese Foreign Office and that he either received evasive replies or that his notes remained unanswered. He said that the Japanese were "uncontrollable" because they had had their own way to such an extent.

Informant stated that there would probably be no immediate change in the policy of his Government in reply to my question whether Moscow would continue the *modus operandi* [with] Chiang Kai-shek. He thought that Chiang Kai-shek might be forced to withdraw to some mountain retreat towards the west as he would not be able to remain at Chungking much longer but that a collapse of Chinese resistance would not necessarily follow. In the Soviet Ambassador's opinion the difficulties inherent in a permanent conquest of any substantial part of China were beginning to be appreciated by the Japanese and the capacity of the Chinese to resist was greater than most people realized.



The general impression created by the conversation was that there is likely to be no change in Soviet policy in the immediate future and that it is marked by an unyielding attitude to Japanese demands or penetration.

GREW

761.94/1211 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State*

Tokyo, August 27, 1940—11 a. m.

[Received August 27—2 a. m.]

752. Our 746, August 25, 3 p. m.—Matsuoka-Steinhardt conversation. After consultation with the Military Attaché <sup>41</sup> we have come to the conclusion that the name of the general named in paragraph 3 of the telegram under reference is probably Lieutenant General Yoshit-sugu Tatekawa who was retired in 1936 and is at present adviser to the Dai Nippon Seinento, a radical ultra-nationalistic right wing organization whose president, Colonel Kingoro Hashimoto, is a member of the commission of 26 to be entrusted with organizing the new national structure.

GREW

894.00/959 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State*

Tokyo, September 16, 1940—8 p. m.

[Received September 16—10:18 a. m.]

845. Unusual political activity has been observable in Tokyo during the last several days. Among many other conferences it is reported that Prince Kanin, Chief of the Army General Staff, Prince Fushimi, Chief of the Naval General Staff, and Matsuoka, Minister for Foreign Affairs, have twice called on the Emperor during the past week, all three officials having been last received on September 14. This morning an extraordinary meeting of the entire Cabinet is reported as having taken place at the Premier's residence to discuss "an important state affair".

This activity is generally believed to be connected with Japan's policy of southward advance <sup>42</sup> but it is impossible to confirm this supposition.

GREW

<sup>41</sup> Lt. Col. Harry I. Creswell.<sup>42</sup> See vol. iv, pp. 1 ff.

762.9411/9: Telegram

*The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State*

TOKYO, September 19, 1940—10 p. m.  
[Received September 19—2:35 p. m.]

864. The following is from a reliable official source: Stahmer, whose present visit to Japan is connected with the strengthening of the Berlin-Tokyo Axis, is a Foreign Office official in the confidence of Ribbentrop.<sup>43</sup> He acted as intermediary in the negotiations in Berlin leading to the Anti-Comintern Pact<sup>44</sup> and was also here and in the United States with the Duke of Saxe-Coburg's mission earlier this year.

Although it appears that the Japanese are not now considering the formation of a definite alliance with Germany, they feel that closer contact would be useful in general in frightening Great Britain into a policy of appeasement toward Japan and particularly in providing for the supply of machinery and aircraft via Siberia.

Informant states that the Stahmer visit is not directly connected with Japan's policy in Indochina or the Netherlands East Indies. There is current in Japanese press circles a conflicting report that the German mission has made proposals regarding the East Indies which Japan finds not altogether satisfactory. The Polish Ambassador also reports having heard reliably that the German Ambassador has refused to give Japan a free hand either in the Indies or Indochina and has adopted an attitude of reserve.

The mission is also stated to have no connection with possible mediation in China by Germany. Informant considers such mediation unlikely, feeling that it is definitely in the German interest that China should be under Chiang Kai Shek rather than under Wang Ching Wei, and that the Germans must realize that mediation based on Chiang's survival is not possible at present.

Various forces in Japan, notably General Oshima<sup>45</sup> and the Shiratori<sup>46</sup> group in the Foreign Office, are working toward strengthening of the Axis with Berlin. It is reported that the Berlin Embassy has been offered to Oshima, but that his acceptance is conditioned upon a guarantee that this time his policy will be allowed to materialize, this policy being the strengthening of the Axis. Informant believes that Japan will not enter the war on the side of Germany.

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<sup>43</sup> Joachim von Ribbentrop, German Minister for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>44</sup> Signed November 25, 1936; for text, see *Foreign Relations*, Japan, 1931-1941, vol. II, p. 153.

<sup>45</sup> Gen. Hiroshi Oshima, formerly Japanese Military Attaché in Germany; later Ambassador in Germany (1938-39); reappointed Ambassador to Germany, December 1940.

<sup>46</sup> Toshlo Shiratori, former Japanese Ambassador to Italy.

For geographical reasons, help from Germany and Italy is impossible and if Japan decided to act against Britain she would do it alone. The general public would, however, realize before long the extent of Germany's failure in Europe, and at that time, probably early next year, pressure in favor of a *rapprochement* with the democracies would be brought to bear on the Government.

Italy is not participating in the negotiations of the present German mission. Japan is, however, maintaining close contact independently with Italy, in the event of an overwhelmingly German victory as a threat to both their interests. (End of official informant's remarks.)

From other sources I am informed that Germany is steadily pressing Japan to conclude an alliance, the primary consideration of which is such as to commit Japan to follow a course which would ensure the continued holding of the main part of the American fleet in the Pacific area and thereby to reduce the possibility of the United States entering the war against Germany. Germany, for her part, would *inter alia* influence Soviet Russia to conciliate Japan and to furnish Japan with needed war materials. The Japanese Government is said to be reluctant to commit itself to an alliance with Germany but as settlement of the China campaign is now the paramount consideration in Japanese policy it is not impossible that some deal along the foregoing lines may eventuate.

In the meantime, there is evidence that the building of the "new structure" in Japan is proceeding far from smoothly. Discordant elements render unanimity impossible and dissatisfaction with Prince Konoye is gaining ground. In some circles the feeling is expressed that he should retire. As one prominent Japanese described the situation to me: "Something is rotten in the state of Denmark."

GREW

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762.9411/8 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State*

TOKYO, September 20, 1940—noon.  
[Received September 20—3:30 a. m.]

867. As a result of a 3-hour conference of the Emperor yesterday with the Cabinet and the highest military and naval officials, I am informed from a reputable source that the Emperor gave his sanction to the conclusion of a defensive alliance with Germany. Details are not yet available but I shall explore.

Sent to the Department. Repeated to Shanghai.

GREW

762.9411/11 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, September 23, 1940—11 p. m.

[Received 11 : 33 p. m.]

1209. In the course of a conversation this afternoon the British Ambassador<sup>47</sup> stated to me that he had learned that the Japanese Emperor within the past few days has approved an agreement between Japan and Germany providing that Japan is to keep the United States fleet "occupied" in the Pacific and in return Germany is to arrange with the Soviet Union for the transit of supplies to Japan from Germany over the Trans-Siberian Railroad and is to use its good offices in endeavoring to bring about a *rapprochement* between the Soviet Union and Japan. The Ambassador also stated that he had reason to believe that Germany and Italy proposed shortly to call a conference of Yugoslavia, Greece, and Bulgaria for the purpose of subjecting them completely to Axis domination. The Ambassador added that he and his Government were endeavoring to persuade Yugoslavia, Greece, and Bulgaria to come to an understanding with Turkey for their joint resistance to Axis pressure or domination, the agreement to be under the benevolence of the Soviet Union, but that he had little hope of success.

STEINHARDT

762.9411/62½

*Memorandum by the Consul General at Geneva (Tittmann)*<sup>48</sup>

[GENEVA,] September 25, 1940.

## STATEMENTS MADE BY M. KIKUO KOBAYASHI, DIRECTOR AD INTERIM OF THE JAPANESE BUREAU FOR INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES IN GENEVA AND JAPANESE CONSUL GENERAL

Last year's negotiations looking to a *rapprochement* between Japan and Germany which had been sponsored but not conducted by the germanophile military in Japan were broken off at the time of the announcement of the German-Soviet Pact in August 1939.

This event caused the military to lose caste and for a time the Emperor, with Admiral Yonai as Prime Minister,<sup>49</sup> was able to keep the influence of the military in the background.

<sup>47</sup> Sir Stafford Cripps.<sup>48</sup> Copy transmitted to the Department by the Consul General in his letter dated September 30; received October 21.<sup>49</sup> Adm. Mitsumasa Yonai was Japanese Prime Minister from January 16 to July 16, 1940.

The German victories in Europe in the spring of 1940, however, were the occasion for the reemergence of the influence of the military and were the chief cause of the fall of the Yonai Cabinet and the composition of the new one on July 20, 1940, which is dominated by the military under Prince Konoye.

On August 1st, Herr Otto,<sup>50</sup> the German Ambassador in Tokyo, had a preliminary conversation with M. Matsuoka, the Foreign Minister, regarding the resumption of negotiations looking to a German-Japanese *rapprochement*. Ambassador Kurusu<sup>51</sup> in Berlin was then authorized to begin conversations with the Germans there, and on August 26th the first step was taken when he conferred with Ribbentrop at Salzburg. The Japanese military, however, were not in favor of M. Kurusu's conducting negotiations as he was not considered by them sufficiently germanophile and, besides, he speaks English very well and has an American wife. Furthermore, in view of the failure of negotiations last year, the military were determined this time not to let matters get out of their hands and into those of civilians whom they could not control. The Germans, on their part, were satisfied not to continue with M. Kurusu for the same reasons and also because they considered that he might be too clever a diplomat for them.

Consequently, negotiations in Berlin were suspended with the consent of both sides, and one of Herr von Ribbentrop's entourage was sent to Tokyo expressly for the purpose of conferring with M. Shiratori and General Oshima, who were designated to carry on negotiations from the Japanese side. M. Shiratori was formerly Ambassador in Rome, is an admirer of the Fascist Regime, and is now one of the councillors of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, while General Oshima, ex-Ambassador in Berlin, is leader of the Japanese germanophiles.

The Japanese Government in power is now strongly pro-German. The Japanese press at the present time prints a preponderance of official news despatches from Germany and Italy, giving little or no space to the anti-Axis point of view. Five Ambassadors, nineteen Ministers, and sixteen Councillors and Consul Generals who are considered to be lukewarm toward the Axis powers have been recalled to Tokyo for dismissal. The stage is set, therefore, for an intensification of the *rapprochement* between Germany and Japan which is not unlikely to end within a comparatively short time in the conclusion of a "consultative pact" between the two countries together with all the implications of such an agreement. The most effective check to these designs, at least from the point of view of Japan, would be the announcement of the conclusion of an arrangement between the United

<sup>50</sup> Maj. Gen. Eugen Ott, formerly German Military Attaché in Japan.

<sup>51</sup> Saburo Kurusu.

States and Soviet Russia. Japan still has a healthy respect for Russian prowess in the Far East.

With regard to French Indo-China, Japan has no territorial designs on that country, but seeks to obtain military facilities there for the prosecution of the war against China. Concerning the Netherlands East Indies, Japan has no territorial designs in that quarter either, nor is she contemplating military operations, there, such as are being carried on in Indo-China. Her interest lies solely in ensuring that access to the raw materials of the Netherlands East Indies remains free to her.

HAROLD H. TITTMANN

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762.9411/17: Telegram

*The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State*

TOKYO, September 27, 1940—5 p. m.  
[Received September 27—7: 12 a. m.]

904. The informant<sup>52</sup> mentioned in our 903, September 27, 4 p. m.,<sup>53</sup> has just told me that the Japanese-German alliance will be signed in Tokyo at 7 o'clock this evening and that announcement to the press will be made at 9 o'clock.<sup>54</sup>

GREW

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762.9411/40: Telegram

*The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State*

TOKYO, September 28, 1940—4 p. m.  
[Received September 28—10: 12 a. m.]

913. In an informal conversation with the Manager of the Standard Oil Company, Tokyo, a senior member of the Italian Embassy said this afternoon that the word "attacked" in article III of the Treaty of Alliance which was signed yesterday by representatives of Germany, Italy and Japan could be interpreted to mean various kinds of attack, including economic sanctions. He inferred that any complete embargo imposed by any third power on exports to Germany, Italy and Japan might cause these countries to declare war against the country which imposed the embargo. He also stated that the alliance was intended as a "stop light" for the United States.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Relman Morin, Associated Press correspondent in Japan.

<sup>53</sup> Not printed.

<sup>54</sup> The alliance was signed at Berlin. For text, see League of Nations Treaty Series, vol. cciv, p. 386; for a radio address by Foreign Minister Matsuoka, see *Foreign Relations, Japan, 1931-1941*, vol. II, p. 166; for an imperial rescript by the Japanese Emperor, see *ibid.*, p. 168; and for a message by the Japanese Prime Minister, see *ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> See vol. iv, pp. 565 ff.

The Press Attaché of the Italian Embassy informed a member of my staff that in the event the Kobayashi mission to the Netherlands Indies failed to achieve its objectives, the Japanese would be forced to enter that country. He added that he did not believe that the mission would be successful.

Sent to the Department. Repeated to Shanghai. Shanghai please repeat to Chungking and Batavia.

GREW

762.9411/78½

*The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Chief of the Division of Far Eastern Affairs (Hamilton)*

TOKYO, September 28, 1940.

[Received November 2.]

DEAR MR. HAMILTON: Today is the "day after" Tokyo's celebration of the signing of the Axis alliance, a celebration at which we had ring-side seats but in which we were not included. One's feeling is perhaps just a bit like that of a Harvard man after a Yale victory. It remains to be seen, however, whether this so-called victory may not ultimately end in ignominious defeat. It may be a diplomatic success for Germany but I cannot for the life of me see how it constitutes a diplomatic success for Japan.

The point which I raise is now purely of academic interest. During all the period that I was groping in the dark in Tokyo, conscious that something was developing but, owing to the veil of secrecy drawn over the Axis plans, unable to confirm and elaborate the reports and rumors that came to me, is it possible that the Department was receiving no pertinent information from Berlin or Rome or from any other source? My series of telegrams on this subject beginning with my No. 656, August 3,<sup>57</sup> and carrying on with Nos. 867, September 20, 12 noon, and 876, September 21, 11 p. m.,<sup>58</sup> must have shown how we were groping, and if at that time we could have received from the Department even the briefest of clues from other sources, how helpful such clues would have been! But we were, as usual, shooting from the dark into the dark, and if inconsistencies arose in some of our reports, as they inevitably did arise, the simple explanation is that we were given no yardstick by which to measure the value of the reports that reached us and we simply passed them on to be measured in Washington. Even up to the early evening of yesterday we, and all of our friends, thought that the Pact was to be signed in Tokyo, not Berlin.

<sup>57</sup> Not printed.

<sup>58</sup> Telegram No. 876 not printed.

Merely to satisfy my personal curiosity I hope that you will be good enough to take a moment to tell me if Berlin and Rome were really silent during all the period that the Pact with Japan was developing<sup>59</sup> and, if not, whether it was considered unwise to take me even to an infinitesimal degree into the Department's confidence.

Yours sincerely,

JOSEPH C. GREW

P. S. I fully realize the great weight of responsibility which you in the Department are carrying just now and would be loathe in any way to add unnecessarily to your preoccupations.

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762.9411/64 : Telegram

*The Consul General at Geneva (Tittmann) to the Secretary of State*

GENEVA, September 30, 1940—noon.

[Received September 30—3:02 a. m.]

187. Consulate's 184, September 26, noon.<sup>60</sup> Announcement of tripartite pact came as surprise to the source referred to<sup>61</sup> in above mentioned telegram because when negotiations were first started in a conference between Ambassador Kurusu and Ribbentrop at Salzburg on August 26 a German-Japanese pact only was envisaged. According to this source the inclusion of Italy in the negotiations probably first occurred about 3 weeks ago and was kept so secret that even the Japanese Ambassador in Rome did not hear of it until the last minute.

My informant indicated that there are grounds for feeling that Japan must have entered the pact with a reservation, perhaps a secret clause of some kind with regard to the United States; in any event it is known that Ambassador Kurusu explained to Ribbentrop at Salzburg that Japan could not be expected to obligate herself to do anything under the pact that might involve her in war with the United States. Ribbentrop's reply is stated to have been more or less non-committal. Shortly thereafter the locus of the negotiations was shifted to Tokyo.

TITTMANN

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762.9411/61 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, September 30, 1940—[2 p. m. ?]

[Received 10:26 p. m.]

1249. The first direct comment which has been published in the Soviet press concerning the German-Italian-Japanese pact is con-

<sup>59</sup> For text of Mr. Hamilton's reply of November 2, see p. 672.

<sup>60</sup> Not printed.

<sup>61</sup> See the Consul General's memorandum of September 25, p. 649.



tained in a leading editorial on the subject in *Pravda* today. After stating that there is no need to discuss the contents of the pact since the text has been made public, the editorial asserts that this pact was no surprise to the Soviet Union since in the first place in essence it merely formulates relations which had already existed between Germany, Italy, and Japan on the one hand and England and the United States on the other and, secondly, "the Soviet Government was informed by the German Government of the forthcoming conclusion of the tripartite pact prior to its publication". [Here follows summary of the editorial.]

Repeated to Tokyo.

STEINHARDT

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762.9411/65 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, September 30, 1940—1 p. m.

[Received October 1—12:22 a. m.]

1251. Embassy's 1249, September 28 [30], 2 p. m. The editorial reported in my telegram under reference appears to reflect the public position which the Soviet Government has elected at the moment to adopt in regard to the German-Italian-Japanese agreement in that it accepts at its face value the reservation contained in the pact concerning the Soviet Union and even interprets the inclusion of this reservation as proof of the efficacy of the nonaggression pacts between the Soviet Union and Germany and Italy. In regard to the general outline of the pact the most interesting feature is the blunt statement in the *Pravda* editorial that the United States is now making common cause in a military sense with Great Britain and that the pact presages the development of the war on a world-wide stage between Germany, Italy and Japan on the one hand and England and the United States on the [other], a development which, as the Embassy has previously reported, would not be displeasing to the Soviet Union.

Despite, however, the public acceptance through the medium of the *Pravda* editorial of the view that the tripartite pact will not affect the Soviet Union it must be assumed that the similarity of the present agreement between Germany, Italy and Japan and the anti-Comintern Pact has not passed unnoticed in Moscow. It will be recalled in this connection that one of the chief advantages which the Soviet Union obtained through the nonaggression pact with Germany last August was the elimination of German-Japanese cooperation directed against the Soviet Union. It is furthermore significant that while the editorial refers somewhat pointedly to the existence of nonaggression pacts between the U. S. S. R. and Germany and Italy, no mention is

made of the effect of the German-Italian-Japanese military alliance on Soviet-Japanese relations.

In this connection the Secretary of the Japanese Embassy, while professing to be unaware of the exact nature of the instructions which the new Japanese Ambassador will bring him from Tokyo, was quite frank in stating that the general position in view of Japanese preoccupation in the south was more favorable for an improvement in Soviet-Japanese relations than at any time in the past. As the Embassy has reported since Molotov's speech on October 31, 1939 (Embassy's 847, November 1, 10 p.m.<sup>62</sup>) the Soviet Government has given certain indication of a disposition to reach some political agreement between Germany [*the Soviet Union?*] and Japan. The failure of this event to materialize appears to have been primarily due to hesitancy on the part of Tokyo. The general tone of the editorial under reference would seem to indicate that the Soviet attitude in this respect has undergone no change and that the possibility of a Japanese-Soviet political agreement has been enhanced rather than diminished by the German-Italian-Japanese alliance. Indeed, since as a result of this alliance the Soviet Union is now precluded from taking advantage by hostile action of any difficulties which Japan might encounter in the Far East, without running the risk of becoming involved in war with Germany and Italy at the same time, it is possible that the Soviet Government may be prepared to make greater concessions than heretofore particularly in respect of its assistance to China in an endeavor to reach an agreement with the Japanese.

Not repeated to Tokyo.

STEINHARDT

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762.9411/67 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the  
Secretary of State*

Moscow, October 1, 1940—11 a. m.

[Received 12:52 p. m.]

1254. The Chinese Ambassador<sup>63</sup> told me today:

1. That in his opinion from the Japanese point of view the German-Italian-Japanese alliance had been concluded largely for its effect on Japanese public opinion to counteract discouragement arising from the serious economic and commercial conditions and to offset the Soviet-German agreement of last year.

2. That before he had left Chungking the German Government had approached the Chinese Government with a view to constituting what the Germans called a "Pacific bloc" to consist of Japan, the

<sup>62</sup> Not printed.

<sup>63</sup> Shao Li-tzu.

Soviet Union, China and Germany, pointing out to the Chinese Government that such a bloc could be used as a medium for terminating the Chinese-Japanese war and that it held the promise of economic advantages after the termination of the European war. The Ambassador said that the Chungking Government had been very cool to the German suggestion and that in the course of one of his talks with Soviet officials after his arrival in Moscow he had learned that the German Government had made similar proposals to the Soviet Government.

3. The Ambassador did not express concern at the possibility of a Soviet-Japanese provisional agreement, saying that from his various talks in the recent past with Soviet officials he had gained the impression that there was little likelihood that a common meeting ground could be found for any basic understanding between the Soviet Union and Japan.

4. Insofar as continued resistance by Chiang Kai-shek is concerned, he said he had no reason to believe that his resistance would not continue as long as Chiang Kai-shek found it possible but that the closing of the various roads over which supplies had been reaching the Chinese had reached a point where the assistance of the Government was seriously embarrassed. In this connection he expressed the hope that the United States would exert pressure on Great Britain to reopen the Burma Road, pointing out that the Burma Road was well built and permitted fairly free transportation whereas the route from the Soviet Union via Sinkiang was not only long but risky, for at times almost impassable and open only to such supplies as the Soviet Union permitted.

5. The Ambassador said that a complete and detailed understanding had been reached between the Chungking Government, the French Government at Vichy and the French officials in Indochina for joint cooperation in the event of a Japanese attack and that this agreement had included the sending of a mission from French Indochina to Chungking by plane. He said that 10 days ago when the Chungking Government had sent a plane to Indochina to call for the mission it had been informed that the mission was canceled and that from then on the Indochinese Government had failed to cooperate with the Chinese. He said that the Government at Chungking was convinced that the complete about-face of the French Indochinese Government had been the result of German pressure. As a further example of the sudden failure of cooperation, he said that by agreement with the French Indochina officials the main bridges had been blown up and the railroad cut, it having then been contemplated that the cutting of the railroad would deprive the Japanese of their pretext for invading French Indochina. Although these acts had been undertaken with the full knowledge and consent of the French officials within the past

10 days, the French officials had complained bitterly of the destruction of the bridges and had accused the Chungking Government of having taken this action without prior agreement with the French officials.

STEINHARDT

762.9411/77 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State*

TOkyo, October 2, 1940—7 p. m.  
[Received October 2—2: 10 p. m.]

929. My 916, September 29, 11 a. m.<sup>64</sup>

1. In view of the present strict censorship of the press and control of public utterances, and in view also of the fact that our most important and reliable Japanese channels of information and opinion have not been available since the advent of "the new structure" in Japan (partly because our former connections appear to have abandoned their hope of improving relations with the United States and partly because contacts with the American or British Embassy are looked at askance by the police authorities), accurate appraisal of public reaction in Japan to the recent signing of the Axis pact is uncertain. We must furthermore guard against accepting as a possible criterion of public opinion the privately but forcibly expressed views of Japanese businessmen whose interests have been thrown out of gear through the orientation of the Foreign Office away from the United States and Great Britain, and who are bitterly opposed to the new trend in general and to the Axis alliance in particular.

2. Nevertheless our observations since the signing of the pact point to a marked lack of enthusiasm on the part of a large element of Japanese public opinion, both in certain military and in some civilian and government circles. It is commonly believed by competent foreign observers that the Navy, which was not associated with the negotiation of the pact and whose officers were conspicuously absent from the various official functions held in celebration of the signing of the pact, is not only unenthusiastic but perhaps opposed to the present orientation of affairs. It is also held by certain observers that the Premier himself was forced to accept the pact contrary to his wishes and that he may as a result seek an early opportunity to resign. On this point I do not feel at present moment in a position to proffer an opinion.

3. It may also be significant that the decoration of the city, flag processions, lantern parades, et cetera, which apparently represented at least some measure of spontaneous enthusiasm at the time of the conclusion of the Anti-Comintern Pact in 1937,<sup>65</sup> have been noticeably

<sup>64</sup> *Foreign Relations, Japan, 1931-1941*, vol. II, p. 169.

<sup>65</sup> Signed at Rome, November 6, 1937, *ibid.*, p. 159.

lacking. Indeed today's *Hochi* expressed regretful astonishment at this lack of enthusiasm and naïvely adds: "Something must be done to set the people's blood to boiling. The tripartite pact is a stirring march for Japan, not an elegy"; excise [*sic*] significance may also be attached to the fact that the issuance of an Imperial rescript<sup>66</sup> that the announcement of the pact was thought necessary, the last similar occasion for such a rescript having occurred when Japan withdrew from the League of Nations. Open expressions of opposition to the pact were thus prevented at the beginning.

4. The Japanese press has avoided reporting any of the strong editorials from prominent newspapers in the United States of the substance and tone of those set forth in Radio Bulletin No. 232, but has published utterances recommending conciliation with Japan by such well known Americans as Roy Howard, Arthur Krock, Congressman Hamilton Fish, Cornelius Whitney, et cetera, while conciliatory passages from Mr. Welles' recent speech in Cleveland<sup>67</sup> were taken out of their context.

5. With regard to the effect of the pact upon future Japanese tactics I find that the flood of opinions and suppositions that come to us are based purely on speculation and that for the present we in Tokyo can do no more than to watch developments. The conclusion of a non-aggression pact with Soviet Russia, now freely predicted would obviously have an important bearing upon future Japanese moves. I look with a measure of anxiety on the German military mission which is coming to Japan as a result of the pact because, apart from furnishing technical assistance, the mission will undoubtedly carry on intensive propaganda among the Japanese military and will presumably make every effort to incite Japan to push the southward advance and to provoke war with the United States. This factor in the situation seems to me to be potentially more serious than any technical or material support which Germany might furnish.

6. The attitude of the Japanese Government has been summed up in informal conversations which some of my colleagues have recently had with the Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs.<sup>68</sup> When asked what Japan expected to gain from the pact, Mr. Ohashi replied that it was aimed directly against the United States which, ever since the passage of the exclusion clause of the American Immigration Act,<sup>69</sup> had followed a policy of hampering Japan's necessary and inevitable expansion; that Anglo-Saxonism is about to become bankrupt and will be

<sup>66</sup> See telegram No. 911, September 27, midnight, from the Ambassador in Japan, *Foreign Relations*, Japan, 1931-1941, vol. II, p. 168.

<sup>67</sup> On September 28; for extract, see *ibid.*, p. 112.

<sup>68</sup> Chuichi Ohashi.

<sup>69</sup> Section 13 (c), Act approved May 26, 1924; 43 Stat. 153. For correspondence regarding this subject, see *Foreign Relations*, 1924, vol. II, pp. 333 ff.

effectively wiped out in favor of world totalitarianism, and that it is therefore natural and necessary that Japan should ally herself with those countries which stand for a new order in world affairs.

Sent to the Department. Repeated to Moscow and Shanghai. Shanghai please repeat by air mail to Chungking.

GREW

762.9411/87: Telegram

*The Ambassador in China (Johnson) to the Secretary of State*

CHUNGKING, October 3, 1940—noon.

[Received 1:20 p. m.]

500. My 493, September 30, 9 a. m.<sup>70</sup>

1. During the course of an informal conversation with the Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs<sup>71</sup> last evening the subject of the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo alliance was brought up and discussed. The views of the Vice Minister which are believed to be of interest are summarized below:

Dr. Hsu had made a careful examination of the terms of the pact as published and from these he could only conclude that Germany had once again duped Japan. He considered that the provisions of article 5 of the said pact, which affirms that the terms thereof do not affect the existing political status between each of the contracting parties and Soviet Russia, apparently in no way affect the validity of the Russo-German pact of nonaggression signed in August 1939. He therefore concluded that in the event Russia was attacked by Japan at some future date, Germany was not obliged under the terms of the nonaggression pact with Russia to come to the assistance of Japan while if Russia should be attacked by Germany, Japan would on the contrary be obliged to come to the assistance of Germany.

Dr. Hsu, supporting the views advanced by the local press (see my 498, October 1, 3 p. m.<sup>72</sup>), said Germany and Italy obviously were not in a position to afford material support to Japan while Japan by entering into the pact had clearly revealed its antagonism toward the United States and Great Britain, two sea powers who had the resources to come to the assistance of China. He observed that the only possible advantage accruing to Japan by virtue of adherence to the Axis was the doubtful one that it might force the United States to reverse its present Far Eastern policy and come to recognize the new order in East Asia.

<sup>70</sup> Vol. iv, p. 157.

<sup>71</sup> Hsu Mo.

<sup>72</sup> Not printed.

2. Reverting to Russia, the Vice Minister admitted there was a possibility that Russia might now find it desirable to conclude a pact of nonaggression with Japan not only in order to release pressure on the maritime provinces and Outer Mongolia but also to encourage Japanese southward expansion in the hope that such action would result in war with the United States. He suggested that Russia's action in Europe in 1939 was calculated to start a European War and he believed Russia is now pursuing a similar course of action in the Far East.

He said he is convinced that in the event of a war between Japanese and the United States, Russia would follow a policy of neutrality. With regard to Sino-Russian relations he expressed the view that conclusion of a nonaggression pact between Russia and Japan would not affect Russian support of China which, he said, was continuing to be given and which he believed would continue to be granted in the future.

3. I have formed the conclusion based on my conversations with Chinese officials that they are pleased rather than dismayed with the results which they expect will eventuate from conclusion of the tripartite pact. They reason that they have gained two potential allies and that Russian aid to China will not be diminished, while Japan's position is more desperate than ever. The main Chinese concern for the moment appears to be related to the possibility that the United States may concentrate its attention on the European conflict at the expense of China in the Orient.<sup>73</sup>

Sent to the Department. Repeated to Peiping. Peiping, please repeat to Tokyo.

JOHNSON

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762.9411/90 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, October 3, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received 5 p. m.]

1270. The Chinese Ambassador called on me yesterday afternoon and stated that he had seen Assistant Commissar for Foreign Affairs Lozovski in the afternoon the day before, pursuant to an appointment for the express purpose of discussing the German-Italian-Japanese pact with him. He said that Lozovski had minimized the effect of the

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<sup>73</sup> In telegram No. 553, October 31, 2 p. m. (740.0011 European War 1939/6356), Ambassador Johnson reported an interview with Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek on the general situation as a result of the Axis pact and, specifically, certain observations by an unnamed Soviet citizen. The latter expected both Japan and Germany to go to war with the Soviet Union and asserted that while the United States could avoid involvement in the war, the Soviet Union could not; Generalissimo Chiang felt that this did not represent Soviet propaganda.

treaty; had expressed the opinion that it was primarily directed against the United States; and had stated that the editorials referred to in my Nos. 1249, September 30, and 1245 [1255], October 1, noon,<sup>74</sup> enunciated the official view of the Soviet Government. Lozovski also expressed the opinion that the tripartite pact would bring forth greater assistance from [the] United States to Britain and from the United States and Britain to China. In response to the Ambassador's inquiry as to whether the pact would affect the Soviet attitude toward China, Lozovski [said] it would not. The Ambassador then inquired whether a consequence of this treaty would not be the sending of supplies from Germany and Italy to Japan by the Trans-Siberian Railway to which Lozovski indicated that such would not be the case.

With respect to an observation by the Ambassador that China was dependent for aid in its war against Japan upon Great Britain and the United States and the Soviet Union, Lozovski remarked sarcastically that the principal aid Great Britain had furnished China thus far had been to close the Burma Road at a critical time, that the main assistance the United States rendered China had been to sell huge quantities of scrap metal, copper, and oil to Japan whereas the Soviet Union had furnished China with immense quantities of war materials.

In discussing the pact as an alignment of nations Lozovski gave the Ambassador the impression that he was of the opinion that three blocs existed at the present time: (1) the German-Italian-Japanese bloc; (2) the Anglo-American bloc; and (3) the Soviet Union. In general the Ambassador gained the impression that while Lozovski sought to minimize the effect of the pact and to attach little importance thereto the Soviet Union is in reality seriously concerned.

In response to my inquiry the Ambassador stated that he had definite information to the effect that the number of Japanese troops in Manchuria at the present time is about 175,000—this being the same number that have been there during the last year.

STEINHARDT

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762.9411/96 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State*

TOKYO, October 5, 1940—5 p. m.  
[Received October 5—9:30 a. m.]

946. Following [is] summarized translation [of] press report: Konoye statement yesterday:

“Aim tripartite pact cooperation signatories establish new world order. Should any third power, including United States, attack one

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<sup>74</sup> Latter not printed, but see the Ambassador's telegram No. 1251, September 30, 1 p. m., p. 654.



signatory other signatories will aid attacked power. Fate of Pacific area and question peace [or] war depend United States [and] Japan's mutual understanding respect each other's position. If United States refuses understand real intentions Japan, Germany, Italy and continues persistently its challenging attitude [and] acts regarding pact as hostile act by three powers those powers will be forced to go to war. Japan now endeavoring adjust Russo-Japanese political economic relations will make every effort reduce friction Japan [and] Russia. Now engaged diplomatic maneuvers [to] induce Russia, Britain, United States suspend operations assistance [to] Chiang regime."

GREW

711.94/1772

*The Counselor of the Japanese Embassy (Morishima) to the Chief of the Division of Far Eastern Affairs (Hamilton)*

WASHINGTON, October 5, 1940.

MY DEAR MR. HAMILTON: I consider it extremely unfortunate for the sake of friendly relations between your country and mine that the so-called "copyrighted interview" with Mr. Yosuke Matsuoka, Japanese Minister for Foreign Affairs, by a correspondent of the International News Service<sup>75</sup> has been given such prominence in the press of this country. I take the liberty of sending to you for your information the following statement issued by Mr. Yakichiro Suma, Foreign Office spokesman, with regard to the alleged interview:

"The alleged interview between the Japanese Foreign Minister, Mr. Yosuke Matsuoka, and a certain Smith, correspondent of International News Service in Tokyo, is absolutely without basis. Mr. Matsuoka has never given an interview to Smith since he became Foreign Minister.

"Mr. Matsuoka, however, saw a contributor to *Liberty*, an American magazine, on October 4. On that occasion, he commented on the Three Power Pact, saying, 'The treaty speaks for itself.' He stated further that Japan would have to fight America if she should enter the European War on the side of Great Britain, but that such an eventuality was what 'I shudder even to think of.' It appears that Smith's story is a garbled version of this interview."

Sincerely yours,

MORITO MORISHIMA

762.9411/103: Telegram

*The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State*

TOKYO, October 7, 1940—10 p. m.  
[Received October 7—7:02 p. m.]

954. My 929, October 2, 7 p. m. The following comments on the circumstances surrounding the conclusion of the German-Italian-

<sup>75</sup> Laurence Smith.

Japanese alliance and on other aspects of recent developments come from reliable sources.

1. Prince Konoye was opposed to the alliance and fought hard against it to the point of threatening resignation in the face of the determination of the Foreign Minister and the War Minister<sup>76</sup> to push the alliance through, so that the ensuing deadlock had to be taken to the Emperor. The matter was debated in the long Imperial Conference which preceded the final decision, the Emperor's assent to the alliance having been finally obtained on the grounds that: (a) the danger of war with the United States was real, and (b) in the setting up of the new national structure the Japanese people had been led to expect dynamic developments and unless they were encouraged by some spectacular step there would be serious reaction against the hardships imposed on the nation. (The report in the final sentence of paragraph numbered 5 of my 916, September 29, 11 a. m.,<sup>77</sup> now appears to have been incorrect.)

2. The Emperor, however, made it clear that he was Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the army and navy and while supporting the army against the Premier he exerted his authority by vetoing the proposed appointment of General Terauchi as Chief of the Imperial General Staff and insisting upon the appointment of General Sugiyama,<sup>78</sup> an officer of moderate leanings.

3. In the ensuing dissatisfaction among extremists in the army there were even suggestions that it might be desirable for the Emperor to meet with an "accident" but these elements were restrained on the ground that neither the navy nor the rank and file of the army would tolerate an attempt at revolution affecting the sacred person of the Emperor.

4. Whether the Emperor ordered the resignation of Prince Kanin as Chief of the General Staff of the Army in order to show his displeasure and to curb the extremists and to prevent their sheltering behind the Imperial rank of their chief is a moot question. If the current rumors of Prince Fushimi's impending resignation as Chief of the Naval General Staff should prove to be well founded, strength would be given to the foregoing hypothesis.

5. With regard to the alliance, a reliable Japanese formerly in high official position states that while he has not seen the actual document consummating the pact he has been given to understand that the provisions of article 3 are applicable only in case of unprovoked attack. Thus if the United States should go to war with Germany as a result, for instance of the sinking of American ships by German

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<sup>76</sup> Yosuke Matsuoka and Gen. Hideki Tojo, respectively.

<sup>77</sup> The substance of this telegram is printed in *Foreign Relations*, Japan, 1931-1941, vol. II, p. 169; the sentence under reference is the last one of the top paragraph as printed on p. 170.

<sup>78</sup> Both were former Ministers of War.

submarines, Japan would not be bound to go to war against the United States if Japan herself decided that the United States had acted under provocation.

6. Mr. Toshi Go, editor of the *Japan Times*, today said to a friend that the statement of the Prime Minister in Kyoto on October 4<sup>79</sup> and other inflammatory official utterances against the United States were given out in mistaken belief that they would influence the forthcoming election in the United States by persuading the American people that the present administration was bringing the United States to the verge of war. Mr. Go himself, however, remarked that the foregoing belief represents a total misconception of American psychology and that the utterances mentioned would have an effect the reverse of that intended.

GREW

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761.94/1222 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, October 9, 1940—5 p. m.

[Received 6:03 p. m.]

1320. The reproduction in the Soviet press today of the remarks of the Japanese Foreign Minister concerning the importance of improving relations with the Soviet Union, with the elimination of his reference in the same speech according to radio reports to Japanese opposition to the spread of communism in China, Korea and Manchukuo as well as the acceptance by Molotov and Mikoyan<sup>80</sup> of an invitation from the retiring Japanese Ambassador, is of special interest at this time and tends to confirm the opinion expressed in my 1251 of September 30, 1 p. m. that the Soviet Union is still disposed to consider favorably an improvement in its relations with Japan.

STEINHARDT

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762.9411/106 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State*

Tokyo, October 9, 1940—8 p. m.

[Received October 9—1:30 p. m.]

963. The following is paraphrase of a telegram sent yesterday to his Government by my British colleague:

“This morning at the beginning of my interview and prior to my making the communication regarding the Burma Road, the Foreign

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<sup>79</sup> See the Ambassador's telegram No. 946, October 5, 5 p. m., p. 661.

<sup>80</sup> A. I. Mikoyan, Soviet Commissar for Foreign Trade.

Minister stated that with a view to discussing the matter of the tri-power pact he had had in mind requesting me to call, but that after further reflection he had refrained from doing so because he had reached the conclusion that he could not really add anything to what was contained in the text as published and in the radio speech which he had made. After this preamble, Mr. Matsuoka proceeded to a lengthy discussion of the pact. The following points emerged therefrom:

1. What he asserted to be the progressively unfriendly position of the United States, necessitating Japan's taking measures of defense, was the principal reason that Japan had entered the pact.

2. His aim, aside from this, is to lend his aid, at first, in preventing the spread, and secondarily in bringing to a conclusion the conflicts which are unhappily in progress both in Europe and in China. To see in the action of Japan any aggressive purpose is entirely mistaken.

3. In Japan, to be sure, there are persons in favor of a policy of greater aggression but the Prime Minister and Mr. Matsuoka whatever the cost would resist them and he repeatedly stated that he was determined, should an endeavor be made to compel him to go along with such a policy, to resign and again leave public life.

4. The Minister rejected indignantly my jocular remark to him that Japan is no longer free to decide in favor of peace or war, and asserted that the decision remained completely in Japan's hands as to whether or not, within the purview of the third article of the pact, an attack had taken place, that the most definite promises had been given by the German Government that it was its desire neither to incite the United States nor to antagonize it, and that not only the pact but also the negotiations prior thereto had made it more than clear that Japan would not embark upon war if for example the United States should take action, because of Axis provocation.

In this connection, he stated that in any case only if a great power should attack one of the three countries which had signed the pact would article 3 come into operation. On this point however I was unable to induce him to be more specific.

During a good deal of the conversation the Minister made a somewhat halfhearted endeavor—by way of reply to my statement that the policy of Japan should not be contaminated because of its intimate association with a country which practiced enslavement and dictatorship more than any other—to justify the actions of Germany in the period before the war commenced. The Minister criticised the policy of Great Britain on the ground that it was too rigid in its espousal of the continuance of the *status quo*. I indicated that the belittling of the *status quo* by him and his associates in the Axis was in essence an assertion of their claim to deprive others of their possessions, properties and rights under the cloak of lofty phrases such as leadership and new order, and that it was my belief that peace would result only when the countries which had put such implicit trust in the force of arms found out that in the use of that force they could and would be surpassed. He added the customary nonsense regarding the needs of nations that are vigorous and young but agreed that Great Britain is making a splendid showing against the German attack.

In tone our conversation was more or less friendly. Matsuoka informed me that since he was now relieved of pressure from other

directions, he had promised the American Ambassador that he would give his attention to a study of the claims of the United States in China, and to their settlement, and he gave me the promise that he would act similarly with respect to our own claims. I received absolutely no indication that any definite decision has been taken regarding war, but my impression is that the Minister will press forward now with the policy of expansion to the south, to the extent that he feels confident of getting away with it.”<sup>81</sup>

The statement made by the Foreign Minister in paragraph numbered 4 above confirms the understanding expressed in numbered paragraph 5 of our telegram 954, October 7, 10 p. m.

GREW

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762.9411/119 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State*

TOKYO, October 12, 1940—2 p. m.  
[Received October 12—9:34 a. m.]

980. My 954, October 7, 10 p. m., paragraph numbered 5.

1. Reliable informant states that there are no secret clauses attached to the German-Italian-Japanese pact but that a number of explanatory provisions are contained in a signed *procès-verbal*.

2. It furthermore appears that the final authorized English version of the text of the pact cannot be published until the official German and Italian texts have been received from Berlin and Rome and that this explains the use of the word “summary” to describe the text as published on September 27.<sup>82</sup>

GREW

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762.9411/125½ : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State*

TOKYO, October 21, 1940—6 p. m.  
[Received October 21—7:03 a. m.]

1022. Japan's treaty alliance with Germany and Italy was ratified by the Emperor on October 19 and published in the *Gazette* on October

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<sup>81</sup> In telegram No. 1123, November 11, 9 a. m. (740.0011 European War-1939/6588), Ambassador Grew reported another conversation in which the Japanese Minister for Foreign Affairs told the British Ambassador, *inter alia*, that his impelling motive in concluding the Axis pact had been his conviction that United States entry into the European war would inevitably involve other states, Japan included. He also expressed his fervent desire to avoid war with either Great Britain or the United States, and said that nothing would provoke Japan's entry into war except American entry into the European war or some serious action such as the moving of a powerful American naval squadron to Singapore.

<sup>82</sup> See *Foreign Relations, Japan, 1931-1941*, vol. II, p. 165.

21 in the Japanese language only. The phraseology is the same as previously published in the press.<sup>83</sup>

GREW

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762.94/4761

*Memorandum Prepared in the War Department*<sup>84</sup>

On October 11, 1940 the Japanese Ambassador in Washington<sup>84a</sup> advised the Foreign Office in Tokyo as follows:

In the future, as long as we do not pay any attention to the anti-Japanese attitude of the United States, I do not think that at this time the United States will take any directly aggressive attitude toward us. I think this is clear. President Roosevelt and Secretary of State Hull are both withholding comment on the alliance and as long as they do not make hostile action against us, we should awe them by our very silence, steadily consolidating our new order in the Far East. This, I believe, would be the best plan.

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761.94/1230 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, October 22, 1940—5 p. m.  
[Received October 23—7:25 a. m.]

1390. The British Ambassador told me last night in the strictest confidence that his Government had received a report from the British Ambassador in Chungking<sup>85</sup> of an interview with Chiang Kai-shek in which the latter had informed the British Ambassador that the situation of China was becoming so difficult that the question of further resistance was in doubt and that if a Soviet-Japanese agreement were concluded with its implication of a cessation of Soviet aid, China would probably be forced to conclude peace with Japan. On the basis of the disquieting information Cripps has received instructions from his Government to see Molotov and inform him that the British Government feels that a Soviet-Japanese agreement at this time would be very undesirable as it would probably result in the collapse of Chinese resistance and that consequently should the Soviet Government find it necessary to make any such agreement the British Government hopes that it will rend [*find?*] it possible to eliminate any reference to or even indirect indication of the withdrawal of Soviet

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<sup>83</sup> The Department was informed on November 20, 23, and 24, 1940, that Hungary, Rumania, and Slovakia had adhered to the treaty.

<sup>84</sup> Copy transmitted to the Department by the War Department.

<sup>84a</sup> Kensuke Horinouchi.

<sup>85</sup> Sir Archibald J. K. Clark Kerr.

aid to China. The Ambassador's instructions authorize him further to state that if the Soviet Government is prepared to adopt a policy of "genuine neutrality" and accord Great Britain the same treatment as has been and is being accorded to Germany, the British Government is prepared to give assurances that the Soviet Union will be consulted with respect to any further peace terms and the British Government will pledge itself not to conclude now or hereafter any anti-Soviet agreement with other nations.

The Ambassador stated that he had been endeavoring for a week without success to obtain an interview with Molotov in order to carry out these instructions and that yesterday he had "conveyed an ultimatum to Molotov" to the effect that unless he was received today he would be forced to see Bertram Hinsky [*Vyshinsky?*].<sup>86</sup> (I did not regard it as desirable to disclose to the Ambassador that I have encountered similar difficulty in seeing Molotov.)

The Ambassador continued, however, that he had noted certain progress in his commercial negotiations with the Soviet Government in that the Soviet authorities after first offering flax in exchange for British rubber, tin and other commodities had recently agreed in principle to sell oil and munitions to Great Britain. The Ambassador admitted that Great Britain had no need for Soviet oil and that his insistence on this commodity had been due entirely to a desire to reduce deliveries of Soviet oil to Germany, whereas the munitions in respect of which only rifles have thus far been specifically offered by the Soviets could be advantageously turned over by the British to any friendly nation in the Near East, such as Turkey.

The reluctance of Molotov to receive the British Ambassador in my opinion confirms the views expressed in my 1307, October 8, 5 p. m., and 1373, October 20, 7 p. m.,<sup>87</sup> as to the reasons for the difficulties which I have encountered in seeing him, namely, an intense desire by the Kremlin not to show even the appearance of negotiations with Great Britain or the United States. I am further of the opinion that pending a decision in respect of future Soviet policy at an admittedly delicate moment and especially following the German approach reported in my 1359, October 17, 12 noon, and 1379, October 21, 4 p. m.,<sup>88</sup> the Soviet Government is anxious to avoid having political proposals, or even questions, put to it by the British Government which it is not yet prepared to answer.

Cripps also informed me that in reply to his vehement protest to Halifax concerning the unfortunate and possibly fatal effect of the publicity in respect of British-Soviet negotiations, particularly as he

<sup>86</sup> Andrey Yanuaryevich Vyshinsky, Soviet Vice Commissar for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>87</sup> Vol. III, pp. 232 and 397, respectively.

<sup>88</sup> *Ante*, pp. 568 and 570, respectively.

had given the Soviet authorities assurances that there would be no such publicity, he has now been assured by Halifax that the latter had personally taken steps to avoid a recurrence.

STEINHARDT

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762.9411/129 : Telegram

*The Chargé in France (Matthews) to the Secretary of State*

(PARIS) VICHY, October 23, 1940—1 p. m.

[Received 8:13 p. m.]

804. Chauvel<sup>89</sup> showed me this morning a telegram received from Arsene-Henry<sup>90</sup> at Tokyo under date of October 22. That telegram reported that while there seemed to be no secret clause to the recent tripartite pact he had ascertained that there was a *procès-verbal* specifically providing that Japan would not be required automatically to make war on the United States if we become involved in hostilities against Germany as a result of action taken by the latter. This *procès-verbal*, said Henry, specifically provided that Japan should have the right to examine the circumstances before taking any position.

MATTHEWS

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711.94/1789 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State*

TOKYO, October 23, 1940—6 p. m.

[Received October 24—10:13 a. m.]

1036. In the course of conversation today with the Vice Foreign Minister he asked me about the present feeling in the United States towards Japan. I replied that the feeling was tense and that this was to be expected from the nature of the public statements by high Japanese statesmen following the signing of the tripartite alliance, these statements having conveyed to the American people the impression that the Japanese Government intends to follow an aggressive policy. I asked Mr. Ohashi whether the Japanese Embassy in Washington was not reporting American public opinion as revealed in the American press and from other sources. He replied "No". I expressed surprise and told him that this Embassy sends daily telegrams to Washington, frequently several pages in length, reporting press comment in Japan.

Sent to the Department via Shanghai.

GREW

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<sup>89</sup> Jean Chauvel, head of Far Eastern section, French Foreign Office.

<sup>90</sup> Charles Arsène-Henry, French Ambassador in Japan.



761.94/1236 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the  
Secretary of State*

Moscow, November 1, 1940—6 p. m.

[Received November 2—3 a. m.]

1466. For the President, the Secretary and the Under Secretary. The new Japanese Ambassador <sup>91</sup> made his first call on me yesterday. After stating that he had been instructed by Foreign Minister Matsuoka to speak frankly to me, he told me the following:

He saw Molotov late in the [day?] of October 30 and, as he put it, asked him point blank "Does the Soviet Union or does it not wish a 'convention' with Japan." Molotov replied that the Soviet Government "was studying the matter". The Ambassador told me that Japan has proposed to the Soviet Union what he described as a "convention" (probably a convention of friendship and nonaggression expressed in general terms) to be followed thereafter by negotiations dealing with specific points of difference between the two countries. These points of difference, the Ambassador stated, concerned the Sakhalin oil concessions, the recurrent fisheries dispute, provoking Outer Mongolian-Manchukuoan frontier conflicts and the support hereinbefore rendered by the Soviet Union to the Chiang Kai Shek regime. He said that about a year ago the Soviet Union had desired a political agreement first with negotiations of specific matters in dispute to follow, whereas at the present time his Government had the impression that the Soviet Union desired to discuss the specific matters in controversy first before committing itself to the conclusion of a political agreement. Insofar as concerns Sakhalin, the Ambassador said that Japan was ready to make concessions as the Japanese Army [and Navy?] need oil badly "because of the general attitude of the United States". He said his Government was also prepared to make concessions in connection with the fisheries dispute and that he expected no difficulty at all in the delimitation of the Outer Mongolian-Manchukuoan frontier. He said his Government was entirely prepared to extend diplomatic recognition to Outer Mongolia, as well as to recognize Soviet special interests in Sinkiang and he assumed that in return the Soviet Government would be prepared to recognize Manchukuo. He said very frankly that the Japanese Government was extremely desirous of obtaining an agreement with the Soviet Union at the present time and was prepared to make substantial concessions to this end.

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<sup>91</sup> Lt. Gen. (retired) Yoshitsugu Tatekawa.

The Ambassador disclosed that his Government was primarily concerned with obtaining some form of public declaration from the Soviet Government of a cessation of Soviet aid to China for the political and psychological effect that such a declaration would have on the Chinese willingness to make peace. He stated that were such a public declaration to be made by the Soviet Union, the Japanese Government would not seriously object if moderate or limited amounts of munitions continued to be furnished to Chiang Kai Shek by the Soviet Union and added that Molotov had told him that Soviet aid to China had "virtually ceased at the present time".

I gained the impression from everything the Ambassador said that what Japan desires more than anything else—and for which it is willing to pay a very considerable price—is some kind of a public declaration or general convention with the Soviet Union which the Japanese Government feels will have a powerful political effect throughout the world and will hasten the conclusion of peace with China.

On his parting from Molotov, the latter again assured the Ambassador that the Soviet Government was giving careful consideration to the Japanese proposals. The Ambassador said that he did not intend to press Molotov for an immediate answer but that he hoped and expected to hear from him in the near future. At one point in the course of our conversation, the Ambassador remarked that his Government considered that it could afford to pay a considerable price for what he continued to refer to as a "convention" with the Soviet Union, even if the Soviet Union did not thereafter "keep all of its promises".

The Ambassador said that the Soviet Government had not yet furnished the Japanese Government with its desiderata and that neither he nor his predecessor, Ambassador Togo, had acquainted Molotov with the specific concessions which Japan was ready to make to obtain an agreement. When I asked him what he meant by specific concessions he said that the Soviet Government did not know as much as he had told me concerning the concessions Japan was prepared to make.

Insofar as concerns the present attitude towards China, the Ambassador said that in his opinion the Japanese Government would have to modify its demands of Chiang Kai Shek in order to bring about peace at the present time and that he had urged such modification on Matsuoka before his departure from Tokyo. It was obvious from the Ambassador's entire conversation that he belongs to the more moderate army element and that he is of the opinion that peace between China and Japan should be effected as soon as possible even though the terms which the Japanese Army desires are not obtainable in their entirety.

STEINHARDT

762.9411/78½

*The Chief of the Division of Far Eastern Affairs (Hamilton) to the Ambassador in Japan (Grew)*

[WASHINGTON,] November 2, 1940.

DEAR MR. GREW: We have found of great interest the comments contained in your letter to me of September 28 on the subject of Japan's alliance with the Axis Powers.

With reference to your query as to whether Berlin and Rome were silent during the period you mention, I have made a careful review of the period covered by your telegrams 656 of August 3,<sup>92</sup> 867 of September 20, noon, and 876 of September 21,<sup>93</sup> and find that we did not receive from other sources information which threw light upon the subject. You will readily understand that under existing conditions our representatives at Berlin and Rome are in a difficult position in the matter of keeping in touch with what is going on.

We are continuing to bear in mind the importance of keeping you informed of developments elsewhere affecting Japan so as to assist you in effective reporting, and we appreciate fully how difficult it may be at times for you to evaluate information which may reach you.

Sincerely yours,

M[AXWELL] M. H[AMILTON]

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761.9411/66a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Japan (Grew)*

WASHINGTON, November 7, 1940—8 p. m.

453. The American Legation at Tehran telegraphs under date November 6<sup>94</sup> that according to a Soviet source Japan and Russia are about to conclude some kind of agreement regarding respective spheres of influence in eastern Asia.

HULL

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761.9411/66 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State*

TOKYO, November 11, 1940—10 p. m.

[Received November 12—8: 14 a. m.]

1131. 1. Meeting the Minister for Foreign Affairs at the Tokyo Club today I mentioned personally and on my own initiative certain current rumors that Japan and Soviet Russia are about to conclude

<sup>92</sup> Not printed.

<sup>93</sup> Telegram No. 876 not printed.

<sup>94</sup> Telegram No. 242, not printed.

an agreement predicated on the division of China into spheres of influence and I asked him whether he would be willing to comment informally on these rumors. Mr. Matsuoka replied that these reports are without foundation and he authorized me so to inform my Government. He said that he was doing his best to conclude a nonaggression pact with Soviet Russia but that this was purely and simply for the purpose of avoiding war. In order to protect himself he said that he naturally could not commit himself with regard to Japan's future policy or action in the light of future altered circumstances, but he could state categorically that there was nothing whatever in his mind along the lines of the rumors mentioned.

2. The Minister then said that he is making efforts to get into direct touch with Chiang Kai-shek without third party mediation and is hopeful that he will be able to bring about peace through important Japanese concessions. He did not further elaborate.

3. Adverting to the prevalence in Tokyo of baseless rumors, the Minister said that one such rumor is that Japan in signing the tripartite alliance has taken a tremendous gamble on Germany and Italy winning the war. He said that far from gambling on such a victory he could not possibly predict which side would win but that if Japan's allies should be defeated Japan would loyally honor her commitments under the pact and would support her allies with redoubled aid when the tide of war turned against them.

Sent to the Department via Shanghai. Repeated to Moscow. Shanghai please repeat to Peiping and to Chungking.

GREW

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761.9411/67 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, November 15, 1940—1 p. m.  
[Received November 15—9: 53 a. m.]

1545. The Japanese Ambassador informed me last night that he had received no reply from Molotov or Vyshinski to his inquiry made on October 30 and reported in my No. 1466 of November 1, 6 p. m. nor any other indication of the attitude of the Soviet Government towards the conclusion of a nonaggression pact with Japan. The Ambassador said that, in conformity with the policy which he has adopted he had made no effort to press the Soviet Government in regard to the [matter?], but that following Molotov's return from Berlin he would seek an interview with him for the purpose of insisting upon a reply.

STEINHARDT

761.94/1241 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, November 20, 1940—3 p. m.

[Received 5:30 p. m.]

1584. My 1577, November 19, 1 p. m.<sup>95</sup> Further intimations from the same source<sup>96</sup> referred to in my telegram under reference would indicate that at least one of the conditions which the Soviet Union is demanding for the conclusion of an agreement with Japan is the entire abandonment of the Japanese coal and oil concessions on the northern part of Sakhalin.

I have learned from another diplomatic source that the Soviet conditions have been conveyed directly or indirectly to the Japanese Ambassador here. The Japanese, however, according to my informant, are at the present time not disposed to relinquish their concessions on the northern part of Sakhalin which would be in conformity with the statements of the Japanese Ambassador to me reported in my No. 1466, November 1, 6 p. m., in regard to the importance to Japan of these concessions.

STEINHARDT

762.9411/188

*The British Chargé (Butler) to the Adviser on Political Relations (Hornbeck)*

WASHINGTON, November 20, 1940.

DEAR DR. HORNBECK: Below is the text of the telegram, dated November 19th, addressed to the Foreign Office by His Majesty's Ambassador at Chungking, of which you told me this morning that you would be glad to have a copy.

"Yesterday Chiang Kai Shek told me in strict confidence that immediately after Molotoff's visit to Berlin Ribbentrop had sent for the Chinese Ambassador<sup>97</sup> and had made a statement to him in the following sense.

Germany now controlled the whole of Europe (Italy was not mentioned). War would be over by the end of this year or at the latest early spring. China was advised to make early peace with Japan and to join the Axis. This was her last chance of admission to the fold. If she refused to make peace Japan would recognise Wang Ching Wei and Italy would follow her example. In these circumstances it would be impossible for Germany to refrain from acting in concert with her allies."

Yours sincerely,

NEVILLE BUTLER

<sup>95</sup> *Ante*, p. 584.<sup>96</sup> A member of the German Embassy in the Soviet Union who "accompanied the German Ambassador to Berlin with Molotov."<sup>97</sup> Chen Chieh.

793.94/16245 : Telegram

*The Acting Secretary of State to the Ambassador in China (Johnson)*

WASHINGTON, November 23, 1940—7 p. m.

196. Your 577, November 20, 9 a. m.<sup>98</sup> We appreciate the thoughtfulness of Chiang Kai-shek in having taken steps to communicate to us the information contained in your telegram under reference.

From the information in our possession it appears that the recent Hitler-Molotov conversations at Berlin are one of a series and that they will probably be continued in one or more places; that the Berlin conversations were arranged at least in part for the purpose of their psychological and propaganda effect upon various governments and peoples; and that it may be expected that the Axis and associated governments will endeavor to use the fact of the conversations to their advantage in diplomacy as well as in propaganda. We have no reason to believe that there have come out of the conversations any definitive agreements, at least in so far as the Far East is concerned. We have received no indication that there occurred in the conversations any development that was intended to be inimical to China, or any concrete agreement in regard to matters relating to China. It is not to be doubted that Germany has been bringing diplomatic pressure to bear upon both Soviet Russia and Japan looking to a *rapprochement* between those two countries which might result in an agreement beneficial to the Axis powers in Europe. In this particular connection it is also to be expected that Japan will endeavor to use such Soviet-Japanese conversations as have taken place to Japan's diplomatic and military advantage. It is our belief, from the information we have received, that out of various German efforts to bring about a Soviet-Japanese *rapprochement* there has not yet occurred any concrete developments. That German-Japanese-Soviet conversations may result in an agreement in regard to the Far East which would affect Chinese interests is, of course, a possibility, but we have no evidence to support an assumption that Soviet Russia contemplates an arrangement which would have as [its] purpose sacrificing China to the advantage of Japanese and/or German imperialism. It seems axiomatic that Germany very much desires to see Japan freed from her present involvement in China in order that Japan might be in a better position to further Germany's objective of defeating Britain by taking military action against British territory and interests in general in the Far East.

The Department suggests that unless you perceive objection you communicate the substance of the foregoing orally and in confidence to Chiang Kai-shek or other appropriate official of the Chinese Government.

Sent to Chungking only.

WELLES

<sup>98</sup> Vol. iv, p. 436.

761.9411/68 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the  
Secretary of State*

Moscow, November 28, 1940—7 p. m.

[Received 11:33 p. m.]

1638. For the Secretary and Under Secretary. My 1577, November 19, 1 p. m.<sup>99</sup> The Japanese Ambassador told me this afternoon in the strictest confidence that he has recently seen Molotov and that on inquiring of him as to the Soviet Government's disposition towards the Japanese proposal of a nonaggression pact, Molotov had replied by pointing out to him that shortly after the Soviet-German nonaggression pact Germany had "made the Soviet Union a present" in the form of half of Poland and that he was curious to know what "present" the Japanese Government proposed to make the Soviet Union in exchange for a nonaggression pact. When the Japanese Ambassador inquired as to what "present" Molotov had in mind, the latter replied that he was thinking of the lower half of Sakhalin and "some islands", but that as he assumed the Japanese Government would not be prepared to cede the lower half of Sakhalin and as there was no desire on the part of the Soviet Government to offend the Japanese Government, by even making such suggestion, he proposed that instead of a nonaggression pact the two countries enter into what he termed a "pact of neutrality", the general provisions of which would make no reference to any third country but would merely provide that in the event that either country became involved in war the other would maintain strict neutrality. The Japanese Ambassador told Molotov that he would submit his proposal to Tokyo and he is now awaiting further instruction from his Government.

He said that in reply to Molotov's reference to the lower half of Sakhalin and "some islands" he had asked Molotov why the Soviet Union which was already huge desired any additional territories, to which Molotov replied, "You have so many islands you could give us a few." The Ambassador said that he had reiterated to Molotov the position of his Government that it was unwilling to discuss specific matters in controversy until after some form of treaty had been signed and told me that Molotov was still pressing for a discussion of specific matters in controversy first. He expressed doubt to me that the Japanese Government would under any conditions agree to the cessation [*cession?*] of southern Sakhalin. The Ambassador told me that in revealing the desire of the Soviet Government to receive "a present" in return for an agreement with Japan, Molotov had remarked that "the present international situation was fine for the Soviet Union."

<sup>99</sup> *Ante*, p. 584.

The Ambassador said that in the course of the conversation he had told Molotov that he must not regard the Japanese-Chinese war as of indefinite duration and that as soon as that war was concluded and in the absence of an agreement with the Soviet Union "we are going to transfer all our armies to Manchuria", to which Molotov had replied that he hoped that some arrangement would be arrived at before that became necessary.

STEINHARDT

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761.62/819 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Japan (Grew) to the Secretary of State*

TOKYO, November 29, 1940—4 p. m.  
[Received November 29—11:50 a. m.]

1228. On the principle *in vino veritas* the following recent observations of a prominent member of the staff of the Soviet Embassy, generally believed to be the local representative of OGPU,<sup>1</sup> made during a somewhat "wet" gathering, are reported for what they may be worth. This information comes from a friendly diplomat.

1. Soviet Russia will never tie her hands by entering any agreement with any other country or group of countries except on the broadest and most general terms and this applies equally to Germany and Japan.

2. An independent China is a fundamental principle in Soviet Russia's Asiatic policy and no agreement with Japan which might invalidate that principle would be possible.

From another usually reliable informant we are told that in reply to an informal suggestion made by Japanese representatives in Moscow, the Soviet Government has flatly refused to discuss with Japan the relations between Russia and any third country, and has declined to discuss the question of Russian assistance to Chiang Kai-shek. The same source states that German representatives in Moscow have not been permitted to take part in the Russo-Japanese conversations there.

GREW

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761.62/825a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Japan (Grew)*

WASHINGTON, December 5, 1940—7 p. m.

522. The apparent tendency of Soviet officials to minimize the significance and scope of German-Soviet cooperation, and of German officials to stress the importance of such cooperation, as well as the wishful thinking and talking of representatives of other governments, renders it difficult for the Department to appraise the various reports which it had been receiving with regard to the Molotov visit.

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<sup>1</sup> Initials of the secret police for the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs, Soviet Union.



Such information as has come to the Department, however, causes it to believe that Far Eastern matters were touched upon during the discussion. Molotov apparently took the position that in return for important concessions, some of a territorial nature, on the part of Japan, the Soviet Union might be disposed to conclude with Japan a pact of a non-aggression character. The Department has no information which would cause it to believe, however, that Molotov expressed any willingness on the part of the Soviet Government to cease lending its support in the form of supplies to China. Available information would seem to indicate that the Soviet Government contemplates continuing and even increasing its aid to China. Apparently the Russians are asking so much from Japan and are offering so little that it does not seem likely that a Soviet-Japanese pact of a non-aggression character will be concluded in the near future unless unexpectedly the Russians reduce their demands or developments cause the Japanese to decide that they must have a pact with Russia regardless of the cost to them.

Basing its impressions on available information, the Department believes that it would be erroneous to regard the Molotov visit as a failure. It understands that neither the Germans nor the Russians had expected to conclude any definite political or economic agreements while Molotov was in Berlin. Apparently during the course of the visit real progress was made in eliminating certain frictions and misunderstandings which had recently arisen between Germany and the Soviet Union; in ascertaining, and thus facilitating future negotiations with respect to such conflicts as exist in political or territorial aspirations; and in increasing to an extent at least mutual confidence. It seems likely that the visit represents the beginning of a period of somewhat closer cooperation between Germany and the Soviet Union. Following the conversations, German diplomacy has apparently become more active in its endeavors to influence China to come to terms with Japan.

It is significant to note that almost simultaneously with the visit, the Soviet Government has begun to assume a more reasonable and even a somewhat cordial attitude in the discussion of various matters at issue between the American and Soviet Governments.

HULL

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761.9411/70: Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, December 21, 1940—6 p. m.  
[Received December 22—12:45 a. m.]

1764. My 1577, November 19, 1 p. m.<sup>2</sup> The source indicated in my telegram under reference states that he understands that the Soviet

<sup>2</sup> *Ante*, p. 584.

Government is still prepared to conclude an agreement with the Japanese provided the Soviet conditions relating to territorial questions are met by the Japanese and that consequently such an agreement depends upon the willingness of the Japanese Government to pay the price. In this connection he added that he believed that the Konoye Government, for reasons of foreign policy, would be willing to meet the Russian terms but feared that the popular reaction to the cession of territory would be so strong that the Government might not be able to maintain itself in power. For this reason the final decision of the Japanese could not be forecast.

Members of the Japanese Embassy here are extremely reticent in regard to the negotiations but the fact that they are continuing is in itself of significance.

STEINHARDT

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761.94/1249 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, December 27, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received 9 p. m.]

1786. In the course of a conversation with the Japanese Ambassador this morning, he told me that his negotiations with the Soviet Government looking towards a political convention were "at a standstill". He said that Molotov's suggestion (see my 1638, November 28, 7 p. m.) that Japan cede the lower half of Sakhalin had made Matsuoka "very angry" and that Matsuoka had instructed him to tell Molotov that Japan was prepared "to purchase" the northern half of Sakhalin, which Molotov had described as "rude". He said that notwithstanding the impasse which had caused a "temporary suspension" of the negotiations for a political agreement, he was in daily contact with the Soviet authorities on the subject of the fisheries convention and that Molotov had suggested to him yesterday an 8-year fisheries convention to take the place of the customary annual *modus vivendi* which expires in January. He said he was also endeavoring to negotiate an agreement concerning trans-Siberian freight rates, as in the absence of a commercial convention with the Soviet Union the rates assessed against Japanese merchandise in transit to Germany were "grossly excessive".

In conclusion the Ambassador observed that Matsuoka had decided to take a "strong stand" in his political negotiations with the Soviet Government, as he considered it inadvisable at the present time to exhibit any "weakness".

STEINHARDT

761.94/1251 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in the Soviet Union (Steinhardt) to the Secretary of State*

Moscow, December 27, 1940—6 p. m.

[Received 8:55 p. m.]

1788. My 1786, December 27, 4 p. m. While it would appear from the information given me by the Japanese Ambassador that Japanese-Soviet political agreement is not imminent due to the refusal up to the present time of the Japanese Government to accept the Soviet conditions, nevertheless the apparent willingness of the Soviet Government to conclude a long term fisheries agreement to replace the annual *modus vivendi*, as well as the attitude of the Soviet press, impels me to the conclusion that the Soviet Government is still willing and even desirous of reaching a political agreement but only on its own terms.

Whether or not at some time in the future an agreement is reached, the mere fact that the Soviet Government has on certain conditions shown a disposition to conclude a political agreement with Japan is in itself an important indication of general Soviet policy. I am of the opinion that the Soviet Government has sought and is seeking to exploit, for its own immediate self interest, as a means of exacting a higher price from Japan, the present situation in the Far East and in particular the existing tension between the United States and Japan.

I feel strongly that this aspect of Soviet policy in the Far East should be borne in mind in considering the dubious possibility of any cooperation between the Soviet Union and ourselves in the Far East, since the possibility and the probability cannot be excluded that in the event of a continued refusal by the Japanese Government to accede to the Soviet conditions, the Soviet Government will attempt to create the impression of increasing collaboration with the United States in the Far East solely for the purpose of endeavoring to force the Japanese to accept its terms. In this connection I invite the Department's attention to the similarity of present Soviet aims and tactics in the Far East to those which it has thus far successfully pursued in relation to western Europe and the European war, with Japan in Soviet eyes playing the part of Germany and the United States and Britain in the Far East the role of France and Britain in Europe.

STEINHARDT

## COOPERATION AMONG THE AMERICAN REPUBLICS IN THEIR REACTION TO THE EUROPEAN WAR

### I. VIOLATIONS BY THE BELLIGERENTS OF THE SECURITY ZONE ESTABLISHED BY THE DECLARATION OF PANAMA<sup>1</sup>

740.00111 A.R./889 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Chile (Bowers) to the Secretary of State*

SANTIAGO, January 3, 1940—7 p. m.

[Received 7:30 p. m.]

2. Just had hour's talk with Ortega<sup>2</sup> and with following result:

(1) British Ambassador with naval aide<sup>3</sup> called on Ortega Sunday morning with an urgent formal question whether Chile considers the safety zone "legally" effective. Ortega replied that it was not a matter of legality [but?] of an "accord between chanceries."

(2) Ambassador insisted that the neutrality proclamations of Latin America<sup>4</sup> based on the Hague Convention<sup>5</sup> are inconsistent with Panama Declaration. Ortega replied they could be modified when the committee meets at Rio on the 15th. Ortega got distinct impression from Ambassador's talk that England may be planning one or more deliberate violations of our neutral zone to make an issue at Rio. Bentinck admitted that German boats in Chilean waters are emboldened by the safety zone and said that should they move England would have to act.

(4) [*sic*] A month ago British requested Chile to exclude all submarines both submerged and on surface from Chilean waters. Confidentially German Ambassador told Ortega that such exclusion would not be considered an unfriendly act by Germany. However, Ortega in contact with Argentine urged not to act until action could be taken at Rio. Nevertheless British pressing insistently for action now.

(5) Found Ortega exceedingly open and frank and eager to talk. I got distinct impression that Ortega is loyal to the spirit of Panama but that under pressure from belligerents he felt the need of reassurance as to our sympathy and support.

BOWERS

<sup>1</sup> Continued from *Foreign Relations*, 1939, vol. v, pp. 85-127; for text of the Declaration of Panama, see *ibid.*, p. 36.

<sup>2</sup> Abraham Ortega, Chilean Minister for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>3</sup> Charles Henry Bentinck and S. H. T. Arliss, respectively.

<sup>4</sup> Pan American Union, Law and Treaty Series Nos. 12, 13, 14, and 15: *Decrees and Regulations on Neutrality* (Washington 1939-1940).

<sup>5</sup> *Foreign Relations*, 1907, pt. 2, p. 1239.

862.8591/744

*The Uruguayan Minister (Richling) to the Secretary of State*

[Translation]

WASHINGTON, January 3, 1940.

MR. SECRETARY OF STATE: I have the honor to advise Your Excellency that I have received telegraphic despatches from my Government, dated the 2nd of the current month, in which I am informed that by Decree of December 30th last<sup>7</sup> the German steamer *Tacoma* was declared to be an auxiliary war vessel and was given 24 hours in which to leave the port of Montevideo and that, as it did not leave within the time set, it was interned on the morning of the first [of January].<sup>8</sup>

This action is based on the following antecedents: The steamer *Tacoma* assisted different maneuvers of the armored ship *Graf Spee* and transshipped its crew on the occasion of the sinking of the said vessel, thus violating the first article of Convention XIII of The Hague, of 1907.<sup>9</sup>

My Government deems that toleration of such acts amounts to violation of its neutrality and that merchant vessels put in the service of belligerent warships should be considered, according to existing precedents in the matter, as auxiliary war vessels and, consequently, it applies the pertinent provisions of the above-cited Hague Convention.

Accept [etc.]

J. RICHLING

740.00111 A.R./889 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Chile (Bowers)*

WASHINGTON, January 5, 1940—11 a. m.

5. Personal for the Ambassador from the Under Secretary. Your no. 2, January 3, 7 p. m., and your letter of December 27, 1939 to the Under Secretary.<sup>10</sup> The question of the procedure to be adopted by the American republics following the statement of December 23<sup>11</sup> concerning the violations of the security zone is evidently one for mutual

<sup>7</sup> For text of decree, see República Oriental del Uruguay, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, *Antecedentes Relativos al Hundimiento del Acorazado "Admiral Graf Spee" y a la Internación del Barco Mercante "Tacoma"* (Montevideo, Imprenta "El Siglo Ilustrado" San José 938, 1940), pp. 58-60.

<sup>8</sup> Brackets appear in the file translation.

<sup>9</sup> *Foreign Relations*, 1907, pt. 2, p. 1239.

<sup>10</sup> For latter, see *ibid.*, 1939, vol. v, p. 123.

<sup>11</sup> Statement released by the Department of State on December 23, printed in the Department of State *Bulletin*, December 23, 1939, p. 723; see also telegram No. 165, December 22, 1939, 11 a. m., from the Minister in Panama, *Foreign Relations*, 1939, vol. v, p. 117.

consultation. I personally concur with Ortega's view that the consideration of the measures which may be open to the American republics in order to attain the objectives of the Declaration of Panamá might properly become one of the functions of the Neutrality Committee. I have given much thought to this matter and have discussed it informally with certain representatives of the American republics, including Gazitúa of the Chilean Embassy here.<sup>12</sup> As a result of these discussions we are inclined to feel that the work of the Committee should be divided into four broad fields:

(1) To formulate recommendations when asked to do so as to the action to be taken by any American government when faced by urgent situations similar to that confronted by the Government of Uruguay 2 weeks ago.

(2) To elaborate and clarify questions relating to the rights and obligations of the American republics as neutrals, as set forth in the General Declaration of Neutrality of the American Republics agreed upon at Panamá.

(3) To formulate recommendations to the American governments for the purpose of securing unanimous agreement on the adoption of measures to secure observation on the part of the belligerents of the provisions of the Declaration of Panamá. It is our thought that this point should be discussed and determined without delay; please ascertain whether Ortega believes that it should be made a matter of consultation between all of the American republics through diplomatic channels before the Committee convenes. The most urgent question to be taken up would be the determination of the measures which would make it impossible for belligerent warships, or for belligerent merchant ships, acting as auxiliaries, which violate the terms of the Declaration of Panamá, to obtain fuel or supplies or other facilities in the ports of any American republic.

(4) To receive evidence and reach findings as to facts in cases where alleged violation by the belligerents of the provisions of the Declaration of Panamá has taken place.

I should greatly appreciate Ortega's views not only concerning the specific points mentioned above but also in regard to the most appropriate method to be adopted in order to circulate such views as may already have been formulated by the American republics on this subject. In view of the fact that the Neutrality Committee will meet at Rio de Janeiro might it not be appropriate to suggest that the Brazilian Government assume the role of coordination in this case?

With particular reference to your letter of December 27 I sincerely appreciate your bringing Ortega's reactions to my attention. There has of course been no intention of "slighting" anyone; it is perhaps inevitable, in consultations involving 21 different governments, especially where there is great urgency in reaching agreement on fundamentals, that certain details of future procedure such as were raised by him fail to receive prompt consideration in spite of their

<sup>12</sup> Guillermo Gazitúa, Counselor of Embassy.

importance. Please convey to him my warm appreciation for the cooperative attitude which he has shown in these matters and tell him that his views as transmitted by you to me have been of the very greatest value.

HULL

740.00111 A.R./631

*The Panamanian Chargé (Briceño) to the Secretary of State*

[Translation]

No. D-4

WASHINGTON, January 8, 1940.

MR. SECRETARY: I have the honor to send to Your Excellency herewith the German text, properly corrected, of the message which the Chancellor of the German Reich, Fuehrer Adolf Hitler, addressed to the President of the Republic of Panama in reply to the protest of the American Republics regarding the naval battle of Montevideo.

The first radiogram received in Panama came incomplete, and it was necessary to ask that correction be made, which the German Government did in the following form: <sup>13</sup>

"His Excellency Dr. Augusto S. Boyd, Acting President of the Republic of Panama, Panama: I acknowledge to Your Excellency the receipt of the telegram of December 23rd in which you [?] inform me of the result of the consultations which have taken place among the American Republics in accordance with Article 3 of the Declaration of Panama of October 3rd of this year. I have instructed the competent Government Offices to examine the matter. I beg you, Mr. President, to accept the expression of my most distinguished consideration. Adolf Hitler".

I avail myself [etc.]

JULIO E. BRICEÑO

740.00111 A.R./922

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

[WASHINGTON,] January 8, 1940.

The British Ambassador <sup>14</sup> called to see me this morning at my request.

I told the Ambassador that I had learned confidentially that the British Government, through the British Ambassador in Rio de Janeiro, had addressed an official communication to the Brazilian Government <sup>15</sup> with regard to the Declaration of Panama indicating

<sup>13</sup> Translation from the German.

<sup>14</sup> Lord Lothian.

<sup>15</sup> Not printed; see despatch No. 2407, January 16, from the Ambassador in Brazil, p. 687.

the intention of the Government of Great Britain to respect the zone, providing the other belligerents had agreed to respect it and further providing that certain guarantees and safeguards to the Allied interests could be agreed upon. I asked the Ambassador if my understanding was correct that in the course of the previous conversation which he and I had had upon this subject, he had not intended to make any official statement to this effect, but had intended merely to inform me unofficially of the views of his Government which were in essence similar to those above referred to. The Ambassador said that my understanding was entirely accurate and that he had not as yet been officially instructed to make any official statement to this Government. He then inquired whether the proper procedure would not be for the British Government to make its official views with regard to the Declaration of Panama known to the President of Panama who had heretofore acted as the intermediary in this matter between the American Republics and the belligerent governments. I said to the Ambassador that that was precisely my own understanding.

The Ambassador then said that he believed that his Government was now worried lest the German Government could introduce into the waters comprised within the zone laid down by the Declaration of Panama a considerable number of German merchant vessels which had taken refuge in Murmansk and which could enter the zone with comparative impunity at this time of year owing to the thick fogs which lay between the northern coasts of Scandinavia and Greenland and eastern Canada, and then declare that Germany would respect the zone provided Allied warships did not attack or otherwise interfere with these German vessels within the zone. The British Government feared, the Ambassador said, that if the Germans resorted to this procedure, they would place the British and French navies in the position of violating the zone and of undertaking aggressive acts because, he declared, the Allied Navies could not permit any new concentration of German shipping within the zone since such German shipping must necessarily be a continued and grave menace to Allied merchant shipping traveling between the American continent and Allied ports. I asked the Ambassador if he had any knowledge as yet of any such move having materialized. He replied that he did not. I stated that it clearly could not be thought that the American Republics would agree to have the zone utilized by any belligerent as a base for attack against the other belligerents and that if Germany was contemplating the move to which the Ambassador had referred, such a move would obviously be clearly an attempt to utilize the zone laid down by the Declaration of Panama as a sanctuary and as a basis for attack against Allied merchant shipping. I reminded the Amba-



sador that a week from today the Permanent Neutrality Committee<sup>16</sup> of the American Republics would commence its sessions in Rio de Janeiro and that I believed such problems as that which he had just mentioned would come up for immediate review and for subsequent formal recommendations as to methods of procedure for the Governments of all of the American Republics. I hoped, I said, that the clarification which would result from the labors of the Permanent Neutrality Committee would expedite the decision on the part of all of the belligerents to respect the terms of the Declaration of Panama.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

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740.00111A—Combat Areas/124

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

[WASHINGTON,] January 12, 1940.

The British Ambassador called to see me today at his request. The Ambassador reminded me that in our last conversation he had informed me that the British Admiralty was considering taking American vessels which had not received navicerts<sup>17</sup> to certain ports in Nova Scotia or Newfoundland for inspection of their cargoes in order to avoid taking American ships for inspection into ports within the combat area. The Ambassador said that on consideration the British Admiralty felt that the port of St. Johns in Newfoundland was an inconvenient place for such inspection and desired to have the inspections take place in Halifax. The Ambassador said that Halifax was within the neutrality zone laid down in the Declaration of Panama and asked whether this Government would object if Halifax were selected.

I replied that the Declaration of Panama implied abstention on the part of the belligerents from all belligerent activities within that zone and that obviously the diverting of the passages of American vessels within that zone was clearly a belligerent activity. I said that I would have the matter given consideration in the Department and communicate the views of this Government in the matter to the Ambassador in the near future.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

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<sup>16</sup> See vol. v, section under General entitled "The Inter-American Neutrality Committee."

<sup>17</sup> See section entitled "Establishment of Control Measures by the Belligerents Interfering With Neutral Commerce; Reservations by the United States of American Rights," *Foreign Relations*, 1939, vol. I, pp. 717 ff.

740.00111--A.R.N.C./12

*The Ambassador in Brazil (Caffery) to the Secretary of State*

No. 2407

RIO DE JANEIRO, January 16, 1940.

[Received January 25.]

SIR: I have the honor to enclose herewith the text of the British note<sup>18</sup> regarding the Declaration of Panama which was handed to the Brazilian Government on January 3, 1940, and described in my telegram No. 10 of January 5, 4 p. m.<sup>19</sup> Although along the same general lines as the British reply to the President of Panama,<sup>20</sup> of which the text as received here telegraphically by the Associated Press today is also enclosed,<sup>18</sup> this earlier note received here presents certain interesting differences from the latter.

The note to the President of Panama omits the threat contained in the note handed to the Brazilian Government that "from a political point of view a most serious situation would arise if the American republics began to take sanctions against British ships" for exercising established belligerent rights, "and such action on the part of those republics would inevitably destroy all chance of His Majesty's Government being able to accept the zone as they are anxious to do if they can." While this threat is of course implicit in the repeated insistence in the note to the President of Panama that the Panama proposal "involving abandonment by belligerents of legitimate belligerent rights is not one which on any basis of international law can be imposed upon them by unilateral action, and that its adoption requires their special assent", it is not made explicit there as it was in the note handed to the Brazilian Government.

Otherwise the note to the President of Panama makes more demands and fewer concessions than the note handed to the Brazilian Government. It omits the admission in the latter that fulfilment of the plan for a neutral zone "would lighten the heavy burden now being borne by the British Navy." In addition to elaborating new fears of "providing German warships and supply ships with a vast sanctuary from which they could emerge to attack allied and neutral shipping", the note delivered at Panama lays down the following conditions for acceptance that were not contained at all in the note received here.

German warships and supply ships should not be enabled to pass from one ocean to another through the zone. This is not mentioned as a condition in the note received here.

<sup>18</sup> Not printed.

<sup>19</sup> Printed in vol. v, in section under General entitled "The Inter-American Neutrality Committee."

<sup>20</sup> See note from the Panamanian Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Secretary of State, D. D. No. 262, January 26, p. 689.

German merchant ships should not be permitted to engage in inter-American trade. The note received here stipulated merely that German merchantmen already harboring in American ports be held there for the duration of the war.

Finally, the keynote of the message delivered here was that Great Britain "would accept the proposal if . . ."; that of the note to Panama seems to be that "His Majesty's Government . . . will reserve their full belligerent rights to fight" within the zone, unless . . .<sup>21</sup>

Respectfully yours,

For the Ambassador:  
WILLIAM C. BURDETT  
*Counselor of Embassy*

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862.8591/733 : Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, January 17, 1940—8 p. m.

109. Please present the following to the Foreign Office:

"The Department of State of the United States has been advised by the Commanding Officer of the Twenty-First Air Reconnaissance Squadron at Hialeah, Florida, that on December 19, 1939, the British cruiser *Orion* attempted to overhaul the German ship *Arauca* after the latter had entered American territorial waters and fired across the bow of the *Arauca* a warning shot which fell within the 3-mile limit.

"On September 5, 1939 the American Government issued a proclamation<sup>22</sup> designed to preserve the neutrality of the United States and of its citizens and of persons within its territory and jurisdiction. In this proclamation it was provided, *inter alia*, that '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.'

"The prohibition here set forth is sanctioned by well-established principles of international law and by the practices of states. One of the first principles of neutrality is that a neutral nation has every right to expect the inviolability of its territorial jurisdiction to be scrupulously respected by all belligerents alike. Indeed the duty of impartiality incumbent upon every neutral obliges it to prevent with the means at its disposal any belligerent from committing upon its territory or within its jurisdictional waters any acts of hostility.

"The Government of the United States therefore, assumes that the British Government will view the action of the British cruiser *Orion* as seriously as does the United States and will welcome confirmation of this assumption.

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<sup>21</sup> Omissions indicated in the original despatch.

<sup>22</sup> Department of State *Bulletin*, September 9, 1939, p. 203.

"In addition to the situation presented regarding the territorial waters of the United States my Government also desires to direct the attention of the British Government to the Declaration of Panama, a copy of which was communicated to the British Government on behalf of the twenty-one American Republics by the President of the Republic of Panama on October 4, 1939, stating that 'the American Republics, so long as they maintain their neutrality, are as of inherent right entitled to have those waters adjacent to the American Continent, which they regard as of primary concern and direct utility in their relations, free from the commission of any hostile act by any non-American belligerent nation, whether such hostile act be attempted or made from land, sea or air.'"

HULL

740.0011 European War 1939/1597

*The Panamanian Minister for Foreign Affairs (Garay) to the Secretary of State*

[Translation]

D. D. No. 262

PANAMA, January 26, 1940.

[Received February 1.]

MR. SECRETARY: For Your Excellency's information, I have the honor to transmit to you an authenticated copy of the notes from His Britannic Majesty's Minister and from the Chargé d'Affaires of France, forwarding the replies of the Governments of Great Britain and France to the cablegrams which the President of Panama, in behalf of the 21 American Republics, sent to His Majesty King George VI and to the President of the French Republic, in connection with the encounter between naval forces of the British and German belligerents which occurred on December 13, 1939, within the Security Zone decided upon at the Consultative Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the American Republics, held toward the end of last year in this city.

I take [etc.]

NARCISO GARAY

[Enclosure 1]

*The British Minister in Panama (Dodd) to the Panamanian Minister for Foreign Affairs (Garay)*

PANAMA, January 14, 1940.

MONSIEUR LE MINISTRE: On December 23rd the Acting President of the Republic of Panama communicated to His Majesty The King the text of a document agreed upon unanimously by the 21 American Republics in connection with the recent encounter in the South Atlan-

tic between certain of His Majesty's Ships and the German warship *Admiral Graf Spee*. On December 27th His Majesty formally acknowledged the receipt of this document, stating that, in accordance with constitutional practice, he had referred it for the consideration of his responsible Ministers.

I now have the honour, under instructions from His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, to communicate to Your Excellency the enclosed statement on behalf of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom and to request that Your Excellency will be good enough to communicate it to the other Pan-American Governments.

I have [etc.]

CHARLES DODD

[Subenclosure]

*Statement on Behalf of the British Government*

His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom have devoted most careful consideration to the communication agreed upon unanimously by the 21 American Republics, the text of which was telegraphed to His Majesty The King by the Acting President of Panama on December 23rd last. In that communication reference was made, among other matters, to the recent naval action between British and German warships in the South Atlantic and to the maritime security zone described in the Declaration of Panama of October 3rd, 1939.

His Majesty's Government, who themselves so long strove to prevent war, fully appreciate the desire of the American Republics to keep the war away from the shores of the American Continent. It was therefore not merely with interest but with understanding that His Majesty's Government learned of the maritime security zone proposal. His Majesty's Government noted with satisfaction from the Declaration of Panama itself that the attempt would be made to base the observance of its provisions upon the consent of the belligerents. This fresh expression of adherence to the idea of solving international difficulties by mutual discussion, which has always been upheld by the American Republics, confirmed His Majesty's Government's belief that these Powers would not attempt to enforce observance of the zone by unilateral action and encouraged their hope that it would be possible to give effect by means of negotiation to the intentions which inspired it.

It was in this spirit that His Majesty's Government were examining the proposal of the Conference of Panama at the time when the communication of December 23rd was received. In view of this communication His Majesty's Government desire to draw the attention of the American Republics to the following considerations: It will

be apparent, in the first place, that the proposal, involving as it does the abandonment by the belligerents of certain legitimate belligerent rights, is not one which on any basis of International Law can be imposed upon them by unilateral action, and that its adoption requires their specific assent. The acceptance by His Majesty's Government of the suggestion that the belligerents should forego their rights in the zone must clearly be dependent upon their being assured that the adoption of the zone proposal would not provide German warships and supply ships with a vast sanctuary from which they could emerge to attack Allied and neutral shipping and to which they could return to avoid being brought to action, and in which some un-neutral service might be performed by non-German ships, for example by the use of wireless communications. It would also be necessary to ensure that German warships and supply ships would not be enabled to pass with impunity from one ocean to another through the zone, or German merchant ships to take part in Inter-American trade and earn foreign exchange, which might be used in attempts to promote subversion and sabotage abroad and to procure supplies for the prolongation of the war, thus depriving the Allies of the fruits of their superiority at sea. Moreover, the acceptance of the zone proposals would have to be on the basis that it should not constitute a precedent for a far-reaching alteration in the existing laws of maritime neutrality.

Unless these points are adequately safeguarded, the zone proposals might only lead to the accumulation of belligerent ships in the zone. This in turn might well bring the risk of war nearer to the American States and lead to friction between on the one hand the Allies, pursuing their legitimate belligerent activities, and on the other, the American Republics endeavouring to make this new policy prevail.

The risk of such friction, which His Majesty's Government would be the first to deplore, would be increased by the application of sanctions. His Majesty's Government must emphatically repudiate any suggestion that His Majesty's Ships have acted, or would act, in any way that would justify the adoption by neutrals of punitive measures which do not spring from the accepted canons of neutral rights and obligations. If, therefore, the American States were to adopt a scheme of sanctions for the enforcement of the zone proposal, they would, in effect, be offering a sanctuary to German warships, within which His Majesty's Ships would be confronted with the invidious choice of having either to refrain from engaging their enemy or laying themselves open to penalties in American ports and waters.

Up to the present it does not appear that means have been found by which the disadvantages of the zone proposal could be eliminated. That this is the case was shown by the operations in the zone of the warship *Admiral Graf Spee* and the supply ship *Tacoma*.

With regard to the specific incidents of which mention is made in the communication under reply, His Majesty's Government must observe that the legitimate activities of His Majesty's Ships can in no way imperil, but must rather contribute to the security of the American Continent, the protection of which was the object of the framers of the Declaration of Panama. His Majesty's Government cannot admit that there is any foundation for a claim that such activities have in any way exposed them to justifiable reproach, seeing that the zone proposal has not been made effective and belligerent assent has not yet been given to its operation.

In view of the difficulties described above, it appears to His Majesty's Government that the only effective method of achieving the American object of preventing belligerent acts within the zone would be, firstly, to ensure that the German Government would send no more warships into it. Secondly, there are obvious difficulties in applying the zone proposal at this stage of the war when so much German shipping has already taken refuge in American waters. If the Allies are to be asked to forego the opportunity of capturing these vessels, it would also seem to be necessary that they should be laid up under Pan-American control for the duration of the war.

In the view of His Majesty's Government it would only be by means such as those indicated that the wish of the American Governments to keep war away from their coasts could be realised in a truly effective and equitable manner. Until His Majesty's Government are able to feel assured that the scheme will operate satisfactorily, they must, anxious as they are for the fulfilment of American hopes, necessarily reserve their full belligerent rights in order to fight the menace presented by German action and policy and to defend that conception of law and that way of life, which they believe to be as dear to the peoples and Governments of America as they are to the peoples and Governments of the British Commonwealth of Nations.

[Enclosure 2—Translation] <sup>22</sup>

*The French Chargé in Panama (De la Blanchetai) to the Panamanian Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Communications (Garay)*

JANUARY 23, 1940.

MR. SECRETARY: AS Your Excellency knows, on December 23rd last, His Excellency Mr. Augusto S. Boyd, Acting President of the Republic of Panama, sent to the President of the French Republic the text of a note the terms of which had been drawn up in common accord by the twenty-one American Republics, regarding a naval action that had taken place between English and German warships close to

<sup>22</sup> Filed separately under 740.0011 European War 1939/1573.

the coast of Uruguay. On January 4th, Mr. Albert Lebrun acknowledged receipt of the communication in question, indicating that the French Government would submit to a thorough examination the problems raised by the American Republics, problems with regard to which it reserved its stand.

By order of my Government, I have the honor to send to Your Excellency, under this cover, the response of Mr. Daladier,<sup>23a</sup> requesting you to be good enough to communicate it to the American Republics which signed the Declaration of Panama.

I take [etc.]

PIERRE H. DE LA BLANCHETAI

[Subenclosure—Translation]

*Statement on Behalf of the French Government*

The Government of the French Republic has examined with attention the communication which the Acting President of the Republic of Panama was good enough to address to the President of the French Republic on December 23rd last, following a unanimous agreement among the twenty-one American Republics. This note referred to a naval action that had taken place between British and German warships after the *Admiral Graf Spee* had attempted to come up with the French merchant vessel *Formose* for the purpose of destroying it.

2. This communication referred to the desire manifested by the American Republics in the Declaration of Panama to keep the war away from the coasts of the American continent. The Government of the Republic, which strove for a long time to avoid war, fully appreciates the desire of the American Republics, and has examined in the most sympathetic spirit their proposal aiming at the establishment of a zone of maritime security. It interprets the steps taken in the name of the American Governments both on December 23rd and also by the preceding communication of the Declaration of Panama as implying that in the minds of those Governments the constitution of such a zone, involving a renunciation by the belligerent states of the exercise, over wide areas, of rights well established by international custom, could result only from an agreement among all the states interested.

3. The recent occurrences to which the communication addressed to the Government of the French Republic in the name of the American Republics refers illustrate very plainly the situation which is to be regulated. These facts arise from the attempt of the *Admiral Graf Spee* to attack and destroy, within the zone of maritime security, the French merchant vessel *Formose*. It is evident that under the conditions of the present war such attempts on the part of the Germans can have no effect on the outcome of this war. It is no less clear that

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<sup>23a</sup> Edouard Daladier, French Minister for Foreign Affairs.



if such acts are committed or attempted it is the strict right of France and Great Britain to oppose this in good time by a counter-attack and that they cannot be asked to renounce this right. It follows that, if the maritime security zone is to become a reality, as the American Governments desire, it is necessary for the latter to furnish the Government of the Republic with satisfactory assurance that the German Government will no longer send warships or supply ships into that zone.

4. The incontestable superiority that France and Great Britain have over Germany in the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans has had the result that numerous German merchant vessels normally have no other resource for escaping the legitimate exercise of the right of taking prizes than to seek refuge in American ports. The institution of the zone of protection could not have the effect of releasing them and of thus depriving the Allies of advantages for them arising out of their naval superiority over Germany. It would therefore have to include, on the part of each American Government, effective measures adapted to hold in its ports the German ships which have taken refuge there.

5. The American Governments do not appear to contemplate assuming the responsibility of insuring within the wide areas which would constitute the zone of protection the suppression of acts of aid to the enemy (un-neutral service). The possibility of such acts is so great, thanks in particular to radio communications, that naval forces could not be deprived of the right of preventing them and repressing them to the full extent permitted by international law.

6. These are the bases on which, if the American Governments cause them to be accepted by all the belligerent states, there must, in the opinion of the Government of the Republic, be sought the accomplishment of the aims pursued by the American Republics.

7. The Government of the Republic is not unaware that because of the novelty of the procedure and the extent of the zone, differences of opinion may arise over concrete cases. At least, they can be easily discussed through diplomatic channels if, in application as well as in theory, an effort is made to follow the method of free discussion and reciprocal agreement. On the other hand, there would be danger of provoking regrettable friction by proceeding unilaterally, departing from the habitual practice of nations. Such friction would be particularly serious if it proceeded from punitive measures against ships that had done nothing contrary to international law. To refuse, in a case of this kind, refuge, transit or refueling to a warship would contrast badly with the line of conduct adopted by the Government of Uruguay with regard to the *Admiral Graf Spee*.

8. The Government of the Republic hopes that by thus setting forth its sentiments it will have contributed to the putting into practice of the views by which the twenty-one American Republics have

been inspired. At the same time, it anticipates that the latter will recognize that as long as an agreement is not reached on the bases described above, the Government of the Republic retains the full exercise of its rights as a belligerent, which are founded on international law and which must permit it to safeguard the principles of law and the concept of life which it shares with the Governments and the peoples of America.

DALADIER

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862.857/55

*The Panamanian Ambassador (Boyd) to the Secretary of State*

[Translation]

No. D-66

WASHINGTON, February 16, 1940.

MR. SECRETARY OF STATE: I have the honor to transmit to Your Excellency, herewith, the communication which the Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Communications of the Republic of Panama addresses to Your Excellency, in connection with a new violation of the Security Zone established by the Declaration of Panama and which is self-explanatory.

I avail myself [etc.]

JORGE E. BOYD

[Enclosure—Translation]

*The Panamanian Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Communications (Garay) to the Secretary of State*

FEBRUARY 16, 1940.

EXCELLENCY: I have the honor to advise Your Excellency that the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the United States of Brazil, His Excellency Oswaldo Aranha, has sent me a cablegram which reads word for word:

“His Excellency Mr. Narciso Garay,  
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Panama,  
Panama City.

“I have to advise Your Excellency that on the 12 instant the German freighter *Wakama* was sunk by its own crew about 15 miles from the Brazilian coast when hailed by an English war vessel, obviously for purposes of visit and capture. As from the procedure of the English war vessel there results a hostile act classified as such by the 13th Hague Convention<sup>24</sup> and committed in waters adjacent to the American continent which the American Republics have the right to keep free of any hostile act on the part of any belligerent nation, I desire

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<sup>24</sup> *Foreign Relations*, 1907, pt. 2, p. 1239.

to request Your Excellency to be good enough to consult with the other American countries in the manner of the precedent already established on the suitability of a collective protest against this new violation of the Maritime Zone which we undertake to preserve from the evils of war. Oswaldo Aranha."

In conformity with the request of the Brazilian Minister of Foreign Affairs I have the honor to ask Your Excellency's opinion as to whether your Government agrees on the suitability of a collective protest because of the acts reported in the message for Mr. Aranha above transcribed.

I greet Your Excellency [etc.]

NARCISO GARAY

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740.0011 European War 1939/1686

*The Panamanian Ambassador (Boyd) to the Secretary of State*

[Translation]

No. D-65

WASHINGTON, February 16, 1940.

MR. SECRETARY: I have the honor to transmit to Your Excellency herewith a copy of the note, with a translation thereof into Spanish, addressed to the Panamanian Chancellery by the Chargé d'Affaires of Germany in Panama, by means of which he replies in the name of his Government to the protest which the American Republics, through His Excellency the President of the Republic of Panama, addressed on December 23, 1939, to the countries which violated the Security Zone established in the Declaration of Panama, of October 3, 1939.

I avail myself [etc.]

JORGE E. BOYD

[Enclosure—Translation]

*The German Chargé in Panama (Von Winter) to the Panamanian Minister for Foreign Affairs (Garay)*

[PANAMA, February 14, 1940.]

MR. MINISTER: The late President of Panama communicated to the Chancellor of the German Reich, by a cablegram of October 4, 1939, on behalf of the American Republics, the text of the so-called Declaration of Panama, which sought to protect the neutral American Republics against menace to their vital interests by the effects of the state of war existing at present. For that purpose, the establishment of a security zone is contemplated in the Declaration and of such a nature that no military operations may be carried on by belligerents in the waters adjacent to the American continent, to a fixed

distance. The Governments of the American Republics agree that they will endeavor to secure from the belligerents the recognition of such a security zone. In another telegram of the Acting President of the Republic of Panama, certain cases are mentioned, which, in the opinion of the American Governments, have been likely to endanger the efforts for the security of the American continents. In addition, it was stated in this telegram that the American Governments protested to the belligerent powers against these occurrences and that they had entered into consultation for the purpose of strengthening the system of common protection. The Chancellor of the German Reich acknowledged the receipt of these two telegrams by telegrams of October 23rd and December 29th, 1939, and added that he had instructed the German Government to consider the matter. As the result of this consideration, I have the honor to communicate the following to Your Excellency, with the request that it be transmitted to the other American Governments :

(1) The German Government welcomes the intention of the American Republics, expressed in the Declaration of Panama, to maintain strict neutrality during the present conflict, and fully understands that they wish, as far as possible, to take precautionary action against the effects of the present war on their countries and peoples.

(2) The German Government believes itself to be in agreement with the American Governments that the regulations contained in the Declaration of Panama would mean a change in existing international law and infers from the telegram of October 4th last year that it is desired to settle this question in harmony with the belligerents. The German Government does not\* take the stand that the hitherto recognized rules of international law were bound to be regarded as a rigid and forever immutable order. It is rather of the opinion that these rules are capable of and require adaptation to progressive development and newly arising conditions. In this spirit, it is also ready to take up the consideration of the proposal of the neutral American Governments. However, it must point out that for the German naval vessels which have been in the proposed security zone so far, only the rules of law now in effect could, of course, be effective. The German naval vessels have held most strictly to these rules of law during their operations. Therefore in so far as the protest submitted by the American Governments is directed against the action of German warships, it cannot be recognized by the German Government as well grounded. It has already expressed to the Government of Uruguay its divergent interpretation of the law also in the special case mentioned in the telegram of the Acting President of the Republic of Panama of December 24th. Besides, the German Government cannot recognize the right of the Governments of the American Republics to decide unilaterally upon measures in a manner deviating from the rules hitherto in effect, such as are to be taken under consideration by the

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\*This negative was omitted in the accompanying German text apparently by inadvertence.—Tr[anslator]. [Footnote in the file translation.]

American Governments against the ships of the belligerent countries which have committed acts of war within the waters of the projected security zone, according to the telegram of December 24th of last year.

(3) Upon considering the questions connected with the plan for the establishment of the security zone, there arises first of all one important point which causes the situation of Germany and the other belligerent powers to appear disparate with respect to this: that is, while Germany has never pursued territorial aims on the American continent, Great Britain and France have, however, during the course of the last few centuries, established important possessions and bases on this continent and the islands offshore, the practical importance of which also with respect to the questions under consideration here does not require any further explanation. By these exceptions to the Monroe Doctrine in favor of Great Britain and France the effect of the security zone desired by the neutral American Governments is fundamentally and decisively impaired to start with. The inequality in the situation of Germany and her adversaries that is produced hereby might perhaps be eliminated to a certain extent if Great Britain and France would pledge themselves, under the guaranty of the American States, not to make the possessions and islands mentioned the starting points or bases for military operations; even if that should come about, the fact would still remain that one belligerent state, Canada, not only directly adjoins the zone mentioned in the west and the east, but that portions of Canadian territory are actually surrounded by the zone.

(4) Despite the circumstances set forth above, the German Government, on its side, would be entirely ready to enter into a further exchange of ideas with the Governments of the American Republics regarding the putting into effect of the Declaration of Panama. However, the German Government must assume from the reply of the British and French Governments, recently published by press and radio, that those two governments are not willing to take up seriously the idea of the security zone. The mere fact of the setting up of demands according to which entrance into the zone mentioned is not to be permitted to German warships, while the warships of the adversaries are officially to retain the right to enter the zone without restriction, shows such a lack of respect for the most elementary ideas of international law and imputes to the governments of the American States such a flagrant violation of neutrality that the German Government can see therein only the desire of the British and French Governments to do away with the basic idea of the security zone, first of all.

(5) Although the German Government is entirely ready to enter into the proposals and suggestions of the American States in this field, the German Government can feel certain of a success of the continuation of the plan of the security zone only when the British and French position that has been made known is fundamentally revised.

I avail myself [etc.]

WINTER

740.00111 A.R.N.C./52 : Telegram

*The Under Secretary of State (Welles) to the Secretary of State*

S.S. "REX" AT SEA, February 20, 1940—10 p. m.  
 [Received February 20—9:55 p. m.]

For Duggan.<sup>25</sup> Referring to the request of the Brazilian Government<sup>26</sup> for our views concerning most recent violation of the neutrality zone I feel that we should inform Brazil that we are prepared to join the other Republics immediately in joint protest; that we should however further state that we believe the Neutrality Committee should be requested to undertake at once the formulation of the draft replies to be submitted to all of the Republics for their approval as joint responses to be sent to the communication addressed to the President of Panama by the belligerents refusing to accede to the terms of the declaration of Panama; and that the Neutrality Committee should be further requested to expedite its preferential consideration of the implementation of the declaration.

I believe our reply while fully supporting Brazil should make it clear that in our opinion reiterated protests without the implementation above indicated would be sterile and ultimately stultifying.

WELLES

862.857/94

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*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Chief of the Division of the American Republics (Duggan)*

[WASHINGTON,] February 21, 1940.

Mr. Butler<sup>27</sup> gave me the content of a message from London, in turn received by the Director of Naval Intelligence in London from the British Naval Attaché in Rio.

The Naval Attaché had learned that the *Wakama* was using its wireless while in port in Rio de Janeiro to communicate regarding ship movements at sea. The Naval Attaché called the attention of the Brazilian Government to this section [*action*] and "denounced" the *Wakama* as a German naval auxiliary. The *Wakama* left port 36 hours thereafter, the inference being that the Brazilian Government had "done something".

The Naval Attaché had also learned on February 8 that the German merchant ship *Königsberg* was at anchor off Gravata Island at the entrance of Rio Harbor, from where it was watching and presumably communicating about ship movements. The Naval Attaché called

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<sup>25</sup> Laurence Duggan, Chief of the Division of the American Republics.

<sup>26</sup> See note from the Panamanian Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Communications, February 16, p. 695.

<sup>27</sup> N. M. Butler, Counselor of the British Embassy.

this to the attention of the Brazilian authorities, who are said to have informed the master of the *Königsberg* that she had either to leave Brazilian territorial waters or to return to port. The *Königsberg* chose the latter course.

Mr. Butler added that it must be evident that Great Britain could not permit German merchant vessels to perform unneutral acts in the territorial waters of American countries. He said that if they left territorial waters then under international law Great Britain had a right to capture or destroy them. He expressed hope therefore that there would be no protest regarding the *Wakama*.

I thanked Mr. Butler for the information he had conveyed emanating from the British Naval Attaché in Rio and said that as he doubtlessly knew the several American countries were now considering the *Wakama* incident at the request of the Government of Brazil.

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862.857/55 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Brazil (Caffery)*

WASHINGTON, February 21, 1940—6 p. m.

35. Please inform Aranha that this Government has received his message communicated through the Government of Panama regarding the sinking of the German freighter *Wakama*. The Department is in complete agreement that this incident constitutes a violation of the Declaration of Panama and feels that a collective statement by the American republics might be made and transmitted to the Government of Brazil through the Government of Panama, supporting the Brazilian protest and stating that this incident, like any belligerent activity carried on within the waters adjacent to the American continent, necessarily tends to affect the security of normal maritime routes of communication and trade between the countries of America and prejudices that assurance of security and of freedom from involvement in hostilities to which the American republics are entitled in view of their distance from the theatre of war.

In event that such a collective statement is agreed to, and that the competence of the Neutrality Committee at Rio is established, Department would suggest that the Committee take up the matter, with a view to considering whether any measures along the lines indicated in the statement of December 23 transmitted to the belligerent governments are called for in the circumstances.

HULL

862.857/58 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Brazil (Caffery) to the Secretary of State*RIO DE JANEIRO, February 22, 1940—9 p. m.  
[Received 9 : 48 p. m.]

68. Aranha says he appreciates the Department's telegram No. 35, February 21, 6 p. m. but prefers that Panama forward at once a note in the name of all the American Republics to the British Government calling its attention to the *Wakama* incident as a violation of the 300-mile zone; he wants nothing in the way of menace or threat. He does not like the suggestion that this particular incident be studied by the Neutrality Committee. The Committee can study later the whole question of the 300-mile zone.

CAFFERY

862.857/58 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Brazil (Caffery)*

WASHINGTON, February 26, 1940—6 p. m.

39. Your 68, February 22, 9 p. m. Please inform Aranha that the Department will shortly express to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Panama its agreement as to the suitability of a collective protest against the violation of the security zone resulting from the *Wakama* incident, and its acceptance of the text of the protest drafted by the Brazilian Government and made available to the Department by the Brazilian Ambassador here.

HULL

862.857/66a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Chargé in Argentina (Tuck)*

WASHINGTON, February 26, 1940—6 p. m.

35. For your information and for communication to Cantilo,<sup>29</sup> the Department is in agreement with the Brazilian Government as to the desirability of a collective protest to be addressed to the British Government in regard to the *Wakama* incident. A communication to this general effect will shortly be addressed to the Foreign Minister of Panama. The Brazilian Government has drawn up a proposed text of the protest with which the Department is in agreement and which is limited to calling attention to the fact that the *Wakama* incident was a violation of the principle of the Declaration of Panama.

HULL

<sup>29</sup> José María Cantilo, Argentine Minister for Foreign Affairs.



862.857/55 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Panama (Dawson)*

WASHINGTON, February 27, 1940—7 p. m.

18. Please inform the Minister of Foreign Affairs that the Department is in agreement with the proposal of the Government of Brazil as to the suitability of a collective protest against the violation of the Security Zone resulting from the *Wakama* incident. A reply to Dr. Garay's note of February 16 on this subject is being forwarded by air mail. The following telegram is being sent to the Embassy at Rio:

[Here follows text of telegram No. 42, February 27, 8 p. m., to the Ambassador in Brazil, printed *infra*.]

HULL

862.857/58 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Brazil (Caffery)*

WASHINGTON, February 27, 1940—8 p. m.

42. Department's 39, February 26, 6 p. m. In order to expedite this matter, the Department suggests that the Brazilian Government circulate the text of the protest on the *Wakama* incident drafted by that Government to the other American Republics for their approval. Please inform Aranha that the Department will be pleased to assist in this matter, particularly in the case of countries where Brazil has no diplomatic representation. In view of the time which has elapsed since this incident, it is felt that the matter should be handled by telegraph.

HULL

862.857/79

*The Chargé in Argentina (Tuck) to the Secretary of State*

No. 504

BUENOS AIRES, February 27, 1940.

[Received March 5.]

SIR: I have the honor to refer to the Department's telegram No. 35 of February 26, 6 p. m., directing the Embassy to communicate to the Minister for Foreign Affairs our Government's proposed action in connection with the collective protest to be addressed to the British Government in regard to the *Wakama* incident, and to report that I called today on Dr. Roberto Gache who, in the absence of Dr. Cantilo is in charge of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and communicated to him the substance of the Department's message.

Dr. Gache stated that his Government had recently received by steamer mail from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Panama a communication on the subject and had replied telegraphically yesterday that the Argentine Government was in agreement in principle with the desirability of sending a collective protest to the British Government. He added that since the Argentine Government was not familiar with the exact terms of the protest, it could only agree in principle to the proposed step.

Respectfully yours,

S. PINKNEY TUCK

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862.857/62 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Venezuela (Corrigan)*

WASHINGTON, February 29, 1940—4 p. m.

14. Your despatch 230, February 21, 1940.<sup>30</sup> For your information the Department has agreed to participate in the collective protest of the American republics to the British Government in connection with the *Wakama* incident. According to the report received from the Brazilian Government, the sinking of this vessel took place 15 miles from the Brazilian coast when the vessel was hailed by a British war vessel obviously for purposes of search and capture.

The Venezuelan Government, in the memorandum attached to your despatch referred to above, raises the question whether the practice of visit and search constitutes a violation of the Declaration of Panama. You are requested to suggest to the Venezuelan Minister for Foreign Affairs that in this case the action of the British war vessel was the direct cause of the sinking by its own crew of the German freighter *Wakama* and that the incident therefore may fairly be described as an act of the type which the Declaration of Panama is intended to avoid within the security zone.

Please suggest to the Venezuelan Minister for Foreign Affairs that it would be most helpful in the interest of continental solidarity if the Venezuelan Government could adhere to the collective protest proposed by the Brazilian Government in this case without prejudice of course to a submission to the Neutrality Committee of the question of the practice of visit and search within the zone. (It is our hope that the Neutrality Committee will shortly receive through the Pan American Union an affirmative reply from all the American republics to its inquiry as to the Committee's competence to deal with matters arising under the Declaration of Panama.)<sup>31</sup>

HULL

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<sup>30</sup> Not printed.

<sup>31</sup> See letter from the Director General of the Pan American Union to the Secretary of State, January 26, printed in vol. v, in section under General entitled "The Inter-American Neutrality Committee."

862.857/66 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Brazil (Caffery) to the Secretary of State*

RIO DE JANEIRO, February 29, 1940—5 p. m.

[Received 6 p. m.]

76. Department's 42, February 27, 8 p. m. Aranha says that he would appreciate it highly if the Department as a friendly gesture would circulate the text of the protest on the *Wakama* incident drafted by the Brazilian Government to the other American Republics and suggest their approval. . . .

CAFFERY

862.857/68 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Venezuela (Corrigan) to the Secretary of State*

CARACAS, March 1, 1940—5 p. m.

[Received 7:55 p. m.]

24. Your 14, February 29, 4 p. m. Dr. Gil Borges<sup>22</sup> feels that the American position may be weakened if a protest is made before statutes for the government of the continental security zone have been drawn up and accepted by the 21 republics. He doubts that by this criterion the *Wakama* incident would constitute a violation. However, the Foreign Minister will not advise his Government to hold back from a collective action provided all have agreed, and he has promised the Embassy a written statement of its position after conferring with the President.

CORRIGAN

862.857/70a : Circular telegram

*The Secretary of State to All Chiefs of Missions in the American Republics Except Panama and Brazil*

WASHINGTON, March 2, 1940—4 p. m.

The Brazilian Government has suggested the following text for the note of protest to be delivered to the British Government by the President of Panama on behalf of the 21 American republics in connection with the *Wakama* incident:

"I have the honor to bring to the attention of Your Excellency that on the 14th of February the Government of the United States of Brazil informed me as follows:

<sup>22</sup> Esteban Gil Borges, Venezuelan Minister for Foreign Affairs.

'I have to advise Your Excellency that on February 12th last the German freighter *Wakama* was sunk by its own crew about 15 miles from the Brazilian coast when hailed by an English war vessel, obviously for purposes of visit and capture. As from the procedure of the English war vessel there results a hostile act classified as such by the 13th Hague Convention and committed in waters adjacent to the American continent which the American Republics have the right to keep free of any hostile act on the part of any belligerent nation, I desire to request Your Excellency to be good enough to consult with the other American countries in the manner of the precedent already established on the suitability of a collective protest against this new violation of the Maritime Zone which we undertake to preserve from the evils of war.'

"The American Republics, which have been consulted through me regarding this communication, have agreed that the fact referred to by the Brazilian Government constituted a violation of the principles which we established in Panama for the purpose of keeping the war away from continental waters, and at the same time have authorized the Panamanian Government to present (through the intermediary of Your Excellency) to His Majesty's Government the unanimous protest of the American Republics as the result of this fact, and to reiterate their appeal that the war be kept away from the waters which the Declaration of Panama contemplated preserving for the pacific use of intercontinental commerce."

The Department is in agreement with this text and has agreed to act on behalf of the Brazilian Government in bringing it to the attention of the governments of the other American republics. You are therefore requested to suggest that if it is acceptable to the Government to which you are accredited a statement to that effect be telegraphed by that government to the Government of Panama. Please report by telegram action taken and its result.

HULL

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862.857/85: Telegram

*The Ambassador in Panama (Dawson) to the Secretary of State*

PANAMA, March 6, 1940—10 a. m.  
[Received 12:35 p. m.]

29. Department's telegram No. 25 of March 2, 4 p. m.<sup>33</sup> The proposed text is acceptable to the Panamanian Government.

In the second paragraph of its telegram the Department states that the note is to be delivered to the British Government by the President of Panama. Doctor Garay points out that the President would address any communication to the King of England and that as drafted the Brazilian text seems to contemplate a note to be addressed by the Panamanian Foreign Office to the British Government through the British Minister in Panama. Further advices from the Department as to the procedure desired in this respect would be appreciated. In

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<sup>33</sup> Not printed; it transmitted text of circular telegram printed *supra*.

the case of the *Graf Spee* incident the protest was addressed by the President of Panama to the several chiefs of state.

[DAWSON]

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862.857/85 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Panama (Dawson)*

WASHINGTON, March 6, 1940—6 p. m.

26. Your 29, March 6, 10 a. m. In view of the fact that the Declaration of Panama and the statement of December 23 were transmitted by the President of Panama to the King of England, the Department perceives no objection to a modification of the text of the protest proposed by the Brazilian Government so as to provide for its transmission in the same manner.

HULL

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862.857/116 : Telegram

*The Chargé in the Dominican Republic (Hinkle) to the Secretary of State*

CIUDAD TRUJILLO, March 11, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received 6 : 40 p. m.]

46. The following is translation of the note cabled today by the Dominican Government to Minister of Foreign Affairs of Panama.

"I have the honor to inform Your Excellency that on the 9th of March the German merchant vessel *Hannover* was sunk by its own crew in the Mona Passage, in the vicinity of the coast of the Dominican Republic, on being stopped by a warship of British nationality. As these acts constitute belligerent acts within the waters adjacent to the American continent, and as the nations of America in accord with the Declaration of Panama of October 3, 1939 have the right, as a measure of continental protection, to preserve free from all hostile acts by a belligerent nation said adjacent waters for the distance from their coasts established in the zone of continental security, I request Your Excellency kindly to consult the other countries of America in the manner already established on the advisability of making a collective protest against this new violation of the above-mentioned maritime zone."

HINKLE

862.857/124 : Telegram

*The Chargé in the Dominican Republic (Hinkle) to the Secretary of State*CIUDAD TRUJILLO, March 12, 1940—1 p. m.  
[Received 2 : 54 p. m.]

48. Legation's 46, March 11, 4 p. m. The Dominican Foreign Office states that it has no further official details of the *Hannover* incident other than the facts in the first sentence of its note to the Foreign Minister of Panama. Foreign Office also informs Legation that investigation of crew for the present by Dominican officials is not being conducted since crew is being given asylum in German Legation which is waiting for orders from Berlin. Dominican Government is endeavoring to ascertain whether ship was armed despite statements to contrary by crew. According to an American press representative members of the crew in the German Legation this morning gave him the following authorized information: *Hannover* spotted unknown warship a few hundred yards away 12 : 30 a. m. Friday morning 6 miles south of Cabo Engano Light and 2 miles off Dominican coast. The warship was described as a cruiser between 1,500 and 2,000 tons while it was thought another warship was also sighted. About 1 : 30 a. m. and on being told to stop, crew fired ship and lowered three life boats, one of which was captured by the warship. The *Hannover* was not fired upon. One life boat with 37 of crew of 92 reached shore about daybreak and afterwards saw two warships, one of which was identified as the French cruiser *Jeanne d'Arc*.

Press announcement by the German Legation and statements by two members of crew in written testimony Sunday to Dominican police officials at Higüey are substantially the same as above information.

From other reports, particularly the Dominican schooner *Yaqui*, it seems that French and British warships have been very active in the Mona Passage and that a German ship identified by the schooner as the *Nurnberg* was also detained near Dominican shore between Cape Engano and Punta Juan Illo last Thursday.

HINKLE

862.857/139

*The Ambassador in Argentina (Armour) to the Secretary of State*

No. 536

BUENOS AIRES, March 12, 1940.  
[Received March 19.]

SIR: With reference to the Department's circular telegram of March 2, 4 p. m., transmitting the text suggested by the Brazilian Government of a note of protest to be delivered to the British Govern-

ment by the President of Panama on behalf of the twenty-one American Republics in connection with the *Wakama* incident, I have the honor to report that upon receipt of the above telegram I called on the Foreign Minister and handed to him a note embodying the contents of the Department's telegram under reference.

Dr. Cantilo, after reading the note, informed me that he had been in touch with the Brazilian Foreign Minister on this matter adding that his Government was in accord with the text of the note as proposed and would take the necessary action in so informing the Government of Panama. At the same time, however, Dr. Cantilo indicated considerable scepticism as to whether action as proposed would have any real effect along the lines desired, namely, that the war be kept away from the waters which the Declaration of Panama contemplated preserving for the specific use of intercontinental commerce.

The Foreign Minister added that in talks with the British Ambassador <sup>34</sup> the latter had insisted that adherence by the British Government to the proposals laid down by the twenty-one American Republics would give a great advantage to the Germans and enable their merchant ships to navigate without risk within the zone to say nothing of offering a haven for German submarines from which they could prey on British shipping.

Dr. Cantilo was, however, of the opinion that as a matter of record in establishing the position of neutral countries for the future, protests of this sort would perhaps serve a useful purpose and possibly lead, after the termination of hostilities, to the extension of the limited area of territorial waters as now generally accepted under international law.

The Foreign Minister referred in passing to the procedure proposed by his Government <sup>35</sup> to be followed in the event of violation of the security zone as later embodied in the protest subscribed to by the American Republics and embodied in the note to the belligerent powers of December last.<sup>36</sup> In doing so, however, the Foreign Minister did not make clear that he felt that action such as that envisaged in that note should be invoked in connection with the *Wakama* incident.

Respectfully yours,

NORMAN ARMOUR

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<sup>34</sup> Sir Esmond Ovey.

<sup>35</sup> See telegram No. 291, December 16, 1939, 4 p. m., from the Ambassador in Argentina, *Foreign Relations*, 1939, vol. v, p. 100.

<sup>36</sup> For text of note as released on December 23, 1939, see Department of State *Bulletin*, December 23, 1939, p. 723.

862.857 *Wakama*/9

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Secretary of State  
(Berle)*

[WASHINGTON,] March 12, 1940.

Lord Lothian <sup>37</sup> came in today, at his request.

He wished to know what the status of the proposed *Wakama* protest was. I told him that so far as I knew all save two or three governments had assented to it and that I supposed it would be coming along in due course. The Ambassador inquired whether it was to be published. I said I was not clear on the point but I thought he could assume that it would be. He rather indicated the hope that it might not be; saying that these protests gave considerable aid and comfort to the enemy. I said that the present protest was more or less formal.

I then said that in my judgment his government probably had profited more than anyone else from the Declaration of Panama, whose operation he appeared to fear. Particularly, the patrolling operations had undoubtedly made it difficult for violations of neutrality to take place, and the principal result was that raiders in the Atlantic had been unable to get supplies through unneutral use of American shores. In consequence, I thought, they had every reason to welcome the operation of the neutrality patrol.

The Ambassador then asked what action was brewing with regard to the *Hannover*. I said that we were as yet collecting facts on that and I could not say how matters would go.

The Ambassador asked the status of the Neutrality Committee at Rio.<sup>38</sup> I said that the governments had now given that Committee full competence to deal with violations of the neutrality zone; and that they were meeting in the not distant future; and that I presumed they would take up and report on and deal with many of these incidents.

The Ambassador then asked whether determination would be taken as to the matter of German ships blockaded in the harbors of the American republics.<sup>39</sup> He said that some of these ships he thought had gone out and sunk themselves in the neutrality zone primarily to make trouble for the British.

I said that this thesis seemed a little extreme to me; our impression was that they received general orders to attempt the run home, perhaps because they feared that ultimately they might be taken over, though of course we were in the dark as to the motives of Berlin in issuing

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<sup>37</sup> The British Ambassador.

<sup>38</sup> See vol. v, section under General entitled "The Inter-American Neutrality Committee."

<sup>39</sup> See vol. v, section under General entitled "Discussions Regarding Possible Purchase by Neutral Interests of German Merchant Ships Which Had Taken Refuge in Western Hemisphere Ports."



such orders. Some 90 ships had originally been blockaded; and we understood that of these only 52 remained.

The Ambassador asked whether it was planned to run these ships within the neutrality zone and I said that there were no plans of that kind. We had considered that situation but had not formulated any definite ideas, since circumstances had made that unnecessary. Naturally, to have our inter-neutral communication in the hands of a belligerent line would not be a wholly safe position for neutral trade, since it would tend to encourage trouble; and this was one consideration.

The Ambassador asked about possible transfers of these ships to neutral flags, pointing out that his government had declined to recognize the validity of such transfers.

I said that we had taken a contrary position, namely, that if the transaction was in good faith and not a cover for belligerent activities, we felt that it was permissible. Lord Lothian observed that the question really came down to "good faith"; their lawyers construed any attempt to escape from the consequences of belligerency by transfer to a neutral flag as being "bad faith". I said that if, for instance, a neutral government seized ships blockaded in its harbor for their national use or to collect a debt, that question would not arise. In such case the transfer was not to escape the consequences of belligerency; indeed, it would not be a consensual transfer at all. However, I said the problem did not immediately arise, though conceivably it might arise in future. Lord Lothian observed that this was true: and that the German interest appeared to be to diminish the total amount of shipping in existence, in order to affect Allied communications. He said he hoped that if transfers were undertaken, we might discuss them with him, first. He gave this merely as a personal suggestion, though he thought his government would agree.

I said that while I could give no assurance in the matter, I personally agreed. It was not our desire to present the belligerent governments with a *fait accompli* but wherever possible to settle matters by negotiation and I personally would advocate this course, though as he would readily agree, I had no instructions in the matter. I gathered that the British government is beginning to consider that the time may come when there is a distinct advantage in having these ships under a neutral flag and plying the ocean.

I said that our desire to discuss these matters had been evidenced in the case of the *Stella*. I had asked Mr. Butler, of the Embassy, to come down and requested him to take action, so that if the Nicaraguan government had taken over the *Stella*, the British ships in those waters might not molest her until the matter had been thoroughly threshed out; likewise, we had encouraged the Nicaraguan government to continue its discussions with the British government in case the transfer

were not complete. The fact proved to be that the transfer was not complete; the Nicaraguan government had dropped the proposed acquisition; as a result, the *Stella* case was now ended.

A. A. BERLE, JR.

862.857/126: Telegram

*The Chargé in the Dominican Republic (Hinkle) to the Secretary of State*

CIUDAD TRUJILLO, March 13, 1940—5 p. m.  
[Received 7:50 p. m.]

50. Legation's telegram No. 48, March 12, 1 p. m. Dominican Foreign Minister <sup>39a</sup> states that due to conflicting representations of British and German Legations regarding the location of the *Hannover* incident his Government has dropped the question of violation of Dominican territorial waters.

Regarding the disposition of the 37 crew members now in Ciudad Trujillo the Foreign Secretary said that these are being turned over to the immigration authorities pending the possibility of their leaving the country.

The Foreign Secretary intimated he was anxious to get rid of them but did not know in what country they would be admitted.

HINKLE

862.857/116: Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Chargé in the Dominican Republic (Hinkle)*

WASHINGTON, March 13, 1940—6 p. m.

30. Your 46, March 11, 4 p. m. Please inform the Minister for Foreign Affairs that the Department shares in the satisfaction which it is confident will be felt by the other American republics at the action of the Dominican Republic in rendering a prompt report regarding the *Hannover* incident. This action is indicative of the high degree of existing continental solidarity.

You are instructed to inform the Minister for Foreign Affairs that the Department plans, if the Minister agrees, to suggest to the government of Panama that a joint statement be forwarded to the government of the Dominican Republic on behalf of the other American republics, acknowledging that government's message and expressing support of the position of the Dominican government to the effect that the security zone has been violated. It further contemplates

<sup>39a</sup> Arturo Despradel.

suggesting that the government of Panama on behalf of the 21 American republics communicate with both the British and the German governments, notifying them of the incident and reserving the rights of the 21 republics in the premises. It likewise plans to suggest that the government of Panama refer the matter to the Inter-American Neutrality Committee at Rio, whose competence to deal with the problem is now recognized.

You are requested to take the earliest opportunity of discussing this situation, along the lines indicated above, with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and you should inform the Department of his views as soon as possible.

HULL

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862.857/131 : Telegram

*The Chargé in the Dominican Republic (Hinkle) to the Secretary of State*

CIUDAD TRUJILLO, March 15, 1940—9 a. m.

[Received 10:42 a. m.]

51. Dominican Foreign Secretary states that his Government is in complete agreement with the three points raised in the second paragraph of the Department's No. 30, March 13, 6 p. m.

He also has informed the Legation that his Government now has reason to believe that the *Hannover* incident did not take place in Dominican territorial waters.

HINKLE

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862.857/133 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Panama (Dawson) to the Secretary of State*

PANAMA, March 16, 1940—10 a. m.

[Received 10:52 a. m.]

36. All the American Republics having approved Brazilian text, the protest regarding the *Wakama* incident is being telegraphed at once by the President of Panama to the King of England.<sup>40</sup> Protest will be despatched by cable this morning at 11 o'clock. Dr. Garay will deliver the text to the press today at 2 p. m. for publication in newspapers appearing not before 5 p. m.

DAWSON

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<sup>40</sup> The text was a Spanish translation of that given in circular telegram of March 2, 4 p. m., p. 704, except that "Your Excellency" had been changed to "Your Majesty" and the usual complimentary ending and signature added (862.857/151).

740.00112 European War 1939/1226

*The Ambassador in Brazil (Caffery) to the Secretary of State*

No. 2766

RIO DE JANEIRO, March 20, 1940.

[Received March 28.]

SIR: Referring to recent reports in connection with the *Wakama* incident, I have the honor to report that the Brazilian Minister for Foreign Affairs told me yesterday that the British Ambassador had been in to say that his Government was not pleased with the way the *Wakama* matter had been handled. Aranha invited his attention to the fact that no threat or menace had been made. The British Ambassador then went on to say that the British were protecting Brazilian commerce. Aranha replied: "Indeed you are not; you are definitely not protecting our commerce by maintaining your warships off our coast. It is apparent to me that your blockade of Germany is plainly ineffective. If it were effective, you could stop the German boats on the other side before they entered German ports."

Respectfully yours,

JEFFERSON CAFFERY

862.857/154

*The Minister in Uruguay (Wilson) to the Secretary of State*

No. 231

MONTEVIDEO, March 20, 1940.

[Received March 28.]

SIR: The protest transmitted in the name of the twenty-one American Republics by the President of Panama to the King of Great Britain concerning the *Wakama* incident has attracted little attention in the Montevideo press. Only two papers, *El País* and *El Plata* (both Blanco Independiente), commented editorially. The two articles were very similar being mainly restatements of the now familiar critical attitude of Uruguayan opinion, official and private, concerning the Declaration of Panama. The article in *El País* stated in part:

"These continual protests about questions of scant importance, such as the present one, and which are inevitable during a war, that take place within a zone in which the three European belligerents have declined to recognize the alleged right of the American Republics, serve no useful purpose whatsoever and only have the effect of embittering the relations of the countries of America and those of Europe.

"Since the breakdown (*sic*) of the doctrine of the 300 miles, it would seem advisable to consider whether we are not taking steps in the wrong direction and playing lightly with the prestige of American diplomacy with these protests resting upon the basis of a unilateral declaration lacking absolutely any juridical foundation."

I might add that in a conversation the other night with Dr. Pedro Manini Rios, who headed the Uruguayan delegation at the Panama

Conference, he referred to the general feeling of dislike for the Panama Declaration which exists in Uruguay and remarked, as if in excuse of the part he had played in signing the Declaration, that when the project was first introduced at Panama he had cabled Dr. Guani <sup>40a</sup> for instructions; Dr. Guani had replied vaguely leaving the question entirely to Dr. Manini's judgment; he had therefore "simply gone along with the others", although he had at the time, so he said, entertained doubts as to the wisdom of adopting the Declaration.

Respectfully yours,

EDWIN C. WILSON

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862.857/131 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Chargé in the Dominican Republic (Hinkle)*

WASHINGTON, March 21, 1940—5 p. m.

31. Your 51, March 15, 9 a. m. Please express to the Dominican Foreign Secretary the gratification of the Department at the meeting of minds which has taken place with regard to the *Hannover* incident and inform him that the following telegram is today being sent to the American Embassy at Panama:

(Here copy telegram No. 33, March 21, 5 p. m. sent to Embassy, Panama.)

Please ask the Foreign Secretary to telegraph his comments on these drafts and on the proposed procedure to Dr. Garay, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Panama.

HULL

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862.857/131 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Panama (Dawson)*

WASHINGTON, March 21, 1940—5 p. m.

33. Following informal discussion, the Dominican Foreign Secretary has agreed with the Department that the *Hannover* incident should be dealt with by the American republics along the following lines:

1. A joint statement to be forwarded to the Government of the Dominican Republic by the Government of Panama on behalf of the other American republics, acknowledging that Government's report of the incident and expressing support of the position of the Dominican Government to the effect that the Security Zone has been violated.

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<sup>40a</sup> Alberto Guani, Uruguayan Minister for Foreign Affairs.

2. A communication to be forwarded by the President of Panama on behalf of the 21 American republics to the British and German Governments bringing the incident to their attention and reserving the rights of the American republics in the premises.

3. The Government of Panama to refer the matter to the Inter-American Neutrality Committee at Rio, whose competence to deal with the problem is now recognized.

Please bring these views to the attention of Dr. Garay. The Department has prepared tentative drafts of the three statements described above as follows:

“(1) *From the President of Panama to the President of the Dominican Republic.*

I have the honor to inform Your Excellency that your note of March 11 reporting the sinking of the German merchant vessel *Hannover* near the eastern coast of the Dominican Republic has been transmitted to the governments of the other American republics and has received the careful consideration of those governments.

It gives me pleasure, on behalf of the 21 American republics, to express cordial appreciation of the prompt action of the Dominican Government in reporting this incident. The action of Your Excellency's Government is one more indication of the determination of the nations of the American continent to face together the problems brought about by the European war.

The American republics have authorized me to express to Your Excellency their complete agreement with the position taken by the Dominican Government in the sense that the *Hannover* incident was a violation of the right set forth in the Declaration of Panama. A statement to this effect is being addressed to the British and German Governments and at the same time the attention of the Inter-American Neutrality Committee is being directed to this case.

(2) *A note to the British and German Governments.*

The Government of the Dominican Republic has informed the other American republics that on March 12, near the eastern coast of the Dominican Republic, the German merchant vessel *Hannover* was scuttled by its own crew on being intercepted by a British war vessel obviously for purposes of search and capture.

This incident is considered by the governments of the 21 American republics to be a violation of the inherent right asserted on behalf of those republics in the Declaration of Panama which was communicated to the Governments of Great Britain, France and Germany on October 4, 1939. At the same time that the American republics have authorized me to express their regret at the failure of the belligerent governments to observe the terms of the Declaration, they reiterate the principle therein set forth and reserve all their rights in the premises.

(3) *From the President of Panama to the President of the Inter-American Neutrality Committee.*

On March 2, 1940 a communication was addressed to Your Excellency by the Director General of the Pan American Union transmitting the affirmative answer of the 21 American republics to the inquiry propounded by the Inter-American Neutrality Committee as

to the competence of that Committee to deal with problems arising from the Declaration of Panama.

Since the date mentioned, a number of hostile acts have taken place within the security zone established in the Declaration. I have been instructed to transmit to Your Excellency the following documents relating to the sinking by its own crew of the German merchant vessel *Hannover* near the eastern coast of the Dominican Republic on being intercepted by a British war vessel obviously for purposes of search and capture:

- (1) A telegram from the Dominican Government to the Government of Panama, dated March 11, 1940, reporting the incident.
- (2) A telegram from the President of Panama to the President of the Dominican Republic on behalf of the American republics.
- (3) A telegram from the President of Panama on behalf of the American republics to the King of Great Britain and to the Chancellor of the German Reich."

These drafts are being telegraphed to the Dominican Government with the request that approval or comments be forwarded directly to Dr. Garay. The Department hopes that Dr. Garay will examine the texts and furnish any comments or suggestions for changes which may occur to him.

As soon as the Governments of Panama, the Dominican Republic, and the United States agree upon these texts, and it is, of course, desirable that such agreement be reached at as early a date as possible, it is suggested that these documents be circulated by Dr. Garay to the other American republics by air mail as the proposal of the three governments mentioned with a request for telegraphic replies.

HULL

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862.857/144 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Panama (Dawson) to the Secretary of State*

PANAMA, March 22, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received 5:08 p. m.]

38. Department's telegram No. 33 of March 21, 5 p. m. President Boyd is out of town over Easter and while Garay may be available earlier he would take no action without consulting the President. I shall see Garay as soon as possible and in the meantime I should appreciate the Department's consideration of the following suggestions:

(1) In second sentence of proposed telegram from President of Panama to President of the Dominican Republic would it not be more appropriate to say "on behalf of the other American Republics" instead of on behalf of the 21 American Republics?

(2) I presume that in the first sentence of the proposed note to the British and German Governments the date of the incident should read March 9 instead of March 12.

(3) In the third sentence of the proposed communication to the President of the Neutrality Committee would not "I have been requested" be more appropriate than I have been instructed?

(4) I would suggest that unless the Department perceives serious objection the communication to the Neutrality Committee be sent in the name of Dr. Garay rather than in the name of the President of Panama. This would seem appropriate and I believe that it would please Garay who has cooperated most cordially and effectively in all matters pertaining to the Declaration of Panama.

DAWSON

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862.857/144 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Panama (Dawson)*

WASHINGTON, March 23, 1940—1 p. m.

35. Your 38, March 22, 4 p. m. The Department is in full agreement with the changes proposed by you and requests you to make them in the drafts prior to their submission to Dr. Garay. The Dominican Government is being informed to this effect.

HULL

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862.857/131 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Chargé in the Dominican Republic (Hinkle)*

WASHINGTON, March 23, 1940—2 p. m.

34. The Department's 31, March 21, 5 p. m. Ambassador Dawson has suggested and the Department concurs in the following modifications in the proposed texts with regard to the *Hannover* incident:

(1) In the second sentence of the proposed telegram from the President of Panama to the President of the Dominican Republic delete "21" and insert "other".

(2) The date contained in the first sentence of the proposed note to the British and German Governments should be March 9 instead of March 12.

(3) In the third sentence of the proposed communication to the President of the Neutrality Committee delete "instructed" and insert "requested".

(4) It is proposed that the communication to the Neutrality Committee be sent in the name of Dr. Garay rather than in that of the President of Panama.

The texts as submitted to the Government of Panama by Ambassador Dawson will contain these modifications.

HULL



862.857/148 : Telegram

*The Chargé in the Dominican Republic (Hinkle) to the Secretary of State*

CIUDAD TRUJILLO, March 25, 1940—noon.  
[Received 1:28 p. m.]

53. Department's 31, March 21, 5 p. m. Dominican Foreign Secretary states that he is today telegraphing Dr. Garay his Government's approval of the drafts and procedure.

HINKLE

862.857/150 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Panama (Dawson) to the Secretary of State*

PANAMA, March 26, 1940—4 p. m.  
[Received 5:46 p. m.]

40. Department's telegrams 33 of March 21 and 35 of March 23. The Government of Panama is in full agreement with procedure and drafts proposed by the Department. The Dominican Government has notified Panama of its full approval. Garay will proceed to circulate the documents by air mail as soon as possible requesting telegraphic replies.

DAWSON

862.857 Hannover/3 : Circular telegram

*The Secretary of State to All Diplomatic Missions in the American Republics Except the Dominican Republic and Panama*

WASHINGTON, April 6, 1940—3 p. m.

For your information the Foreign Minister of Panama on March 27 forwarded by air mail to the other American republics the joint proposal of the Governments of the Dominican Republic, Panama and the United States for the handling of the *Hannover* incident involving the scuttling by its own crew of a German merchant vessel near the Dominican coast on March 9. The proposal includes drafts of the following communications: (1) a note from the President of Panama on behalf of the other American republics to the President of the Dominican Republic acknowledging the report of the incident made by the latter Government and expressing agreement with the position of that Government to the effect that the incident was a violation of the Declaration of Panama; (2) a note addressed by the President of Panama to the King of Great Britain and to the Chancellor of the German Reich drawing attention to the incident and reserving the rights of the American republics in the premises and (3) a com-

munication from the Foreign Minister of Panama to the Inter-American Neutrality Committee at Rio informing that committee of the action taken by the American republics.

Dr. Garay has requested that comments concerning this proposal be made by telegraph. You are requested to take such steps as may, in your discretion, be desirable in order to expedite favorable action on the part of the Government to which you are accredited. You should report any information which may reach you concerning the attitude of that Government toward the proposal.

HULL

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862.857 Hannover/14 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Venezuela (Corrigan) to the Secretary of State*

CARACAS, April 11, 1940—2 p. m.

[Received 5:33 p. m.]

36. Department's circular April 6, 3 p. m. The Mexican [*Venezuelan?*] Minister for Foreign Affairs reaffirmed the position of his Government that the correct method of procedure is by submission of all protests to the Rio Neutrality Committee (please see last paragraph of memorandum transmitted with my despatch 230, February 21, 1940<sup>41</sup>). He has communicated with Dr. Garay to this effect.

CORRIGAN

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862.857 Hannover/15 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Argentina (Armour) to the Secretary of State*

BUENOS AIRES, April 11, 1940—5 p. m.

[Received 8:28 p. m.]

100. Department's circular telegram April 6, 3 p. m. regarding *Hannover* incident. Minister for Foreign Affairs informs me that he is not over optimistic of anything practical resulting from continued protests of this nature, particularly when one considers the grave violations of neutrality occurring. Nevertheless, his Government would not wish to stand aside and would be willing to join with the other republics in the action proposed, particularly if, as I assured him was the case, our Government considered such action desirable. He is so informing Panamanian Government.

Doctor Cantilo's reaction was very much the same as in the case of the *Wakama* incident (see Embassy's despatch 536, March 12, last).

ARMOUR

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<sup>41</sup> Not printed.

862.857 Hannover/15 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Argentina (Armour)*

WASHINGTON, April 15, 1940—5 p. m.

57. Your 100, April 11, 5 p. m. Please inform the Minister of Foreign Affairs that the Department agrees with him as to the ineffectiveness of continued protests concerning violations of the Declaration of Panama in the absence of measures designed to attain the objectives set forth in that document. It appears to the Department however that the action taken in the *Wakama* case and that proposal in the *Hannover* incident are useful demonstrations of the fact that the American republics continue united in their adherence to the security zone principle and that their position has not been changed as a result of the replies of the French, British and German Governments to the statement of December 23 last. It is the belief of the Department that the Inter-American Neutrality Committee will formulate recommendations on this subject which will serve as a useful basis for consultation between the American republics with a view to determining the measures which they may be willing to take in existing circumstances. Please express to Dr. Cantilo the Department's sincere appreciation of his cooperative attitude.

HULL

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862.857 Hannover/14 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Venezuela (Corrigan)*

WASHINGTON, April 15, 1940—6 p. m.

29. Your 36, April 11, 2 p. m. Please inform the Minister of Foreign Affairs that the proposal of this Government and of the Governments of Panama and the Dominican Republic in connection with the *Hannover* incident included the submission of the case to the Inter-American Neutrality Committee at Rio and that this procedure was included in the proposal as a direct result of the position set forth by the Venezuelan Government at the time of the *Wakama* incident. It is therefore hoped that the Minister for Foreign Affairs will be willing to give the approval of his Government to the other matters involved in the current proposal in the *Hannover* case, namely the communication to the Dominican Republic from the other American republics and the communication from the President of Panama to Great Britain and Germany on behalf of the American republics.

The Department understands that a number of the American republics have already approved the proposed method of dealing with the *Hannover* case and has no information that any of them other than Venezuela are unwilling to participate in the proposed action.

For your information the following telegram expressing the Department's position was today sent to the American Ambassador at Buenos Aires:

[Here follows text of telegram No. 57, April 15, 5 p. m., to the Ambassador in Argentina, printed *supra*.]

HULL

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862.857 Hannover/26 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Venezuela (Corrigan) to the Secretary of State*

CARACAS, April 23, 1940—3 p. m.

[Received 8:05 p. m.]

44. Department's telegram No. 29, April 15, 6 p. m. I informed the Minister of Foreign Affairs concerning the sense of the Department's telegram under reference. In reply, he again stated the position of his Government to be as follows: "The 21 American Republics have unanimously agreed to submit questions involving possible violations of the American security zone to the Inter-American Neutrality Committee at Rio for study and recommendation. Since the incident under reference occurred after that agreement was reached, the Venezuelan Government will follow the above procedure."

The Minister added that he had communicated this view to the Government of Panama. In my opinion there is no likelihood that the Venezuelan Government will change its position.

CORRIGAN

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862.857 Hannover/38 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Panama (Dawson)*

WASHINGTON, May 9, 1940—5 p. m.

56. Your 59, May 6, 4 p. m.<sup>42</sup> The Department understands that the reply of the Venezuelan Government concerning the *Hannover* incident is to the effect that the matter should be referred to the Inter-American Neutrality Committee and that no communication should be addressed to the British and German Governments in regard thereto. Please endeavor to confirm this impression.

HULL

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<sup>42</sup> Not printed.

862.857 Hannover/41 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Panama (Dawson) to the Secretary of State*

PANAMA, May 13, 1940—1 p. m.

[Received 3:40 p. m.]

61. Department's telegram No. 56 of May 9, 5 p. m. After reference to Caracas, Dr. Garay is informed by the Venezuelan Legation here that the reply of the Venezuelan Government concerning the *Hannover* incident is to be interpreted as opposing the sending of any communications to the British and German Governments but favoring reference of the matter to the Inter-American Neutrality Committee. In the circumstances, Dr. Garay believes that the proposed communications to the British and German Governments should be abandoned but that with appropriate minor changes in texts the communications to the Dominican Government and the Neutrality Committee should be sent as proposed in the plan of action. Dr. Garay considers that the Panamanian Government could properly take this action without renewed consultation of the American Republics. He would, however, like to know whether the Department approves this course and agrees that further consultation is unnecessary.

DAWSON

862.857 Hannover/41 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Panama (Dawson)*

WASHINGTON, May 14, 1940—4 p. m.

60. Your 61, May 13, 1 p. m. Please ask Dr. Garay to delay any action concerning the *Hannover* incident for two or three days pending consideration by the Department of the question raised by Dr. Garay in the telegram under reference.

HULL

862.857 Hannover/26 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Venezuela (Corrigan)*

WASHINGTON, May 14, 1940—4 p. m.

45. Your 44, April 23, 3 p. m. Please convey a personal oral message along the lines described below to Dr. Gil Borges from the Under Secretary of State:

"The Under Secretary understands that 20 of the 21 American republics have agreed to the proposal originally set forth by the Dominican Republic, Panama, and the United States for dealing with the *Hannover* incident. Although the Under Secretary personally

perceives considerable merit in the dissenting position taken by Dr. Gil Borges and is of the opinion that continued protests in the absence of implementing measures are not calculated to attain the objectives of the Declaration of Panama, he is of the opinion that the disadvantages of the procedure proposed in this particular instance are outweighed by a very great advantage, namely, that it would serve as a notification to the belligerent governments that the American republics maintain their adherence to the security zone principle in spite of the arguments advanced by the belligerent governments in their replies to the statement of the American republics dated December 23, 1939. It would furthermore serve a most useful purpose, under the circumstances which have developed since the *Hannover* incident took place as a demonstration of continued continental solidarity and unity of action. The Under Secretary hopes that the Inter-American Neutrality Committee will shortly formulate recommendations which may form the basis for consultation between the American republics as to the measures open to them in order to attain the objectives set forth in the Declaration of Panama. In view of these considerations the Under Secretary has ventured to make known to Dr. Gil Borges this personal expression of his views in the hope that Dr. Gil Borges will wish to reappraise his position on this matter."

Please report the result of your interview with Dr. Gil Borges by telegram.

HULL

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862.857 Hannover/49 : Telegram

*The Chargé in Venezuela (Scott) to the Secretary of State*

CARACAS, May 15, 1940—3 p. m.

[Received 5 : 30 p. m.]

64. Department's No. 45, May 14, 4 p. m. The Minister for Foreign Affairs has agreed to the proposal. He stated, however, that he was only agreeing as a personal favor to the Under Secretary and that he is more convinced than ever that similar incidents should be handled first with the Neutrality Committee. He expressed his opinion that far too many resolutions were being hastily taken up by the Pan American countries without sufficient consultation. In this connection, he referred specifically to the protest regarding the invasion of Holland<sup>43</sup> which he does not like and he strongly condemned the recent proposal of Argentina<sup>44</sup> which he characterized as ill-advised and dangerous.

SCOTT

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<sup>43</sup> See pp. 727 ff.

<sup>44</sup> See pp. 743 ff.

862.857 Hannover/50 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Chargé in Venezuela (Scott)*

WASHINGTON, May 16, 1940—1 p. m.

47. For Scott from the Under Secretary. Your No. 64, May 15, 3 p. m. Please say to the Minister for Foreign Affairs how much I value his never failing cooperation and understanding. Please tell him confidentially that I share to the fullest degree the views which he expressed to you as set forth in your telegram under reference.

HULL

862.857 Hannover/60

*The Panamanian Minister for Foreign Affairs (Garay) to the Secretary of State*

[Translation]

PANAMA, May 24, 1940.

[Received June 3.]

MR. SECRETARY: I have the honor to transcribe to Your Excellency the cablegrams<sup>45</sup> which the President of the Republic of Panama has addressed today, in connection with the incident of the freighter *Hannover*, to the President of the Dominican Republic, the King of Great Britain and Ireland and Emperor of India and the Chancellor of the German Reich, as well as the cablegram from the undersigned to the Chairman of the Inter-American Neutrality Committee, all of which has been done in developing the plan of action submitted by the Dominican Republic, the United States of America, and the Republic of Panama to the other American states and approved by them unanimously.

Please accept [etc.]

NARCISO GARAY

## II. ATTITUDE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE REGARDING A SUGGESTED PROTEST BY THE AMERICAN REPUBLICS AGAINST THE INVASION OF NORWAY AND DENMARK BY GERMANY<sup>46</sup>

740.0011 European War 1939/2157 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Argentina (Armour) to the Secretary of State*

BUENOS AIRES, April 12, 1940—5 p. m.

[Received 8:53 p. m.]

103. In discussing with the Minister for Foreign Affairs the situation in Europe arising out of the German invasion of Denmark and

<sup>45</sup> Texts not printed. The substantial part of the cablegrams was a Spanish translation of the texts given in telegram No. 33, March 21, 5 p. m., to the Ambassador in Panama, p. 714, as modified in accordance with telegram No. 34, March 23, 2 p. m., to the Chargé in the Dominican Republic, p. 717.

<sup>46</sup> For other correspondence on the invasion of Norway and Denmark by Germany, see pp. 136 ff.

Norway,<sup>47</sup> the possibility of some form of declaration or protest along the lines taken at the time of Russia's invasion of Finland<sup>48</sup> was raised. Dr. Cantilo said that his Government was not considering any individual action and that if anything was to be done, he felt that our Government was clearly the one to take the initiative. Should we be considering anything in this nature, however, and invite the other American Republics to join, his Government would, he felt, be glad to consider it.

The Associated Press correspondent tells me that the Minister for Foreign Affairs mentioned to their Foreign Office correspondent—not for publication—that he had discussed this matter with me as well as with the Brazilian Ambassador.

ARMOUR

740.0011 European War 1939/2162 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Brazil (Caffery) to the Secretary of State*

RIO DE JANEIRO, April 12, 1940—9 p. m.  
[Received 9:10 p. m.]

149. In reply to Uruguayan suggestion in regard to rights, et cetera, of small nations, Aranha<sup>49</sup> says he would be disposed, if all American nations agreed, to join in an American declaration in regard to rights, et cetera, of small nations.

CAFFERY

740.0011 European War 1939/2174 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Argentina (Armour) to the Secretary of State*

BUENOS AIRES, April 13, 1940—1 p. m.  
[Received April 13—12:55 p. m.]

105. Embassy's telegram 103, April 12, 7 [5] p. m. In a press interview last night the Minister for Foreign Affairs stated that his Government would maintain the principle of non-recognition of territorial conquests through force. Consequently the Danish and Norwegian Ministers would continue to be recognized as diplomatic representatives accredited to the Argentine Government.

In reply to a question Dr. Cantilo stated that the Ministry for Foreign Affairs had no knowledge of any steps of a continental character being taken towards formulating a protest relating to Ger-

<sup>47</sup> German troops invaded Denmark and Norway on April 9, 1940.

<sup>48</sup> See *Foreign Relations, 1939*, vol. v, pp. 128 ff.

<sup>49</sup> Oswaldo Aranha, Brazilian Minister for Foreign Affairs.



man acts of aggression in Denmark and Norway. Consequently rumors to this effect were without foundation.

ARMOUR

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740.0011 European War 1939/2162: Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Brazil (Caffery)*<sup>50</sup>

WASHINGTON, April 16, 1940—3 p. m.

104. Your 149, April 12, 9 p. m. The Department is of the opinion that the American republics have adequately placed themselves on record at various inter-American gatherings with regard to the rights of small nations and the principles of international relations to which the American republics adhere. With regard to the formulation at this time of a specific statement applicable to recent events in Europe, you may, in your discretion recall to Aranha that the Department expressed its willingness to participate in a unanimous collective statement of protest at the time of the invasion of Finland. However, in the absence of unanimity, this protest was not made. Even if unanimity could now be obtained, and there is no reason to think that circumstances in this respect have changed, it would appear that the failure to take collective action in the case of Finland would preclude any such action at the present time.

In this connection, as you are aware, the President has already stated the views of this Government (see radio bulletin No. 88 of April 13<sup>51</sup>). The Department is confident that these views are shared by the other American republics.

HULL

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<sup>50</sup> The text of this telegram was repeated on the same date as No. 58 to the Ambassador in Argentina with reference to his telegrams No. 103, April 12, 5 p. m., p. 724, and No. 105, April 13, 1 p. m., *supra*.

<sup>51</sup> For statement by President Roosevelt released to the press by the White House April 13, see Department of State *Bulletin*, April 13, 1940, p. 373.

III. COLLECTIVE PROTEST BY THE AMERICAN REPUBLICS AGAINST THE VIOLATION OF THE SOVEREIGNTY AND NEUTRALITY OF THE NETHERLANDS, LUXEMBURG, AND BELGIUM BY GERMANY (URUGUAYAN PROPOSAL)<sup>52</sup>

740.00111 A.R./1049 : Telegram

*The Minister in Uruguay (Wilson) to the Secretary of State*

MONTEVIDEO, May 11, 1940—8 p. m.  
[Received 9:30 p. m.]

64. For the Secretary and the Under Secretary. Guani<sup>53</sup> sent for me tonight and said that, after talking with the President, he was preparing a message to the President of Panama<sup>54</sup> invoking, in view of the invasion of Holland, Belgium and Luxemburg, paragraphs 4 and 5 of the declaration adopted at the Panama meeting entitled "Maintenance of International Activities in Accordance with Christian Morality".<sup>55</sup> He asked me to inquire of you whether such action would prejudice any steps which you have in mind.

He explained that public opinion was so incensed over the German invasion that strong pressure would be brought on the Government to declare that it was no longer neutral (see my telegram No. 63 of today<sup>56</sup>). He feels that the American states should act together not singly, and believes that if he starts the machinery of consultation by invoking the declaration referred to above, he will be able to keep people in line for the time being.

He requested a reply by tomorrow.

WILSON

740.00111 A.R./1049 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Minister in Uruguay (Wilson)*

WASHINGTON, May 12, 1940—noon.

34. Your 64, May 11, 8 p. m. Please express our deep appreciation to Guani for his courtesy in consulting us, and inform him that this Government will be glad to join with Uruguay and the other American

<sup>52</sup> For other correspondence regarding the German invasion of the Netherlands, Luxemburg, and Belgium, see pp. 184 ff.

<sup>53</sup> Alberto Guani, Uruguayan Minister for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>54</sup> Augusto Boyd.

<sup>55</sup> See *Report of the Delegate of the United States of America to the Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the American Republics held at Panama September 23-October 3, 1939*, p. 60. The paragraphs mentioned read as follows:

"4. That they consider the violation of the neutrality or the invasion of weaker nations as an unjustifiable measure in the conduct and success of war; and

"5. That they undertake to protest against any warlike act which does not conform to international law and the dictates of justice."

<sup>56</sup> Not printed; it reported press comment (740.0011 European War 1939/2866).

Republics in a statement condemning the ruthless invasion of Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg. In order to expedite agreement upon the text of the statement you might suggest to Guani that he be preparing the draft of the statement for circulation to the other American Republics as soon as they have been advised by the President of Panama of the Uruguayan initiative. You may offer the services of this Government in transmitting the text to governments in countries where Uruguay has no diplomatic representative.

It is assumed that Guani in speaking of consultation does not have in mind another meeting of representatives but merely the circularization of the various governments. In the latter case it would be desirable if you could obtain from him the text of his proposed statement for our comment prior to his circularizing the other governments.

HULL

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740.00111 A.R./1049½ : Telegram

*The Minister in Uruguay (Wilson) to the Secretary of State*

MONTEVIDEO, May 12, 1940—7 p. m.

[Received 8:15 p. m.]

65. Reference my telephone conversation today with Duffan [*Duggan?*].<sup>57</sup> The Uruguayan Government will send tonight the following telegram to the President of Panama (translation):

“The Uruguayan Government has learned with deep emotion of the attack on the sovereignty, and the violation of the neutrality of Belgium, Holland, and Luxemburg. My Government considers that respect for the rights of neutrality consecrated to the maintenance of peace is an international principle which must be firmly respected whatever the circumstances in which the belligerents may find themselves.

I permit myself to invoke paragraphs 4 and 5 of the tenth (ninth in English text published by Pan American Union) resolution approved at Panama City in order that the other American Governments may be consulted concerning the possibilities of a joint declaration on this subject.<sup>58</sup>

I beg Your Excellency that in transmitting the contents of this telegram to the other American Governments you inform them that within 24 hours they, as well as Your Excellency's Government, will receive a draft text forwarded by the Uruguayan Government.”

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<sup>57</sup> Laurence Duggan, Chief of the Division of the American Republics.

<sup>58</sup> See *Report of the Delegate of the United States of America to the Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the American Republics Held at Panama September 23-October 3, 1939*, p. 60.

The following is the draft text referred to above, concerning which Guani requests your views. He will accept any suggestions you wish to make. Please telephone me tomorrow.

(Translation) "The American Republics in accord with the principles of international law and in application of the resolutions adopted in their Inter-American conferences, consider unjustifiable the ruthless violation by Germany of the neutrality and sovereignty of Belgium, Holland and Luxemburg.

In paragraphs 4 and 5 of the Tenth Resolution of the Meeting of Foreign Ministers held at Panama in 1939, it was established that the violation of the neutrality or the invasion of weaker nations as a measure in the conduct and success of war, warrants the American Republics in protesting against this infraction of international law and the requirements of justice.

The American Republics therefore find themselves forced to protest against the military attacks directed against Belgium, Holland and Luxemburg, at the same time making an appeal for the reestablishment of law and justice in the relations between countries."

I will advise later of the countries to which Guani will request you to transmit the draft text. As you will note, there is no question of a meeting of representatives.

In order to expedite matters I venture to suggest that you request our Ambassador in Panama to advise the Panamanian Government that you are informed of this initiative and that you support it.

WILSON

740.00111 A.R./1051½

*Memorandum of Telephone Conversation, by Mr. Philip W. Bonsal  
of the Division of the American Republics*

[WASHINGTON,] May 13, 1940.

In accordance with Mr. Duggan's instructions, Mr. Bonsal telephoned Minister Wilson at Montevideo and told him that the Department is in agreement with the text drafted by the Uruguayan Government of a statement to be made by the American republics in regard to the invasion of Belgium, Holland and Luxemburg by Germany (see section 2 of Montevideo's telegram no. 65, May 12, 7 p. m.).

Mr. Wilson stated that the final paragraph of the statement had been modified to read "The American Republics therefore resolve to protest" instead of "The American Republics therefore find themselves forced to protest".

Dr. Guani has spoken to Dr. Cantilo<sup>59</sup> and to Senhor Aranha<sup>60</sup> regarding this matter and states that although they have not seen the proposed text, they are agreed "in principle".

<sup>59</sup> José María Cantilo, Argentine Minister for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>60</sup> Oswaldo Aranha, Brazilian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Mr. Wilson stated that a press item in a Montevideo newspaper this morning led him to believe that there is a possibility that Chile may not go along with the contemplated procedure. He said that, in that event, Dr. Guani is of the opinion that the other American republics should make the proposed statement, indicating specifically the names of the republics adhering to it.

Mr. Wilson will inform us promptly of the names of the countries to which the Uruguayan Government wishes us to circulate this text.

BONSAL

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740.00111 A.R./1051 : Telegram

*The Minister in Uruguay (Wilson) to the Secretary of State*

MONTEVIDEO, May 13, 1940—6 p. m.

[Received 7:05 p. m.]

66. Reference telephone conversation with Bonsal this morning. Guani has just been informed that the telegram addressed last night to the President of Panama has been circularized to all the American Governments. The Uruguayan Government will, therefore, cable tonight at 9 o'clock (7:30 Washington) the draft text of declaration to the Uruguayan representatives in eight Latin American countries instructing them to submit the text tomorrow to the governments to which they are accredited with the request that the governments cable their reply to the President of Panama without delay.

Guani requests that you cable the text indicating the same procedure to our representatives in Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, Haiti, Dominican Republic, Cuba, Venezuela and Ecuador. It is understood that you will advise the Government of Panama that the United States approves the text.

In the second paragraph of the draft text please change "tenth resolution" to read "ninth resolution" adding immediately thereafter in parentheses the title of the resolution.

As explained this morning the words in the third paragraph "find themselves forced" are replaced by "resolve".

Please advise me of the replies made by the 11 Governments mentioned above.

WILSON

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740.00111 A.R./1055a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Panama (Dawson)*

WASHINGTON, May 13, 1940—7 p. m.

59. The Department has been advised that on the evening of May 12 the Uruguayan Government telegraphed the President of Panama

with regard to the invasion of Belgium, Holland, and Luxemburg by Germany and invoked paragraphs 4 and 5 of the resolution entitled "Maintenance of International Activities in accordance with Christian Morality" adopted at Panama last October. The Uruguayan Government proposed a joint declaration by the American republics and asked that the contents of its telegram be transmitted to the other American governments, informing them that within 24 hours a draft text of the joint declaration would be forwarded.

The Department has informed the Uruguayan Government that this Government will be glad to join with Uruguay and the other American republics in a statement condemning the ruthless invasion of Holland, Belgium, and Luxemburg. The Department is in full agreement with the draft text proposed by the Uruguayan Government which reads as follows:

"The American Republics in accord with the principles of international law and in application of the resolutions adopted in their inter-American conferences, consider unjustifiable the ruthless violation by Germany of the neutrality and sovereignty of Belgium, Holland and Luxemburg.

In paragraphs 4 and 5 of the Ninth Resolution of the Meeting of Foreign Ministers held at Panama in 1939, it was established that the violation of the neutrality or the invasion of weaker nations as a measure in the conduct and success of war warrants the American Republics in protesting against this infraction of international law and the requirements of justice.

The American Republics therefore resolve to protest against the military attacks directed against Belgium, Holland and Luxemburg, at the same time making an appeal for the reestablishment of law and justice in the relations between countries."

The resolution mentioned in the second paragraph of the proposed statement is the ninth instead of the tenth resolution in the English version of the Final Act of the Panama meeting.

The Uruguayan Government has accepted the cooperation of the Department in circulating this text to those governments where there is no Uruguayan diplomatic representation and in transmitting their replies to Panama.

The Department is confident that the proposal of the Uruguayan Government will meet with the approval of the Government of Panama and that that Government will cooperate with the other American republics in the same efficient and wholehearted manner which it has demonstrated on recent occasions requiring collective action on the part of the American republics.

You are requested to keep the Department informed daily of the steps taken by the Government of Panama and of the replies received by it to the proposal of the Uruguayan Government. It is hoped that the telegraphic message referred to in the first paragraph of this telegram has been transmitted by the Government of Panama by

telegraph to the other American republics. The Department will be glad to render any cooperation which the Government of Panama may feel desirable in this connection.

HULL

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740.00111 A.R./1051 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Minister in Uruguay (Wilson)*

WASHINGTON, May 13, 1940—11 p. m.

35. Your 66, May 13, 6 p. m. The text of the Uruguayan draft is being telegraphed tonight<sup>61</sup> to our missions in the 11 countries specified in your telegram under reference with the request that it be placed promptly before the Governments concerned and that the latter cable their reply to the President of Panama without delay. It is being indicated at the same time that the Government of the United States is in full agreement with the text.

HULL

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740.00111 A.R./1057 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Panama (Dawson) to the Secretary of State*

PANAMA, May 14, 1940—5 p. m.

[Received 5:47 p. m.]

62. Department's telegram No. 59, May 13, 7 p. m. As requested by the Uruguayan Government Dr. Garay<sup>61a</sup> transmitted the contents of its telegram of May 12 yesterday by telegraph to the other American governments. The Panamanian Government is heartily in agreement with the proposal and with the Uruguayan draft as delivered to Dr. Garay by me in English text. Dr. Garay tells me that he will telegraph Dr. Guani direct requesting the original Spanish text in order to avoid eventual discrepancies in translation. The Panamanian Government has already received telegrams from Cuba and Haiti approving proposal and Uruguayan draft.

DAWSON

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740.00111 A.R./1066 : Telegram

*The Minister in Uruguay (Wilson) to the Secretary of State*

MONTEVIDEO, May 15, 1940—11 a. m.

[Received 12:25 p. m.]

69. Guani is having difficulties with Cantilo over the Uruguayan draft. Last night Cantilo telegraphed Panama proposing the omis-

<sup>61</sup> Circular telegram, May 13, 11 p. m., not printed.

<sup>61a</sup> Narciso Garay, Panamanian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

sion of the last paragraph of the draft and its replacement by the following:

“The American Republics in the presence of these facts reserve full liberty of action to proceed as seems best in defense of their external and internal interests.”

As this proposal would cause delay and raise difficulties for some states (presumably for the United States) Guani is insisting that Argentina adhere to the Uruguayan draft making public if it so desires at the time the protest is published the foregoing proposal as an Argentine reservation or new proposition to be submitted to the American states. The question is still unsettled.

Repeated to Buenos Aires.

WILSON

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740.00111 A.R./1069 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Panama (Dawson) to the Secretary of State*

PANAMA, May 15, 1940—4 p. m.  
[Received 7:50 p. m.]

63. My telegram No. 62 of May 14, 5 p. m. Further telegrams approving Uruguayan proposal and draft have now been received by the Panamanian Government from Bolivia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Peru, and Venezuela. In addition telegrams have been received from Argentina and Mexico proposing substantial changes in Uruguayan draft and from Colombia suggesting elimination of word ruthless and broadening of protest to include attacks on Norway and Denmark. Dr. Garay is telegraphing texts of replies to Uruguayan Government but is not circulating them to other American Republics. The texts of Argentine, Colombian and Mexican replies follow *en clair* as section 2 of present telegram.

Argentine reply reads as follows:

“I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of your telegram of yesterday by which you were good enough to advise me of the initiative of the Government of Uruguay for an American protest on account of the aggressions of which Belgium, Holland and Luxemburg are the victims. Having received the suggested text directly from the Uruguayan Chancellery, I have to inform Your Excellency that the Argentine Government agrees in principle with the spirit of the initiative but, in a desire to give it greater force, could only adhere to it if its last paragraph should be modified, for which purpose I suggest that after the words ‘exigencies of justice’, the following paragraph be substituted for the (present) paragraph: ‘The American Republics, confronted by such events, reserve all their freedom of action to proceed as may be appropriate to the defense of their external and domestic interests.’ José Maria Cantilo.”



Colombian reply is as follows :

“Colombian Government expressed its doctrine as regards unjustified aggression against weak countries when Finland was invaded<sup>62</sup> and it believes that for itself it is sufficient to repeat that opinion in domestic statements of external effect when similar cases occur—as it has already vehemently done in the case of Belgium, Holland and Luxemburg—in order not to lessen the sternness of that attitude through frequent repetitions, but if the American nations decide to repeat their protest on this occasion it will cordially accept their initiative. If this occurs, we suggest adding the names of Denmark and Norway in the text of the joint declaration and suppressing the qualifying adjective ‘cruel’ which perhaps detracts from the calm tone in documents of this kind. With assurances of my highest consideration, Luis Lopez de Mesa.”<sup>63</sup>

Mexican reply reads :

“With reference to Your Excellency’s courteous message dated yesterday, I inform you that I have received the text of the Uruguayan proposed protest on account of the aggression against Belgium, Holland and Luxemburg. I find the said text weakened by unnecessary quotations and I beg to propose the following wording: ‘The nations of America, in conformity with the principles of international law and in application of the resolutions adopted by them in their continental conferences and particularly at the consultative meeting at Panama in 1939, consider unjustifiable the cruel violation by Germany of the neutrality and sovereignty of Belgium, Holland and Luxemburg and resolve to protest against such acts, at the same time making an appeal for the reestablishment of law and justice in the relations between peoples.’ I renew to Your Excellency the assurance of my highest and most distinguished consideration. Eduardo Hay.”<sup>64</sup>

DAWSON

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740.00111 A.R./1068 : Telegram

*The Minister in Uruguay (Wilson) to the Secretary of State*

MONTEVIDEO, May 15, 1940—8 p. m.

[Received May 15—8 p. m.]

70. My 69, May 15, 11 a. m. Guani has just informed me that Cantilo accepts the Uruguayan draft and withdraws his proposed modification to Buenos Aires and Rio de Janeiro.

Repeated to Buenos Aires.

WILSON

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<sup>62</sup> See section entitled “Proposed Collective Protest by the American Republics Against the Soviet Invasion of Finland,” *Foreign Relations*, 1939, vol. v, pp. 128 ff.

<sup>63</sup> Colombian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>64</sup> Mexican Minister for Foreign Affairs.

740.00111 A.R./1067 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Argentina (Armour) to the Secretary of State*

BUENOS AIRES, May 15, 1940—10 p. m.

[Received 11:24 p. m.]

Referring to Minister Wilson's telegram No. 69 of May 15, 11 a. m. transmitting change proposed by Argentine Minister for Foreign Affairs in last paragraph of Uruguayan draft protest, Cantilo informs me that the Brazilian Government has approved the Argentine change and that he desires to learn our Government's views as soon as possible. If we also approve he hopes the change can be made as his Government feels that the present draft is too weak. If we do not approve change or feel that time element makes suggested change impracticable, his Government, in order to maintain united front, would be willing to accept original Uruguayan draft.

Repeated to Rio de Janeiro and Montevideo.

ARMOUR

740.00111 A.R./1066 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Minister in Uruguay (Wilson)*

WASHINGTON, May 16, 1940—1 p. m.

36. Your 69, May 15, 11 a. m. For your information and for transmittal to Guani the Department understands that 10 out of the 11 American republics to which the Uruguayan draft was transmitted by the Department have approved that draft and have either telegraphed Panama to that effect or will very shortly do so. There is no indication that the other country is not in agreement.

HULL

740.00111 A.R./1077 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Panama (Dawson) to the Secretary of State*

PANAMA, May 16, 1940—3 p. m.

[Received 4:55 p. m.]

64. My telegram No. 63 of May 15, 4 p. m. The Panamanian Government has received further entirely favorable replies from the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Honduras, and El Salvador and from Brazil a reply suggesting a change in text. Chile, Nicaragua, and Paraguay are the only countries remaining to be heard from. Text of Brazilian reply follows *en clair* as section 2 of present telegram.

Brazilian reply reads as follows:

"I have the honor to reply to the telegram of the 13th instant by which Your Excellency consults the Brazilian Government in the

name of the Government of Uruguay on the propriety of a collective protest of America in the case of the invasion of Belgium, Holland and Luxemburg. I have to communicate to you that the Brazilian Government is in agreement with the Uruguayan proposal but proposes the inclusion in it of the following Argentine addition: 'The American countries in protesting against the acts that have occurred reserve to themselves the right to take the measures which they may consider necessary for the defense of their domestic and external interests'. Please accept the assurances of my highest consideration. Oswaldo Aranha."

DAWSON

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740.00111 A.R./1067 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Argentina (Armour)*

WASHINGTON, May 16, 1940—6 p. m.

73. For the Ambassador from the Under Secretary. Your May 15, 10 p. m. and our telephone conversation of this morning. After full consideration I do not see how this Government can approve the suggested Argentine modification, even with the certainty that the Argentine Government would be willing to withdraw its proposal for such modification. The language used in the proposal is so broad as to be liable to almost any construction.

I consequently suggest that you have an informal talk with Dr. Cantilo and say that this Government is, of course, prepared to give the most attentive and friendly consideration to any suggestion proffered by the Argentine Government with regard to inter-American affairs or concerning any other matter they desire to bring to our attention, but that, since it is our understanding by word received from the Uruguayan Government that the Argentine Government has withdrawn its proposal to modify the Uruguayan text of a joint declaration, further consideration on our part would not seem to be required at this juncture. You should then say that because of the desirability of demonstrating the existence of complete unity on the part of all of the American Republics in these critical times and since many other governments have already approved the Uruguayan text, it is hoped that complete accord may be had in the near future on the part of all of the governments with regard to the text proposed. In your discretion you might wish to add that there was no preliminary conversation between the Uruguayan Government and this Government with regard to the Uruguayan proposal and that the first knowledge which the Government of the United States had of the Uruguayan suggestion was when the American Minister at Montevideo was informed of the suggestion on May 11.

Please telegraph any observations which may be made to you by the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

HULL

740.00111 A.R./1084: Telegram

*The Minister in Uruguay (Wilson) to the Secretary of State*

MONTEVIDEO, May 17, 1940—noon.

[Received 12:35 p. m.]

72. Guani understands that all the American states have accepted the proposal for a protest except Chile and Nicaragua (Colombia has suggested a slight change in form; it is not clear whether Argentina still desires to have her proposed modification recorded). He is telegraphing Panama to confirm foregoing and on receipt of reply will telegraph again late this afternoon to Panama requesting that the text of the protest be made public, together with the names of the states adhering thereto and such observations as Colombia and possibly Argentina may still wish to maintain.

He considers it essential to have the protest published today, feeling that the spectacle of the American states delaying and wrangling over the matter of a protest against ruthless invasion is not particularly edifying.

If you wish to make any suggestion regarding his procedure please advise me at once.

WILSON

740.00111 A.R./1087: Telegram

*The Ambassador in Panama (Dawson) to the Secretary of State*

PANAMA, May 17, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received 7 p. m.]

65. My telegram No. 64 of May 16, 3 p. m. Favorable replies have now been received from Paraguay and Nicaragua. Chile is the only country which has not replied. Mexico has withdrawn its suggestion regarding changes and has accepted Uruguayan text. Doctor Garay presumes that when the time comes the joint declaration will be addressed by the President of Panama to the German Chancellor.<sup>65</sup> He is, however, consulting the Uruguayan Minister for Foreign Affairs regarding this point.

DAWSON

740.00111 A.R./1088: Telegram

*The Minister in Uruguay (Wilson) to the Secretary of State*

MONTEVIDEO, May 17, 1940—5 p. m.

[Received 6 p. m.]

73. My 72, May 17, noon. Instead of the message mentioned in my telegram under reference Guani is now cabling Panama that he

<sup>65</sup> Adolf Hitler.

has just heard that Argentina has definitively withdrawn its proposed modification and that Chile will reply tonight. He is requesting the Panamanian Government to advise him of the nature of the Chilean reply and whether Nicaragua has as yet replied. After hearing from Panama he will then urge that the protest be published tomorrow with the names of the countries accepting it and such observations as any of them may have made. He would appreciate it if you would request our Legation at Managua to urge the Nicaraguan Government to reply favorably to Panama tonight.

WILSON

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740.00111 A.R./1090 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Argentina (Armour) to the Secretary of State*

BUENOS AIRES, May 17, 1940—5 p. m.

[Received 7:15 p. m.]

147. The Under Secretary's telegram No. 73, May 16, 6 p. m. I have just seen the Minister for Foreign Affairs and conveyed to him the substance of the telegram under reference. Doctor Cantilo assured me that his Government realized the importance of unity on the part of all the American Republics, particularly at this time and stated that they would immediately convey to the Uruguayan Government approval of the Uruguayan text. Dr. Cantilo appeared to be entirely satisfied with regard to the point mentioned in the last sentence of the penultimate paragraph of the Under Secretary's telegram.

The Uruguayan Ambassador, who was waiting to see the Minister for Foreign Affairs when I left, has since confirmed this to me, adding that Cantilo said they were telegraphing the Panamanian Government withdrawing their own proposal in the interest of unity on the part of all the American Republics.

Repeated to Rio de Janeiro and Montevideo.

ARMOUR

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740.00111 A.R./1091a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Minister in Nicaragua (Nicholson)*

WASHINGTON, May 17, 1940—7 p. m.

31. Department's circular May 13, 11 p. m.<sup>65a</sup> Panama has not yet received the reply of the Nicaraguan Government to the Uruguayan proposal for a joint statement regarding the invasion of Holland, Belgium and Luxemburg. All but one of the remaining American republics have, it is understood replied affirmatively. Please bring

<sup>65a</sup> Not printed.

matter to the urgent attention of Foreign Office and endeavor to persuade Foreign Minister to make telegraphic reply to Panama tomorrow morning without fail. HULL

740.00111 A.R./1215

*The Ambassador in Argentina (Armour) to the Under Secretary of State (Welles)*

BUENOS AIRES, May 17, 1940.<sup>66</sup>

DEAR SUMNER: I have sent off my reply<sup>67</sup> to your telegram<sup>68</sup> received this morning to the effect that we cannot agree to give approval to the Argentine Government's proposed change in the Uruguayan draft note, even though not to be used.

Cantilo accepted it with pretty good grace. He . . . assured me he realized that unity was the great thing, particularly at this time, and that what he and the President especially desired was to keep step with us. He wished at times we could make this a little easier. He realized, however, that we had our difficulties, although he thought perhaps we did not always appreciate theirs to the full. He showed me a poster they had just confiscated, several thousand of which had been printed, demanding in big red letters the resignation of Cantilo because of his alleged attempt to bring Argentina into the war through his stand on non-belligerency.<sup>69</sup> The poster called on all Argentines to stand firm for neutrality and for keeping out of war. This was, Cantilo said, of course Nazi-inspired.

I have no doubt that what he had in mind was that had we been able to support their proposal in principle—that is, a strengthening of the Uruguayan text—this would have helped the Government here, particularly Dr. Ortiz<sup>69a</sup> and himself, in a somewhat difficult situation they are facing in the pro-Nazi group which appears to be making some gains due to the very effective German propaganda directed by the German Embassy and the unlimited funds the latter seem to have at their disposal apparently through levies on German firms and members of the German community.

Dr. Ortiz is, I think, becoming really worried both by the internal situation as well as what would be in store for them in the event of a German victory in Europe. I see this reflected in Cantilo who in his calmer moments seems at last convinced of the necessity of cooperating more closely with us.

<sup>66</sup> Receipt date not indicated.

<sup>67</sup> Telegram No. 147, May 17, 5 p. m., p. 738.

<sup>68</sup> No. 73, May 16, 6 p. m., p. 736.

<sup>69</sup> See section entitled "Argentine Proposal That the American Republics Declare They Cease To Be Neutrals and Announce They Have Become Nonbelligerents," pp. 743 ff.

<sup>69a</sup> Roberto M. Ortiz, President of Argentina.

In this connection he asked me particularly to give you a message. He said that he feels that many in the United States do not understand Argentina and incorrectly interpret their attitude as unfriendly to the United States. He admitted that in the past, at any rate, there may have been justification for this feeling. He feels sure that you do understand them and appreciate their difficulties. He also feels, however, that you may still have in mind the Saavedra Lamas<sup>70</sup> days but hopes you will realize that those days are now gone, not to return. He was in Rome, far from the scene of action, when Saavedra Lamas took his stand on our proposed lease of destroyers to Brazil,<sup>71</sup> a position which he quite understood must have irritated you—justly—beyond measure. All he asks now is to cooperate with us: to keep in step with us: and if the worst comes to the worst and we are forced into the war, he wants his country to be shoulder to shoulder with us. To be sure, their assistance from a material point of view would perhaps not prove very effective, but he does feel the moral effect at any rate might be worth quite a little. There was more along these lines but this is the gist of what he had to say. . . .

May I suggest, if not too much trouble to you, that you might write him a personal line, saying that you have received this message from me of his desire to work closely with us and to keep Argentina in step with our Government on the larger questions in which we are all so vitally interested. I know this would be greatly appreciated and I feel sure it would have a good effect.

Incidentally, as evidence of one of the smaller points of difficulty, he mentioned earlier in his conversation this morning our Government's selling subsidized wheat and corn abroad, making it increasingly difficult for Argentina to dispose of its large surplus crops, particularly corn.<sup>72</sup> I do not know whether there is anything that you can do, perhaps through Wallace,<sup>73</sup> or whether this is a matter which has come to your attention through Espil.<sup>74</sup> But could anything be done or perhaps some explanation be given as to the necessity leading to our action in this respect, I think this might have a good effect.

I hope I have not bothered you too much during these last days by my telephone calls. I know how frightfully busy and anxious you must be with the grim events in Europe apparently becoming worse and worse and hope you will forgive these interruptions.

With all good wishes,

Always sincerely yours,

NORMAN ARMOUR

<sup>70</sup> Carlos Saavedra Lamas, former Argentine Minister for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>71</sup> See *Foreign Relations*, 1937, vol. v, pp. 149 ff.

<sup>72</sup> See vol. v, section under Argentina entitled "Negotiations for a Proposed Marketing Agreement Between the United States and Argentina."

<sup>73</sup> Henry A. Wallace, Secretary of Agriculture.

<sup>74</sup> Felipe A. Espil, Argentine Ambassador in the United States.

740.00111 A.R./1092 : Telegram

*The Minister in Nicaragua (Nicholson) to the Secretary of State*

MANAGUA, May 18, 1940—9 a. m.

[Received 12:35 p. m.]

46. Department's telegram No. 31, May 17, 7 p. m. Nicaraguan Minister for Foreign Affairs confirms that affirmative reply regarding Uruguayan proposal was sent by telegraph to Panama on May 16.

NICHOLSON

740.00111 A.R./1091 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Panama (Dawson) to the Secretary of State*

PANAMA, May 18, 1940—10 a. m.

[Received 11:15 a. m.]

67. My telegram No. 65 of May 17, 4 p. m. Chile has replied favorably and the Panamanian Government is advised by the Uruguayan Government that the United States and Ecuador have accepted the original Uruguayan text. Through the Colombian Legation here Dr. Garay has requested that Colombia withdraw its suggestion regarding changes. He is now awaiting Colombian reply and hopes to be able to release joint declaration this afternoon. According to suggestion received from the Uruguayan Minister for Foreign Affairs the declaration will be addressed to no one and will be preceded by the following words: "The States of America adhere to the following protest relative to the violation of the sovereignty and neutrality of Belgium, Holland and Luxemburg."

DAWSON

740.00111 A.R./1093 : Telegram

*The Minister in Uruguay (Wilson) to the Secretary of State*

MONTEVIDEO, May 18, 1940—noon.

[Received 12:53 p. m.]

75. Guani has just telephoned me to say that Chile has accepted the Uruguayan text (I advised him after learning from Panama that Nicaragua has also accepted). He is therefore telegraphing Panama at once requesting that, as all the American States have accepted, the protest be published by the President of Panama in tomorrow morning's papers. He intends to publish it here at that time and hopes other governments will do the same. He also intends as author of the initiative, to transmit the text to the Pope.

WILSON



740.00111 A.R./1095 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Panama (Dawson) to the Secretary of State*

PANAMA, May 18, 1940—2 p. m.

[Received 2:55 p. m.]

69. My telegram number 67.<sup>75</sup> Doctor Garay is releasing joint declaration for publication this afternoon in papers appearing not before 5 o'clock.

DAWSON

740.00111 A.R./1096 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Panama (Dawson) to the Secretary of State*

PANAMA, May 18, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received 5 p. m.]

70. My telegram No. 69. At the suggestion of Uruguayan Foreign Minister Dr. Garay has just furnished the press the following additional communiqué:

"In connection with the joint declaration of the American Republics the Panamanian Foreign Office states that the Government of Colombia, in adhering to the said document, expressed the desire that the names of Denmark and Norway be added to those of the three countries whose neutrality has been violated by the German forces."

DAWSON

740.00111 A.R./1101a : Circular telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Missions in Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, and Venezuela*

WASHINGTON, May 18, 1940—8 p. m.

The text of the joint declaration proposed by Uruguay has been approved by all of the American republics and is being released to the press this evening by Panama.<sup>76</sup> Please inform the Foreign Office and indicate the desirability of taking appropriate measures in order to secure a maximum of publicity. In approving the statement, the Colombian Government indicated that it should include Denmark and Norway.

HULL

<sup>75</sup> May 18, 10 a. m., p. 741.

<sup>76</sup> The text was the same as that quoted in telegram No. 59, May 13, 7 p. m., to the Ambassador in Panama, p. 730, with the addition of the title "Maintenance of International Activities in Accordance with Christian Morality" after the reference in the second paragraph to the Ninth Resolution of the Meeting of Foreign Ministers held at Panama in 1939.

740.00111 A.R./1148 : Telegram

*The Minister in Ecuador (Long) to the Secretary of State*

QUITO, May 25, 1940—1 p. m.

[Received 5 p. m.]

71. Subsecretary for Foreign Affairs told me that this morning message arrived from Panama that Mexico, in addition to Colombia, suggested including Denmark and Norway in protest; that Ecuador would reply that it seemed too late but it would join if majority of American States thought protest desirable.

LONG

**IV. ARGENTINE PROPOSAL THAT THE AMERICAN REPUBLICS DECLARE THEY CEASE TO BE NEUTRALS AND ANNOUNCE THEY HAVE BECOME NONBELLIGERENTS**

740.00111 A.R./1012 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Argentina (Armour) to the Secretary of State*

BUENOS AIRES, April 19, 1940—6 p. m.

[Received 10:43 p. m.]

112. I have just come from the Foreign Minister <sup>77</sup> who called me in for the purpose of talking over in great confidence a matter which he and President Ortiz <sup>78</sup> have been discussing and which they both wish to present to the President and to you for earnest consideration.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs said that his Government was worried by the position in which the American Republics find themselves as a result of the evolution of the war in Europe. The American Governments have declared their neutrality and have even declared a zone of security destined to protect this neutrality. In practice, however, this zone actually [possible omission] and would even seem to be a dead letter. In Europe, on the other hand, neutrality no longer exists and a neutral status creates duties but gives no rights. The weaker countries of Europe are not in a position to defend themselves against the stronger powers. As a result neutrality today is based upon rules and conceptions which have no basis in fact.

The Minister pointed out in the friendliest manner that the neutrality of the United States is not in reality effective in that we can and do provide aid to the Allies and that we seem disposed to continue to do so more and more as time goes on.

Dr. Cantilo believes that it is in the interest of the American Republics and of the world that we abandon this fiction of neutrality. He suggests, therefore, that the American Republics agree to declare

<sup>77</sup> José María Cantilo.<sup>78</sup> Roberto M. Ortiz.

that they have become "non belligerents". Italy, the Minister added, has given us an idea of what is in effect meant by "non belligerence". This status consists in not entering into the war and permitting each nation to do what it feels to be in its best interest (he pointed out that Italy helps Germany but also continues to do business with England, France and the other belligerents).

If the American Republics declared that they are "non belligerent" rather than neutral, Dr. Cantilo feels that the following will be the consequences:

(1) There is no risk, because "non belligerence" does not imply entering into the war.

(2) Such a course would give liberty of action to the American Governments as they would no longer be bound by rules of neutrality which appear to be without practical foundation in Europe today.

(3) Germany could not blame us for an attitude which it accepts from Italy, while the Allies could only congratulate the American Republics on a change in position which would favor them.

(4) As to procedure, Dr. Cantilo desires, for the moment to present this idea for the consideration of our Government alone. If we view the idea favorably, Dr. Cantilo will then discuss the matter with Aranha<sup>19</sup> to see if he agrees and if he does, they will together present the proposal officially to the United States Government.

The President, with whom Dr. Cantilo has discussed the matter, heartily approves the idea. Dr. Cantilo presumes that, if our Government approves and in the event Brazil should not, then Argentina and the United States Government could take the initiative on their own. Cantilo feels reasonably sure, however, that if we and Argentina are in agreement, Brazil would come into line.

Cantilo stated that President Ortiz believes that such action would constitute a dynamic gesture in Americanism which would free us from the static state in which we now find ourselves.

Also to procedure, Cantilo suggests that if agreement were reached between the three Governments named, he thought the best plan would be for the United States to call a conference of the representatives of the American Republics. We could, of course, he said, handle the matter by consultation between the various Governments but that, he felt, would be a cumbersome and long drawn out method of procedure. He asked me to make it clear to you that if our Government should not agree to the proposal, his Government would of course drop it immediately.

Dr. Cantilo feels that the matter is urgent because of the rapid progress of events in Europe and hopes our Government can give it immediate consideration. In the meantime, he particularly requests that the proposal be regarded as strictly confidential.

ARMOUR

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<sup>19</sup> Oswaldo Aranha, Brazilian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

740.00111 A.R./1031

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

[WASHINGTON,] April 22, 1940.

The Argentine Ambassador<sup>80</sup> called to see me this afternoon. The Ambassador came to talk to me with regard to the proposal of the Argentine Government communicated in Ambassador Armour's telegram 112 of April 19, 6 p. m.

Dr. Espil stated that on Saturday he had received a brief cable from his Foreign Minister, Dr. Cantilo, giving him a summary of the proposal and that he had barely read it when Dr. Cantilo called him on the long distance phone asking him what the reaction of this Government might be. He replied that he had not yet had an opportunity to do more than talk with me on the telephone and that I had limited myself to stating that there were many aspects of the proposal which were not clear and that in a matter of such importance very full consideration would have to be given by the President and by the Secretary of State. The Ambassador added that he himself was not at all clear as to what the real objective of his Foreign Minister might be and the Foreign Minister had replied with a great deal of vehemence that he couldn't understand why it wasn't entirely clear but that he would follow up his telephone conversation with a full explanatory telegram.

Dr. Espil received this second telegram yesterday and handed me a digest of it of which the following is a translation:

"The American countries are neutral and have even established a zone of security to protect that neutrality, a zone which the belligerents have not recognized and do not respect. Furthermore, in Europe neutral countries are either being invaded or else are on a war footing as a result of the threats of the great powers. Russia, the ally of the Reich, maintains relations with England and France—Denmark is invaded, et cetera. In a word, neutrality does not exist in reality. It creates obligations but it does not offer guarantees. The norms and conventions which we neutrals apply and which we invoke are a dead letter. Meanwhile the European war is assuming proportions and a threat which must necessarily disquiet America.

"I propose that we Americans issue forth from fiction and adapt ourselves to reality and that by common accord we declare that we are ceasing to be neutrals in order to be 'nonbelligerents'. This signifies, as the case of Italy demonstrates, not to enter into war and to proceed according to one's own interests. I believe that if we declared in lieu of neutrality a state of non-belligerency that that would have the following advantages:

"1. It would be a kind of warning in the face of present aggressions.

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<sup>80</sup> Felipe A. Espil.

"2. It would give us full liberty of action in foreign, as well as internal, policy, freeing us from the restrictions of an illusory and fictitious neutrality.

"3. Germany could not reproach us if we assumed a position which she accepts on the part of her ally, Italy.

"4. The Allies would see with pleasure an act which is favorable to them because it would permit any eventual aid to their cause.

"In the circumstances of the existing war the American countries placed under the régime of neutrality are accepting a fiction which diminishes their moral stature. I believe decidedly that the moment has come when America should place herself within the bounds of reality, and I think that the gesture which I suggest would be beneficial both for America and for the world."

I stated to the Ambassador that the telegram which he had now been good enough to give me clarified certain questions in my mind since I had not been able, up to now, to see with any precision what the precise objectives sought by his Foreign Minister might be. I added that I would submit this message to the Secretary of State and to the President for their information and that as soon as a definite reply had been determined upon by this Government, I would see that the Ambassador received it in writing and that a similar message would be sent to Ambassador Armour in Buenos Aires for communication to the Argentine Foreign Minister. I said, therefore, that for the moment I had no further official statement to make, but that I would be glad to discuss with the Ambassador, in an entirely unofficial and personal way, my own reaction to the proposal.

I said that the Ambassador had been in the United States so many years and knew public opinion in this country so well that I felt sure he would immediately recognize what the reaction on the part of the people of the United States would be if the Government of the United States adopted the policy suggested by the Argentine Foreign Minister. I said I was sure he would realize that such a step would inevitably be regarded by an immense majority of public opinion in the United States as an abandonment of neutrality in all that that term implied by the United States and as a clear evidence that this country was moving rapidly towards involvement in the European war. I said that this, of course, was a domestic problem which could not be dealt with in any official communication to the Argentine Government, but that I thought the Ambassador must realize this for himself.

Secondly, I said, it seemed to me that what in essence Dr. Cantilo proposed was a complete abandonment on the part of all of the American Republics of the agreements reached at the meeting of Panama in September 1939.<sup>81</sup> At that time, I stated, the American Republics had

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<sup>81</sup> See *Foreign Relations*, 1939, vol. v, pp. 15 ff.

unanimously declared their neutrality, had agreed upon a common point of view with regard to the observance of their rights and obligations as neutrals and had in many declarations adopted at that meeting stated their conviction that this common continental policy was in the interest of their own security and in the interest of their own non-involvement in war. I could not, I said, understand what possible advantage the American Republics would derive from such a course. Up to the present moment I had not known of any incidents where the course of procedure there decided upon had resulted in disadvantage or in difficulties by any American Republic.

Thirdly, I said, the American Republics constituted the one remaining portion of the civilized world which stood for, which upheld and which practiced the standards of international law which were being openly violated in every other part of the world. What Dr. Cantilo suggested, I said, seemed to me to be tantamount to a declaration now on the part of the American Republics that they were going to join those nations of the world which were violating international law by refusing any longer to uphold those principles upon which their modern civilization was founded. I said it seemed to me that any such course would result in the most serious blow to decent and orderly international relations that could well be conceived.

Fourthly, I said that as a result of the conferences of Buenos Aires, of Lima and of Panama a complete and most gratifying unanimity of criterion had grown up on the part of all of the American Republics. For the first time after Panama we were adopting a common policy with regard to the situation confronting all of us as a result of the war in Europe and in the Far East. Now what was proposed by Dr. Cantilo was that all of the American Republics reverse their course, abrogate their agreements to adopt such common policy and proceed helter-skelter along the uncharted road of "non-belligerency". If this course were pursued, it seemed to me inevitable that the Government of Argentina would construe "non-belligerency" as meaning one thing, the Government of Chile something completely different and every other government as something again distinct. I said that I did not believe that more than two months would pass, should we follow the course presented by Dr. Cantilo, before the most serious and grave difficulties would arise in inter-American relations due solely to such divergencies of opinions and of policies, in the shaping of which non-American powers would undoubtedly play a very gravely considerable part.

Fifthly and finally, I said that if the term "non-belligerency" meant anything at all, it implied that Italy had an understanding or an alliance with Germany but was not, at least at this moment, taking part in actual hostilities, although always with the very definite threat that

Italy might take part in the existing hostilities on the side of Germany at any given moment. I said that certainly that situation did not apply to any American Republic. None of them had alliances with belligerent powers and I consequently was unable to apprehend the reasons why any American Republic should adopt as its course of conduct a policy which was being followed by an ally of a belligerent in Europe.

I reiterated to the Ambassador that these were entirely personal reflections and that he could be quite sure that this Government would, in the most friendly spirit, study every aspect of the proposal presented by the Argentine Government and in its reply would make clear to the Argentine Government that it appreciated the friendly spirit in which we had been consulted by Argentina.

S[UMNER] W[ELLES]

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740.00111 A.R./1022

*The Ambassador in Argentina (Armour) to the Secretary of State*

No. 624

BUENOS AIRES, April 22, 1940.

[Received April 30.]

SIR: With reference to the Embassy's confidential telegram No. 112 of April 19, 6 p. m., "For the Secretary", I have the honor to transmit herewith a memorandum of my conversation with the Minister for Foreign Affairs on April 19 last, of which the telegram mentioned above was a summary.

As pointed out in the memorandum, Dr. Cantilo did not appear to have worked out the details of his somewhat startling proposal. He explained that he had only just come from the President with whom he had apparently discussed the matter for the first time, but whose enthusiastic endorsement of the idea he assured me he had secured. In fact, as will be noted, the President felt that if our Government approved the idea, he would favor having us both go on with it, even in the event the Brazilian Government should not be disposed to fall into line.

What prompted Dr. Cantilo to advance the suggestion at this time does not appear clear. In discussing the advantages which he felt would result from the abandonment of the present position of neutrality in favor of a non-belligerent status, the Minister mentioned several times the difficulties of the present situation from an internal point of view. (While he did not elaborate on this point or cite any instances, it seems reasonable to believe that he had in mind the problem presented by the internment of the officers and sailors of the

*Graf Spee*<sup>82</sup> as well, possibly, as the difficulties presented by a large German colony in Argentina, the presence of the several German ships, etc.)

As the Department is aware, Dr. Cantilo has for some time been doubtful as to the practicability of effectively maintaining the 300-mile security zone. Both in the *Wakama* and *Hannover* incidents,<sup>83</sup> he has somewhat reluctantly agreed to his Government joining in the protests to the belligerent powers, expressing scepticism as to the probability of any useful results being accomplished by such protests.

The Minister appeared to be equally sceptical as to the Neutrality Commission<sup>84</sup> in Rio de Janeiro being able to formulate any plan of procedure which would result in strengthening the neutral position of the American Republics. As he pointed out in one of my talks with him regarding the *Hannover* incident, even if the Rio Commission were to reach an agreement on proposals in the nature of sanctions, any attempt to enforce these might even result in bringing us into the war.

It seems entirely possible therefore that Dr. Cantilo's somewhat sudden proposal to abandon our neutral status may have arisen out of his attempt, or the attempts of his Government, to find some substitute for the security zone as a method of keeping the war away from the American continent.

I must frankly admit that it was not clear to me just what Dr. Cantilo means by "non-belligerence" as contrasted with, or distinguished from neutrality. The most definite answer he could give me when I asked him was to point to the case of Italy as an example of non-belligerence, as distinguished from neutrality.

While I was careful not to express any opinion which might have been taken to indicate approval on the part of our Government of his proposal, after expressing interest in the suggestion, I ventured to point out what, even admitting our willingness to consider the idea, I felt would be the difficulties confronting our Government from a mechanical viewpoint (so to speak), e. g., the necessity for congressional action, in view of the revised neutrality law passed by Congress under which we are now functioning.

My personal feeling is that perhaps the greatest importance to be attached to Dr. Cantilo's suggestion is the indication it affords of the lines along which he and his Government are thinking at the present time. As I have pointed out in previous despatches, Dr. Cantilo has several times referred to a suggestion which he states was made

<sup>82</sup> See telegram No. 147, December 18, 1939, 5 p. m., from the Minister in Uruguay, *Foreign Relations*, 1939, vol. v, p. 106.

<sup>83</sup> See section entitled "Violations by the Belligerents of the Security Zone Established by the Declaration of Panama," pp. 681 ff.

<sup>84</sup> See vol. v, section under General entitled "The Inter-American Neutrality Committee."



in 1916 (at which time he was Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs) by the Argentine Minister for Foreign Affairs through their Ambassador at Washington for a conference of the American Republics to discuss the situation created at that time by Germany's unrestricted submarine warfare. (See Embassy's despatch No. 136 of September 19, 1939).<sup>85</sup> In these references Dr. Cantilo pointed to the rejection of the Argentine Government's proposal by the then Secretary of State as justifying the Argentine Government's decision a year later not to follow our lead in declaring war on Germany in contrast with the course adopted later by other of the American Republics.

On one or two occasions recently, the Foreign Minister has expressed to me the opinion that, with the evolution which the war is now taking in Europe, while admitting the natural desire of our Government to avoid being drawn in, he cannot see how it will be possible eventually for us to keep out, particularly if things should come to a point where a defeat for the democracies would seem to be a possibility.

Read in this light and in the background of his previous statements, Dr. Cantilo's proposal, it would seem, can logically be interpreted as favoring a procedure which would have the effect of keeping the American Republics in step with us to the end that in the event of our being drawn into the war, this final step would for them also be a natural and logical consequence to those which had preceded it.

If this assumption is correct, it is suggested that whatever decision may be reached by our Government with regard to Dr. Cantilo's proposal, in the wording of the reply due consideration be given to this apparently cooperative attitude on the part of the Argentine Government. In the event that our Government should not consider the proposal practicable, I feel sure the Department will consider it important to make it clear to Dr. Cantilo that we welcome—as I feel sure we do—all suggestions which indicate a desire to see a common front preserved by the American Governments in meeting the increasingly difficult situation created by the evolution of the war in Europe.

Respectfully yours,

NORMAN ARMOUR

[Enclosure]

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Ambassador in Argentina  
(Armour)*

BUENOS AIRES, April 19, 1940.

[The first part of this memorandum, here omitted, is in substance the same as telegram No. 112, April 19, 6 p. m., from the Ambassador in Argentina, printed on page 743.]

<sup>85</sup> See *Foreign Relations*, 1939, vol. v, p. 27, footnote 21.

Dr. Cantilo asked me my opinion with regard to the proposal. I said that of course it was impossible for me to express an opinion on a matter of such importance until my Government had had an opportunity to study it. Speaking entirely personally, however, while I felt the suggestion was an extremely interesting one, I was afraid so far as we were concerned, regardless of the merits of the suggestion, the machinery by which such a change could be put into effect in the United States would, I felt, present certain difficulties. As he knew, we had a Neutrality Law<sup>86</sup> which had been voted by Congress and any such action as that proposed, would presumably require congressional action or approval. As to his observations with regard to our neutrality, I pointed out that our neutrality law permitted the sale of supplies to any belligerents who could come and get them, and the fact that the Germans were not in a position to avail themselves of this did not alter the situation, even though the practical result, as he had stated, was that the Allies were the only ones able to purchase from us. Nor was I clear in my own mind as to what particular advantages a change from our present neutral status to one of non-belligerence would bring the situation.

Dr. Cantilo mentioned once or twice in the course of the conversation that the freeing of the Governments from the obligations—duties—automatically enforced by neutrality would be of considerable assistance in the internal situation, at least so far as Argentina was concerned. (While he did not explain what he had in mind, I presume he referred to incidents such as the internment of the officers and sailors of the *Graf Spee*—the handling of the large German colony in Argentina—Patagonian incident<sup>87</sup>—German ships, etc.)

Dr. Cantilo had obviously not worked out his ideas in any detail; in fact he told me that he hoped later to put his plan in more definite form. He explained that it was only that morning that he had discussed the matter with the President and had not wished to lose any time in putting the matter up to our Government for consideration. I told him that in order to present his ideas as accurately as possible, I would suggest his outlining the essence of what he had told me, for presentation to Washington, and in his presence I made notes for use in the telegram which I later despatched to the Secretary.

N[ORMAN] A[RMOUR]

<sup>86</sup> Approved November 4, 1939; 54 Stat. 4.

<sup>87</sup> The *Habana Avance* of April 10, 1939, gave publicity to a note allegedly sent to the Cuban Secretary of State by the German Minister in Cuba stating that Germany had no interest whatsoever in Patagonia. The newspaper said that the Minister had stated:

"According to notices from abroad reproduced in the Cuban press, it is alleged that Germany, according to a document placed at the disposition of the Government of Argentina, has the intention to annex Patagonia. On behalf of my Government I have the honor to inform Your Excellency's Government that insofar as the said document is concerned it is completely false. . . . So far as Germany is concerned there is no Patagonian question." (835.00N/15)

740.00111 A.R./1012 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Argentina (Armour)*

WASHINGTON, April 24, 1940—5 p. m.

65. Your 112, April 19, 6 p. m. The Department has given the most careful consideration to the proposal submitted by the Argentine Government through yourself. The Argentine Ambassador in Washington has likewise communicated to the Department a telegram he received from Dr. Cantilo on April 22, which clarified in some ways the purposes and objectives of the Argentine Government in formulating the proposal made. This Government has reached the conclusion that it cannot adopt or support the proposal made.

Please transmit to the Argentine Minister of Foreign Affairs the reply made in the name of the Government of the United States in the form of an *aide-mémoire*. The text of the reply is as follows:

"The Government of the United States greatly appreciates the opportunity afforded it by the Government of the Argentine Republic to consider the proposal submitted through the American Ambassador in Buenos Aires on April 19, and through a further communication on the same subject received from the Argentine Ambassador in Washington on April 22.<sup>88</sup>

Because of the very close relations existing between the two Governments, as well as because of the significance of the proposal itself, the most careful study and the most friendly consideration have been given to the proposal advanced.

The Argentine Government proposes that the American Republics, by common accord, declare that they cease to be neutrals, and announce that they have become 'non belligerents'.

In support of this proposal the Argentine Government states that, because of the violation of the neutrality of sovereign nations in Europe by certain belligerent powers, neutrality no longer exists in reality, and that the norms and conventions which the American Republics as neutrals are presently applying, and which they have until now invoked, have become a dead letter. For that reason, the Argentine Government states, the American Republics might well advantageously adapt themselves to the realities above-mentioned.

Finally, the Argentine Government states that it believes that the procedure proposed would be in the nature of a warning in the face of present aggressions; that it would give the American Republics full liberty of action by freeing them from the restrictions of 'an illusory and fictitious neutrality'; and that the German Government would be unable to make any protest with regard to such procedure because that Government accepts such a status in the case of the Government of Italy, whereas the Allied governments would view the suggested procedure with pleasure because, in the opinion of the Argentine Government, the course proposed would prove favorable to the latter governments.

<sup>88</sup> See memorandum by the Under Secretary of State, April 22, p. 745.

It is with very real regret that the Government of the United States finds itself unable to support the proposal made by the Argentine Government, or to acquiesce in the view of the Argentine Government that the procedure recommended would result in benefits both to the American Republics and to the world.

In so far as the policy of the United States Government itself is concerned, as the Government of the Argentine is doubtless aware, the Congress of the United States enacted, and the President of the United States approved on November 4, 1939, a statute whose purpose, as stated in the preamble, was declared to be, 'to preserve the neutrality of the United States in wars between foreign states and . . . to avoid involvement therein'. Under the terms of this statute the Government of the United States is obliged to maintain its neutrality in the present war until and unless the people of the United States through their elected representatives may determine otherwise.

In the opinion of this Government the independent republics of the Western Hemisphere constitute the greatest force which still exists in support of the principles of international law which, as the Argentine Government so justly points out, are being flagrantly violated in so many other parts of the world. International law, it is clear, does not recognize any intermediate status between neutrality on the one hand and belligerency on the other.

Would it not seem to the Argentine Government as if a declaration on the part of the American Republics, that they were now refusing any longer to uphold those principles of international law upon which modern civilization has been to so large an extent founded, might be considered by that large body of public opinion in other parts of the world which still seeks a return to the principles of international law, and to a stable world order, as a most serious blow to that aspiration? Might not such a step also be regarded as a prejudicial retrogression on the part of twenty-one republics who have for many generations prided themselves upon their support of those principles upon which they have always believed sound and healthy international relationships must depend? The mere fact that certain nations are today openly flouting the accepted principles of international law does not, in the opinion of this Government, constitute an argument in favor of further derogation of these standards of international conduct. On the contrary, it most earnestly believes that the tragic breakdown of international law in so many great areas of the world makes it all the more imperative that the American Republics continue to be the standard-bearers of the most enlightened principles of international conduct.

At the meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the American Republics or their representatives, held in Panama in September 1939, during the course of which the Government of Argentina played so helpful and constructive a part, the American Republics not only unanimously adopted accords dealing with specific neutrality measures, but likewise unanimously adopted policies of general neutrality in view of the situation which confronted them all as a result of the war which had broken out in Europe. The agreements there reached were arrived at because of the then unanimous belief that a common policy was in the interest of the security of the Western Hemisphere. If an attitude of "non-belligerency" were now to be adopted by the American Republics, would it not seem probable to the Argentine

Government, by reason of the fact that "non-belligerency" is a status not recognized in international law, and that it is, consequently, an uncharted course, that the result might well be that the American Republics would, consequently, in many instances undertake to follow divergent policies, which might soon result in a complete abandonment of that unanimity of criterion which in the opinion of the Government of the United States has already resulted in such close, continuing, and friendly cooperation between them all?

The Government of the United States has ventured thus to point out in some detail some of the reasons because of which it would find it impossible to support, or to follow, the policy proposed for its confidential consideration by the Government of the Argentine Republic."

The Department is likewise handing a copy of the *aide-mémoire* to the Argentine Ambassador today. The Ambassador will be told that it is a matter of particular regret to this Government that it finds itself unable to agree to the suggestion of the Argentine Government and that it hopes the reasons for this attitude will be sympathetically received and understood by the Argentine Minister of Foreign Affairs.

HULL

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740.00111 A.R./1018 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Argentina (Armour) to the Secretary of State*

BUENOS AIRES, April 25, 1940—8 p. m.

[Received 11:58 p. m.]

117. Department's telegram 65, April 24, 5 p. m. This afternoon I handed the Minister for Foreign Affairs an *aide-mémoire* embodying our Government's reply.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs explained that his Government did not insist upon the term "non-belligerency" but that he and President Ortiz still feel that some procedure along the lines they proposed might have a beneficial effect. However, he appeared to have nothing concrete to suggest. He added that he would immediately communicate our reply to the President and let me know what their future course of action would be. He told me that this morning he and the President had already discussed the matter with the Brazilian Ambassador.<sup>89</sup> The Brazilian Ambassador confirms this. He states that in an interview yesterday with Doctor Ortiz, at which Cantilo was present, Ortiz outlined the plan to him along the same lines as it had been presented to me. The President requested him to proceed personally to Rio de Janeiro to lay the matter before his Government. Rodríguez Alves told the President that he felt reasonably sure his Government would not be disposed to accept such a radical proposal

<sup>89</sup> José de Paula Rodríguez Alves.

but he does not feel he can well refuse to comply with the request to go to Rio de Janeiro in view of Ortiz' insistence. The Ambassador feels there must be something more behind the idea than appears on the surface and thinks the President is frankly disturbed by the internal situation resulting from the active propaganda carried on by foreign belligerent countries particularly the Germans who, at the same time through their Embassy are attempting to dictate to the Argentine Government what they consider to be Argentina's duty as a [neutral?].

The Brazilian Ambassador intends to submit to Doctor Ortiz a memorandum of what he understands his proposal to be in order to have something definite to present to his Government. He tells me that on arrival in Rio on April 29 he will either see our Ambassador or suggest to Doctor Aranha that he keep Caffery informed of the Brazilian attitude. It is suggested that the Department may wish to have Ambassador Caffery advised of our position. If desired I can furnish him with background including *aide-mémoire* by telegraph or air mail.

ARMOUR

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740.00111 A.R./1018: Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Brazil (Caffery)*

WASHINGTON, April 27, 1940—2 p. m.

114. On April 19 the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Argentina discussed with Armour a proposal described briefly hereinafter. The purposes and objectives of the Argentine Government in formulating this proposal were in some ways clarified by the Argentine Ambassador in Washington to the Department in accordance with instructions received from Dr. Cantilo on April 22.<sup>90</sup> After consideration, the conclusion was reached that this Government could not adopt or support the proposal made by the Argentine Government and instructed Armour to transmit to the Argentine Minister of Foreign Affairs the reply of this Government in the form of an *aide-mémoire*. This *aide-mémoire* was handed to the Minister for Foreign Affairs on April 25. Dr. Cantilo stated that his Government would not insist upon the term "non-belligerency", but that he and President Ortiz felt that some procedure along the lines proposed might have a beneficial effect. Dr. Cantilo, however, appeared to have nothing concrete to suggest.

The same day that Armour transmitted the *aide-mémoire* embodying our Government's reply, President Ortiz in an interview with the

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<sup>90</sup> See memorandum by the Under Secretary of State, April 22, p. 745.

Brazilian Ambassador at which Dr. Cantilo was present, outlined the plan to Rodríguez Alves along the same lines that it had been presented to us. The President requested Rodríguez Alves to proceed personally to Rio to lay the matter before his government. Rodríguez Alves told the President that he felt reasonably sure his government would not be disposed to accept such a radical proposal, but he does not feel he can well refuse to comply with the request to go to Rio in view of Ortiz's insistence. The Brazilian Ambassador has informed Armour that he intends to submit to Dr. Ortiz a memorandum of what he understands his proposal to be, in order to have something definite to present to his Government. Dr. Rodríguez Alves has also informed Armour that upon arrival at Rio on April 29 he will either see you or suggest to Aranha that you be kept informed of the Brazilian attitude.

The text of the *aide-mémoire* embodying this Government's views is as follows:

[Here follows text transmitted in telegram No. 65, April 24, 5 p. m., to the Ambassador in Argentina, printed on page 752.]

You are requested please to keep the Department currently informed by telegram of any developments.

HULL

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740.00111 A.R./1020 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Argentina (Armour) to the Secretary of State*

BUENOS AIRES, April 29, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received 5:52 p. m.]

121. Embassy's telegram 117, April 25, 8 p. m., and air mail despatch 632, April 26,<sup>91</sup> concerning Argentine Government's proposals regarding the abandonment of neutrality. Dr. Cantilo had a conversation with the Brazilian Ambassador last evening before latter's departure for Brazil. The Foreign Minister informed him that the Argentine Government had decided to abandon its original suggestion but still feels that neutrality of American States should be more active and watchful and that the three Governments (the United States, Brazil and Argentina) might consult with a view to some declaration which would reinforce our neutrality should the evolution of the war in Europe seem to make this advisable.

Dr. Cantilo asked the Brazilian Ambassador to discuss plans along these lines with his Government and suggested that our Ambassador in Brazil be kept fully informed.

Repeated to Embassy at Rio de Janeiro.

ARMOUR

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<sup>91</sup> Latter not printed.

740.00111 A.R./1019 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Brazil (Caffery) to the Secretary of State*

RIO DE JANEIRO, April 29, 1940—7 p. m.

[Received April 29—5:25 p. m.]

183. Department's No. 114, April 27, 2 p. m. Aranha says that he is in accord with the Department's attitude to the Argentine proposal and if President Vargas agrees (he is sure he will agree) he will adopt a corresponding attitude in the premises.

CAFFERY

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740.00111 A.R./1027 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Brazil (Caffery) to the Secretary of State*

RIO DE JANEIRO, May 1, 1940—2 p. m.

[Received 7:10 p. m.]

189. My telegram No. 183, April 29, 7 p. m. President Vargas approved Aranha's attitude.

Rodríguez Alves arrived Monday afternoon, talked with Aranha Monday evening and yesterday and to Aranha and me this morning. He and Aranha are to lunch with President Vargas today. Aranha asked Rodríguez Alves in my presence if he believed in the sincerity of the Argentine suggestion that the United States, Brazil and Argentina "might consult with a view of some declaration which would reinforce our neutrality should the evolution of the war in Europe seem to make this advisable". Rodríguez said yes. Aranha asked him if he thought that by taking advantage of the present situation the Argentine might be led into adopting a more open policy of Pan-Americanism than it has been willing to adopt in the past. Rodríguez said yes by reason of the existing circumstances: (1) its fear at this juncture of becoming isolated in the face of an aggressive German attitude; (2) possible British urgings to oppose Germany's aggressive policies; (3) unstable domestic situation proves, he emphasized, that were it not for these circumstances the Argentine would not be willing to make any change in its policy hitherto maintained to Pan-Americanism.

President Vargas will instruct Rodríguez to inform President Ortiz that the Argentine proposal will be given ample study in a friendly and cooperative spirit and that a written reply will be transmitted at a later date by the Brazilian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Aranha tells me that in his opinion, having in mind the factors developed in paragraph 3, it is worthwhile going carefully into the most recent Argentine suggestion with a view to studying the possibility of agreeing upon a declaration designed to reinforce our



neutrality. He will appreciate an early expression of the Department's views in the premises. He said also that this might possibly be a moment for bringing about an approximation to an ideal, that is, a genuine understanding among the United States, Brazil and Argentina.

Repeated to Buenos Aires.

CAFFERY

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740.00111 A.R./1033: Telegram

*The Ambassador in Argentina (Armour) to the Secretary of State*

BUENOS AIRES, May 7, 1940—6 p. m.

[Received 11:55 p. m.]

127. Referring to the Department's telegram 65, of April 24, 5 p. m., the following is translation of *aide-mémoire* today received from the Minister of Foreign Affairs in reply to our Government's *aide-mémoire* of April 25 last.

"The Argentine Chancellery has examined with the closest attention the memorandum submitted on April 25 last by the Ambassador of the United States on behalf of his Government with reference to the suggestions put forward by the Argentine Government for a reconsideration of the position of neutrality adopted by the American Republics in view of present conditions of war.

Chancellery recognizes the particular situation which the Neutrality Act of November 4, 1939 creates for the North American Government, but it considers that, in conformity with the spirit of that act, intended, as its preamble states, to preserve the neutrality of the United States, a special manifestation by the American countries is appropriate at this moment, whether its purpose be to bring neutrality face to face with a realistic situation, or to restore the juridical significance of the status chosen by these countries to isolate themselves from the war.

It is evident, as is recalled by the North American Government, that international law does not recognize any intermediate state between neutrality, on the one hand, and belligerency, on the other; but this, in the opinion of this Chancellery, should not compel nations to choose indefinitely between the two positions even after the original concept and practice of neutrality as a system of reciprocal guarantees has fundamentally changed. That concept, in common with many others of international relationships, owed its origin to the need for such relationships and must undergo the same change. The men who, in various international conferences were responsible for the recognized interpretation of neutrality, with its rights and its responsibilities, could surely not have imagined the actual interpretation. Obligated to decide between belligerency and neutrality, non-belligerent countries can only choose a fiction. It is precisely to free itself of that fiction, and to restore to the non-belligerent strong legal position in keeping with the reality, that the Argentine Chancellery

suggested the revision of the present concept of neutrality. The Argentine Government, therefore, does not share the reservations by which the Government of the United States, in examining its initiative, points out the dangers it presents for the maintenance of the principles of order and peace inherent to the international policy of our continent. The question is, precisely, to change the already unstable basis of those principles for a more solid and real one.

The memorandum to which a reply is made recalls the work accomplished by the American countries in Panama in September 1939 and the general rules unanimously adopted at that time to safeguard the neutrality of the continent. It is fitting, however, to point out that under the present war conditions that system does not appear to be respected nor does there seem to be any way of causing it to be respected. It is true that it is in the interest of the safety of the continent to have a common policy, but there is no reason, whatsoever, to think that the system which was considered at the time cannot be revised now with the same unanimity in view of circumstances which doubtless require new forms of political coordination.

If methods of war continue to spread as at present, the status of neutrality offered as the only alternative to the status of belligerency will prove ineffective and false. Without binding itself to any express formula, the Argentine Chancellery believes that this situation should not be allowed to continue without reaction on the part of the American states. In the face of a failing system under which there has gradually been left to the neutrals only the responsibilities and none of the guarantees, it is at least fitting that they should utter a warning in defense of their rights, a declaration for the protection of the policy of aloofness which they have adopted.

This initiative should not be presented as an aim or even with the indirect purpose of bringing the continent closer to the war. It will be necessary to seek an attenuated formula to recall to the belligerent countries the solidarity of the neutrals and their respect for the rules which they have accepted as a reciprocal system of guarantee between themselves and the belligerents. To the merely juridical concept of neutrality there must be opposed a policy of vigilant neutrality. Buenos Aires, May 6, 1940."

The Brazilian Ambassador returned from Rio de Janeiro on May 4. He has informed the Foreign Minister that his Government is considering the Argentine proposal with regard to a declaration designed to enforce our neutrality and that he expects to receive further instructions within the next few days.

The Brazilian Ambassador expressed to me the opinion that if our Government and the Brazilian Government are considering the proposal favorably, it might be well for our two Governments to submit a draft of what we feel the declaration should cover in order to anticipate a draft from here which he thinks would probably go further than we would wish.

Repeated to Rio de Janeiro.

740.00111 A.R./1036 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Brazil (Caffery) to the Secretary of State*

RIO DE JANEIRO, May 8, 1940—3 p. m.

[Received May 8—2:15 p. m.]

196. Buenos Aires telegram No. 127, May 7, 6 p. m. Aranha tells me that he has taken no action and is awaiting a reply to my telegram No. 189, May 1, 2 p. m.

Repeated to Buenos Aires.

CAFFERY

740.00111 A. R./1036 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Brazil (Caffery)*

WASHINGTON, May 8, 1940—7 p. m.

118. For the Ambassador from the Under Secretary. Your 196, May 8, 3 p. m. Please say to Aranha that this Government would welcome an indication from him as to the kind of declaration he may have in mind and that as soon as we receive an expression of his opinion in this regard, we will, of course, be glad to consult with him and to give him our own judgment with regard thereto.

I do not understand what is implied by the "attenuated formula" to which reference is made in the last paragraph of the statement of the Argentine Foreign Minister contained in Buenos Aires' telegram No. 127, May 7, 6 p. m. [Welles.]

HULL

740.00111 A.R./1037 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Brazil (Caffery) to the Secretary of State*

RIO DE JANEIRO, May 9, 1940—7 p. m.

[Received May 9—6:42 p. m.]

201. For the Under Secretary. Department's 118, May 8, 7 p. m. Aranha says that he has no declaration in mind. His sole interest is to endeavor to persuade the Argentine to adopt a more open policy of Pan-Americanism than it has in the past. When President Vargas returns on the 14th, Aranha will send Cantilo a note agreeing in principle that some measures should be taken along the lines of the Argentine suggestion, but setting out that in his opinion the time is not yet ripe for action. He will suggest that in the meantime it will be well for Brazil, the United States, and the Argentine to keep one another closely informed in the premises.

However, if you are not in accord with such a reply he will welcome your suggestions.

CAFFERY

740.00111 A.R./1038 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Brazil (Caffery) to the Secretary of State*

RIO DE JANEIRO, May 10, 1940—1 p. m.

[Received 1:38 p. m.]

203. For the Under Secretary. My 201, May 9, 7 p. m. Aranha telephones he "must reconsider the matter in view of this morning's happenings in Europe".<sup>92</sup> He will communicate with me again later.

CAFFERY

740.00111 A.R./1039 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Argentina (Armour) to the Secretary of State*

BUENOS AIRES, May 10, 1940—3 p. m.

[Received 8:30 p. m.]

133. The Foreign Minister telephoned me last night and called to my attention a telegram which had just been brought to his attention by the Associated Press bearing a New York dateline, to the effect that they had learned from reliable sources in Washington that the Argentine Government has been sounding out the State Department as to the possibility of modifying the American Republic's neutral status to one of non-belligerence, implying that this would permit Argentina to assume a "Mussolinian" attitude as a non-belligerent ally on either side in war. The telegram stated that they were unable to publish the story in the United States as Washington sources were unwilling to give their support.

Dr. Cantilo stated that for background purposes he had admitted to the Associated Press correspondent that he had had informal talks with me as to what he felt was the need of the American Republics to revise their neutrality in order to make it more flexible and more active. After talking with President Ortiz, however, he had informed the Associated Press that neither he nor the President wished the telegram received from the United States to be published here and that if it were published, the President was prepared to deny it. The Associated Press has so informed its New York office which, however, is still pressing for some form of statement from him.

Dr. Cantilo states that the President is much disturbed and at a loss to understand from what source the information could have been secured. A report is being requested from the Argentine Embassy at Washington.

<sup>92</sup> For correspondence relating to the invasion of Belgium and the Netherlands by Germany, see pp. 134 ff.; for protest by the American Republics, see pp. 727 ff.

It is fully understood at the Foreign Office here that today's news from Europe renders it doubly important that the matter should be handled with the greatest care.

Full report by air mail despatch today.<sup>93</sup>

ARMOUR

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740.00111 A.R./1087: Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Brazil (Caffery)*

WASHINGTON, May 11, 1940—5 p. m.

122. For the Ambassador from the Under Secretary. Your Nos. 203, May 10, 1 p. m. and 201, May 9, 7 p. m. In my judgment the steps which are under contemplation may prove to be very prejudicial to continental unity and to the prevention of that kind of incident which may provoke dissension between one of the American Republics and some of the belligerents in the present European war unless there is a completely clear understanding of where the new road which it is proposed we should take is going to lead. The danger of the situation is further increased by the very natural and understandable emotions which have been aroused as the result of the most recent events in the development of the war in Europe.

The only concrete suggestion so far made by the Argentine Government is that the American Republics should adopt a policy of "non-belligerency" rather than a policy of neutrality based upon international law, upon international conventions and upon innumerable precedents as agreed upon unanimously at Panama. As we set forth in our reply to the Argentine Government, the course proposed would seem to be uncharted and the precedent cited by the Argentine Foreign Minister, namely, the case of Italy, is not applicable inasmuch as Italy is an ally to Germany and none of the American Republics are allies of any belligerent power.

You will yourself, of course, understand that under present conditions in the United States any indication on the part of this Government of any willingness to adopt a policy of "non-belligerency" would be at once construed by the great majority of our own people as being the first step towards ultimate involvement in war. It would of course likewise be prevented by existing law.

With the objective of Aranha, namely, "to persuade the Argentine to adopt a more open policy of Pan Americanism", this Government naturally would be whole-heartedly in accord, but this Government could not agree with the position which Aranha apparently contemplates, namely, that in principle "some measures should be taken along the lines of the Argentine suggestion".

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<sup>93</sup> Despatch No. 661, May 10, not printed.

Have you any reason to believe that allied pressure is responsible for the Argentine initiative or for the apparent change of opinion on the part of Aranha himself? I cannot conceive of the proposal having been seriously made unless there was some ulterior motive behind it.

Please telegraph me any developments which take place and inform Aranha that it would be particularly helpful if we could be informed confidentially of any suggestions which he may have it in mind to make before the matter crystallizes any further. [Welles.]

HULL

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740.00111 A.R./1043: Telegram

*The Ambassador in Argentina (Armour) to the Secretary of State*

BUENOS AIRES, May 12, 1940—6 p. m.

[Received 9:44 p. m.]

137. This morning's *Nación* published an article marked "special" from Washington yesterday to the effect that it is learned today that negotiations are taking place with a view to a new declaration of Pan-American solidarity in which the 21 American Republics will declare an attitude of non-belligerency rather than neutrality; that North American diplomats in Buenos Aires have, according to reports, been discussing for several days these plans with Dr. Cantilo. The correspondent states that Mr. Sumner Welles refused to confirm or deny these rumors when they were brought up yesterday afternoon and that the Argentine Ambassador in Washington stated that he knew nothing of the matter.

The Associated Press correspondent here informs me that the Minister for Foreign Affairs has refused to discuss the article but said that he would have a statement on this matter to issue to the press tonight.

In the meantime the Associated Press, anticipating the forthcoming statement, is sending a telegram based upon their previous talk with Dr. Cantilo referred to in paragraph 2 of the Embassy's telegram 133, of May 10, 3 p. m.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs has just telephoned me to say that if I will call upon him at 8 o'clock tonight he will give me a statement which he proposes to give to the press. He did not specify its contents other than to say that it would outline his Government's attitude regarding Pan-American neutrality in the face of the European situation. I shall cable the text of this statement when received.

ARMOUR

740.00111 A.R./1044 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Argentina (Armour) to the Secretary of State*

BUENOS AIRES, May 12, 1940—9 p. m.

[Received May 13—2:45 a. m.]

138. Embassy's telegram 137, May 12, 6 p. m. The following is a translation of the communiqué which the Minister for Foreign Affairs informs me he has just given the press :

"News transmitted from Washington and published in the local press today refers to conversations held in this Chancellery regarding American neutrality.

The Argentine Chancellery, about the middle of last month, taking into consideration the developments which the present war is assuming, suggested to certain colleagues, among them Mr. Armour, Ambassador of the United States, the possibility that the American countries might reconsider their position as neutrals in order to adapt themselves to the reality of the present situation.

Neutrality is a situation governed by legal rules, by virtue of which belligerent states are obliged to respect the will of the neutral and the latter is obliged to make respected its neutrality. It therefore implies bilateral obligations; it creates obligations, but it also creates guarantees. Without this basis of reciprocity, no one could ever have imagined the ideal of neutrality, nor made it conform to the series of rules by which it is governed today.

But, in the present situation, neither the belligerent states respect the will of the neutrals, nor are the latter able to cause their neutrality to be respected as a juridical form of their isolation. Neutrality, created in order to preserve sovereignty, under present circumstances makes a mock of sovereignty or undermines it, but it does not protect it. It is a fiction, a dead concept, which should be replaced within the reality of the times in which we live.

The American countries, with their Declaration of Panama and the Zone of Security, which was the result thereof, made their utmost efforts to observe neutrality within the rules and reciprocal obligations of international law. In order the better to observe it they created in Rio de Janeiro a permanent commission which in the face of the problems of an ineffective neutrality, is only a wheel which turns in a vacuum. Compelled to decide between belligerency and the present system of neutrality, non-belligerent countries can only now opt for a fiction. It is precisely in order to free themselves from that fiction and to restore to non-belligerency a strong legal position, in keeping with the reality, that the Argentine Chancellery has suggested the revision of the present position.

This suggestion should not be considered as an aim or even as an indirect method of bringing the continent closer to the war. But in the face of methods of aggression and the systematic spreading of the war it is fitting for the American countries to set forth their concept with regard to a system which they have accepted as a reciprocal method of guarantees, abandoning rules and limitations which, complied with only in a unilateral sense, hinder them in their action in the external as well as in the internal field without compensating benefits.

For the supreme interests of America a merely juridical concept of neutrality should be replaced by a circumstantial and coordinated policy of vigilance."

Dr. Cantilo called my attention to the fact that while certain passages of the statement follow the general lines of his memorandum of May 6<sup>94</sup> in reply to our *aide-mémoire* he has, of course, refrained from making any reference to our Government's position as set forth in the latter document.

He told me that the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Uruguay today telephoned him that his Government had submitted a proposal to the Panamanian Government reaffirming American neutrality in the light of European events and that the text would be communicated to the Argentine Government probably tomorrow or Tuesday. Cantilo had gathered that the Uruguayan Government had been in communication with our Government with regard to the proposal and that it had our general support. Cantilo had informed Guani that in principle he saw no objection to the procedure suggested and would be glad to examine the proposal when received. He told me, however, that if it were to be merely a reaffirmation of the position taken [in?] Panama he could not see that it would accomplish much and still felt that the situation called for something more vigorous along the lines outlined in his proposals to us and to the Brazilian Government.

I am inclined to believe that the Minister for Foreign Affairs has used the occasion offered by the *Nación* telegram from Washington, referred to in telegram No. 133, May 10, 3 p. m., to make public his Government's attitude in anticipation of the action proposed by the Uruguayan Government.

Repeated to Rio de Janeiro and Montevideo.

ARMOUR

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740.00111 A.R./1046 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Brazil (Caffery) to the Secretary of State*

RIO DE JANEIRO, May 13, 1940—noon.

[Received 2 p. m.]

213. With reference to Buenos Aires telegram No. 137, May 12, 6 p. m. Aranha received this morning the text of the statement given to the press by Cantilo (second to the last paragraph of Ambassador Armour's telegram 137, May 12, 6 p. m.); also another telegram from his Ambassador at Buenos Aires telling of a conversation he had with Cantilo, latter told him of his intention to give the statement to the press. Cantilo spoke of how careful he had been not to let anything

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<sup>94</sup> See telegram No. 127, May 7, 6 p. m., from the Ambassador in Argentina, p. 758.



be known of the conversations he had had with Ambassador Armour and referred to their having been "revealed" at Washington.

Cantilo then spoke of Guani's suggestion for a "continental declaration"<sup>85</sup> and observed Rodrigues Alves "remarked ironically that he assumed they were made in accord with the United States of America."

Aranha received also a telegram from his Ambassador at Montevideo reporting about the Uruguayan suggestion for a "continental declaration relative to violations of neutrality, et cetera". The Brazilian Ambassador added that Guani had given details of this matter to Minister Wilson.

Aranha says that in his opinion it is imperative for Brazil and the United States to take some definite position on these matters without delay for otherwise he fears that a most disagreeable situation will arise. He feels that we should at once put forward some constructive suggestions. He urgently requested the Department to let him have an immediate reply.

Repeated to Buenos Aires.

CAFFERY

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740.00111 A.R./1047 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Brazil (Caffery) to the Secretary of State*

RIO DE JANEIRO, May 15, 1940—2 p. m.

[Received 4:43 p. m.]

215. For the Under Secretary. Second to last paragraph of Department's telegram 122, May 11, 5 p. m. No Allied pressure has been used here in this connection; perhaps some suggestions have been made at Buenos Aires.

CAFFERY

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740.00111 A.R./1046 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Brazil (Caffery)*

WASHINGTON, May 13, 1940—8 p. m.

124. Your 213, May 13, noon.

Paragraph 1. There has been no leak in Washington with regard to the Argentine proposal. There is every indication that the information concerning it was obtained by the Associated Press in Buenos Aires.

Paragraph 2. With regard to the initiative taken by the Government of Uruguay, this Government had no inkling of it until the suggestion was made by Guani to Minister Wilson in Montevideo on May 10.

<sup>85</sup> See pp. 727 ff.

Paragraph 3. Please tell Aranha that I quite agree that it is desirable for Brazil and the United States to take some definite position on these matters. This Government has informed the Uruguayan Government that it will be glad to support the Uruguayan suggestion. In my judgment the most constructive suggestion that can be put forward with regard to the Argentine proposal is for the Argentine Government to be informed that in view of the very many serious questions which the Argentine proposal raises it would seem logical that the Argentine proposal be submitted to the Permanent Neutrality Committee<sup>96</sup> now sitting in Rio de Janeiro which was set up by unanimous agreement of all of the American Republics for the express purpose of considering all matters relating to the neutrality of the American Republics during the present war and to formulate recommendations to the respective American governments with regard thereto. It would seem to me that this would be the orderly procedure required by the Panama agreements and, furthermore, that full consideration could in this way be given to all of the problems raised by the Argentine suggestion.

Please say to Aranha that I would be grateful for his interpretation of the last sentence of the communiqué issued to the press yesterday morning by the Argentine Foreign Minister, which reads: "For the supreme interests of America a merely juridical concept of neutrality should be replaced by a circumstantial and coordinated policy of vigilance." Does Aranha understand this to imply a suggestion on the part of the Argentine Government that a discussion be undertaken by the American Republics on the subject of the coordination of continental defense measures.

HULL

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740.00111 A.R./1074 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Brazil (Caffery) to the Secretary of State*

RIO DE JANEIRO, May 15, 1940—2 p. m.

[Received 3 : 52 p. m.]

219. Aranha received a telegram from his Ambassador at Buenos Aires<sup>97</sup> reporting that Cantilo told him last night he now considers the Argentine neutrality suggestions as "dead and liquidated."

Cantilo suggested an added paragraph to the Uruguayan protest which Rodríguez Alves considered unacceptable. Cantilo then said that the Argentine would not support the Uruguayan proposal unless some addition suggested by the Argentine were accepted and suggested

<sup>96</sup> See vol. v, section under General entitled "The Inter-American Neutrality Committee."

<sup>97</sup> José de Paula Rodríguez Alves.

the addition beginning "and reserve the right to take measures necessary for the defense of their internal as well as their external interests" with which I assume the Department is conversant.<sup>98</sup>

Bolivian Ambassador perceives no objection to this suggested addition.

Repeated to Buenos Aires.

CAFFERY

740.00111 A.R./1072: Telegram

*The Ambassador in Chile (Bowers) to the Secretary of State*

SANTIAGO, May 15, 1940—5 p. m.

[Received 5:30 p. m.]

94. Apropos the Argentine non-belligerency proposal, Foreign Minister has said to newspaperman he cannot express an opinion now and that his attitude would be influenced by attitude of Congress and by word from Washington for which he is waiting.

[BOWERS]

740.00111 A.R./1130

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Chief of the Division of the American Republics (Duggan)*

[WASHINGTON,] May 20, 1940.

The Bolivian Minister<sup>99</sup> informed me that following his conversation with Mr. Welles last week he telegraphed Dr. Ostria Gutierrez<sup>1</sup> to inquire the latter's views with regard to Dr. Cantilo's recent statement urging a change in the status of the American countries with reference to the war in Europe.

The Minister asked me to tell Mr. Welles that he had received a cable in reply from Dr. Ostria Gutierrez on Saturday night. Dr. Ostria Gutierrez stated that since he did not understand what Dr. Cantilo was driving at, it was impossible for him to comment, but that he thought that if the idea had any utility it should be submitted to the Neutrality Committee at Rio for its consideration and advice.

I remarked to the Minister that I knew that Mr. Welles would be glad to learn that the views of Dr. Ostria Gutierrez coincided precisely with his own, since it was Mr. Welles' view also that suggestions involving international law should be submitted to the Committee at Rio which had been established to consider questions of international law.

<sup>98</sup> See telegram No. 69, May 15, 11 a. m., from the Minister in Uruguay, p. 732.

<sup>99</sup> Luis Fernando Guachalla.

<sup>1</sup> Bolivian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

740.00111 A.R./1107: Telegram

*The Ambassador in Argentina (Armour) to the Secretary of State*

BUENOS AIRES, May 21, 1940—11 a. m.  
[Received 1:32 p. m.]

149. Referring to the Embassy's telegrams numbers 138, May 12, 9 p. m., and 142, May 14, 7 p. m.<sup>2</sup> President Ortiz issued the following statement to the press on May 18:

"The President of the Nation confirms the statement contained in his message to Congress at the opening of the present parliamentary term, which defined Argentina's international position in relation to European events. He declares that the meaning attributed to a communiqué issued by the Argentine Foreign Ministry coinciding with the views expressed in the message is groundless and tendentious. The Government has not taken any step which, directly or indirectly, may place the Republic in an equivocal position. It has merely adopted a prudent and necessary attitude to safeguard our integrity and sovereignty, and without any object save the defense of the nation's present and future interests. The Government therefore maintains the strictest impartiality and asks the Foreign Minister to keep calm, and be prepared against any and every perturbing action which may assist the objectives sought by the nations at war. In consequence, and seeking to protect the country's international prestige, the authorities will severely repress all actions which may compromise the attitude adopted."

The foregoing statement of policy, which marks a withdrawal from the position outlined in the communiqué of the Minister for Foreign Affairs referred to, was apparently deemed necessary because of criticism from politically potent domestic quarters, which took the form of accusations that the Government was needlessly exposing the country to the danger of war in advocating other than a policy of strict neutrality.

ARMOUR

740.00111 A.R./1142: Telegram

*The Ambassador in Argentina (Armour) to the Secretary of State*

BUENOS AIRES, May 24, 1940—5 p. m.  
[Received 7:30 p. m.]

156. Referring to the Embassy's 149, May 21, 11 a. m., the strong domestic influence referred to included army circles which are reported to be strongly pro-German and favorable to the elements in the Conservative Party opposed to President Ortiz. Although the Government is taking strong measures against local agitators, such as the *Alianza de Juventud Nacional Argentina* from whom a supply of

<sup>2</sup> Latter not printed.

posters demanding Cantilo's resignation have been confiscated, it is nevertheless apparent that the President has deemed it expedient to modify his stand on the neutrality question as expressed by the recent Foreign Office communiqué in the face of army opposition to taking a stronger attitude against Germany.

ARMOUR

**V. PROPOSAL BY PRESIDENT AGUIRRE CERDA OF CHILE TO PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT FOR JOINT APPEAL BY THE AMERICAN REPUBLICS FOR PEACE**

740.00119 European War 1939/614

*The President of Chile (Aguirre Cerda) to President Roosevelt*

[Translation]

SANTIAGO, September 5, 1940.

MR. PRESIDENT: As the representative of a nation which is small and little known to the world, one of the lesser sister nations of America, I am addressing Your Excellency in a spontaneous impulse, removed from any special interest of my country, in order to make to you a suggestion which I submit to your superior knowledge as a statesman, which I profoundly admire, in the event that this suggestion might seem to you opportune and worthy of acceptance.

As a professor and teacher of the university, I have educated myself in a school of veneration for those great world powers which have inculcated in us love for science, respect for morality both public and private, and the consistent ambition of contributing towards human perfection.

But the events in Europe, even if we believe that we appreciate duly all of their aspects, have filled us with anxiety because of the breakdown of civilization which they presage; before the idea that science, which should be at the service of human progress and comprehension, in these present moments is contributing to the destruction of the moral atmosphere which tradition has formed and in which we would wish to educate both present and future generations, and is threatening to destroy that standard of love which we teachers have wished to forge into the soul of youth in order that a spirit of universal brotherhood might permit that kind of cooperation which would make individuals as well as nations more comprehensive and generous in their progressive impulsion towards well-being and justice.

Your Excellency is the spiritual leader of a great nation, which we admire and which we love, and which is justly respected by the world and directed by your own lofty spirit of morality and knowledge—would it not be possible for you to assist us in bringing about a con-

junction of these small peoples of Latin America in order to suggest the possibility of peace which Chile would initiate in the desire of arresting the horrible destruction of science and civilization which is daily being aggravated.

As a Chilean I possess a national pride which may perhaps be primitive and untamed, but it is certainly not through fear that I am moved to suggest to you this idea. On the contrary, in the imminence of the certain destruction of the scientific gains of humanity, it is because of my hope that we may prevent peoples everywhere from becoming convinced that we have moved back to the primitive aspect of the troglodyte.

Forgive the fact, Your Excellency, that perhaps the most modest leader of the American peoples, drawn as he is by the most cordial spirit of cooperation of your great country, and who has a most sincere admiration for the noble and humanitarian work of government of Your Excellency, should submit the suggestion above set forth, with no other implication than the desire that human dignity may be respected in the manner in which such respect has been shown so altruistically by Your Excellency.

It was of course my thought that this suggestion would be entirely confidential and that it would be conveyed by me to the other Latin nations of the Americas only in the event that it merited your high support.

Accept [etc.]

PEDRO AGUIRRE CERDA

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810.20 Defense/302a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Chile (Bowers)*

WASHINGTON, October 19, 1940—4 p. m.

174. From the Under Secretary. On September 5 President Aguirre Cerda addressed a personal and confidential letter to the President. This letter was not received by the President until October 10. The President's reply will be sent to President Aguirre Cerda as soon as the President returns to Washington next week. If you are afforded the opportunity of seeing President Aguirre Cerda in the near future, it would be desirable for you to say that owing to the delay in transmission the President has only recently received the letter sent him by President Aguirre Cerda and that his reply will be expedited.

Under existing conditions it might be well to avoid any misapprehension on the part of President Aguirre Cerda and any feeling on his part that the President has not given the fullest measure of consideration to the suggestions contained in his communication. [Welles.]

HULL

740.00119 European War 1939/614

*President Roosevelt to the President of Chile (Aguirre Cerda)*

WASHINGTON, [October 26, 1940.]

MY DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: I have been deeply moved by the personal message which Your Excellency sent me on September 5 and I am most appreciative of the confidence you have shown in consulting me regarding a matter of such great importance to all of us.

I share your abhorrence of the destruction of men and their works and the deterioration of the principles that have been developed by centuries of civilization. At a time when knowledge had given us the tools with which to forge peace and progress, when the abandonment of war as an instrument of national policy seemed within the range of achievement, the retrogression into violence can only cause the darkest despair. Therefore, I fully appreciate the motives that prompted your suggestion that your Government initiate steps toward a united appeal by all the Governments of the American republics to the belligerents to cease the present holocaust.

In turning over in my mind your proposal, I find myself again and again returning to the belief that it would be catastrophic for the future welfare of all of us were an appeal of this nature to be construed as a recognition of the ruthless conquests of aggression. If this belief is sound, then the timing of the presentation of a peace plea becomes all important. From all the information available to me, it is my considered view that there is little likelihood of acceptance of a peace proposal on any basis that the republics of this Hemisphere would wish to support. Accordingly, I am reluctantly forced to the conclusion that the strength and prestige of the united voice of the Americas might more usefully be held in readiness for a more propitious and opportune moment.

It has been my sincere endeavor to consider your message in the same spirit in which it was written. I want to be helpful and constructive and to this end would be very glad to lend my hearty support to a proposal modifying your original suggestion which would provide for the calling of a meeting "to discuss the preservation primarily of scientific gains of humanity throughout the Americas".

I share, of course, your understanding that our exchange of views is to be maintained in complete confidence.

With the warmest personal regards,

Very sincerely yours,

[FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT]

VI. PROPOSAL BY COSTA RICA THAT THE AMERICAN REPUBLICS  
SEND A COLLECTIVE NOTE TO SPAIN EXPRESSING THE HOPE THAT  
SPAIN WOULD REFRAIN FROM BECOMING INVOLVED IN THE EURO-  
PEAN CONFLICT

740.00111 European War 1939/520: Telegram

*The Costa Rican Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs (Tinoco) to the  
Secretary of State*

[Translation]

SAN JOSÉ, October 8, 1940—5 p. m.

Governments five Central American Republics consider opportune joint action American nations with a view to avoiding possible participation Spain present European conflict. In name of said governments I have the honor to make known to Your Excellency the feeling expressed and to inform you in case enlightened American Governments consider advisable initiative President Costa Rica<sup>6</sup> following precedent and in order to assure unity of action will be greatly honored to address message on October 12th in name of American Governments to that of Spain expressing to it keen desires for maintenance of peace. Hoping for valued cooperation your Government I avail myself [etc.].

LUIS D. TINOCO

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740.00111 European War 1939/525: Telegram

*The Minister in Uruguay (Wilson) to the Secretary of State*

MONTEVIDEO, October 11, 1940—11 a. m.

[Received 2:03 p. m.]

227. Guani<sup>7</sup> tells me that recently Spanish friends urged him to take the initiative in having the American countries of Spanish origin send a message to Franco on October 12 urging the maintenance of Spanish neutrality. Those who urged this course informed him that Franco was subject to terrific pressure from Hitler to enter the war, that he was resisting to the best of his ability, and would welcome such a message from the American countries which would strengthen his hand.

Guani began consultations with other countries the first of this week, but on finding that his initiative had crossed another of similar nature on the part of the Central American Republics, and in view of un-

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<sup>6</sup> For text of Costa Rican note dated September 30, 1940, proposing joint action by the Central American Governments, see Guatemala, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, *Memoria . . . de 1940* (Guatemala, C. A., 1941), p. 95.

<sup>7</sup> Alberto Guani, Uruguayan Minister for Foreign Affairs.



favorable replies from Chile and Argentina, he has abandoned the matter.

The Chilean Government informed him yesterday that contrary to expectations it would not renew diplomatic relations with the Spanish Government on October 12 and therefore could not participate in the proposed action. Peru accepted. The Argentine Government proposed that instead of collective action each Government send a message individually to Franco. Guani said that he was in close touch with Roca<sup>8</sup> and that if Argentine Government should in fact send a message to Franco it was possible that Uruguay would also do so.

WILSON

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740.00111 European War 1939/520

*The Secretary of State to the Costa Rican Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs (Tinoco)*

WASHINGTON, October 12, 1940.

My Government greatly appreciates the noble and unselfish sentiments which prompted the initiative of Costa Rica referred to in Your Excellency's telegram of October 8 and desires of course to take every proper step in accord with the other American republics to assist in the promotion of peace in the world.

The Government of the United States on numerous occasions has sought to limit so far as might be possible the area of the present tragic conflict. In the present instance, and with specific reference to the suggestion proffered in Your Excellency's telegram, the Government of the United States believes that it might be more appropriate for the American republics, should they so desire, to make the proposed appeal individually rather than collectively.

The Government of the United States expresses its most sincere thanks to Your Excellency's Government for this new evidence of its desire to further cooperation and understanding between the American republics, and I extend to Your Excellency the assurances of my highest consideration.

CORDELL HULL

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<sup>8</sup> Julio A. Roca, Argentine Minister for Foreign Affairs.

740.00111 European War 1939/561

*The Costa Rican Minister for Foreign Affairs (Echandi) to the Secretary of State*

[Translation]

No. 3776-A

SAN JOSÉ, November 28, 1940.

Mr. SECRETARY OF STATE: The five Republics of Central America, at the initiative and through the Government of Costa Rica, invited the other Republics of this continent to address to the Government of Spain, on the occasion of the anniversary of the discovery of the New World, a collective message to express the deep affliction of America due to the fear that she might come to see herself enveloped in the frightful war which is devastating Europe and, at the same time, to formulate fervent wishes that the noble Spanish nation might maintain itself without change in the enjoyment of the infinite benefits of peace.

The American Governments shared the generous spirit of this proposal which would have all its force in a united call from America; they found the exhortation in behalf of peace very much in accord with the sentiments of universal humanity and confraternity; they saw in the unity of action proposed another step in the development of our Pan American system of joint consultation and decision of those international problems of common interest. But some States expressed their concern lest the initiative might be viewed as an intrusion within the radius of the duties which are and should be exclusive to each Government, and consequently, to the Spanish Government. Others stated that as the position of all the Hispano-American Governments with respect to Spain is not identical, they suggested the suitability of making the appeal for peace, not collectively but individually.

In view of the fact that the desired continental unity was not obtained, I have the honor to inform Your Excellency that my Government, after considering carefully the importance of the subject, deems fit to terminate these efforts based on the sincere desire of preventing by peaceful means the spread of the calamity of the war among the nations, and expresses to Your Excellency the intimate satisfaction of the Government of Costa Rica because of the interest and exquisite courtesy with which the enlightened Government of Your Excellency considered the proposal.

Accept [etc.]

ALBERTO ECHANDI

740.00111 European War 1939/561

*The Secretary of State to the Minister in Costa Rica (Hornibrook)*

No. 529

[WASHINGTON,] December 30, 1940.

SIR: There is enclosed for delivery to the Minister for Foreign Affairs a note from the Secretary of State regarding the proposed message to Spain to express the hope that the Spanish nation would refrain from becoming involved in the present European conflict.

For your information and for your files there is also enclosed a copy of a note of November 28, 1940<sup>9</sup> received by the Secretary of State from Señor Alberto Echandi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Costa Rica.

Very truly yours,

CORDELL HULL

[Enclosure]

*The Secretary of State to the Costa Rican Minister for Foreign Affairs (Echandi)*

[WASHINGTON,] December 30, 1940.

EXCELLENCY: I have received Your Excellency's note no. 376 [3776-A] of November 28, 1940 regarding the proposal to send a collective message to Spain to state the fervent hope that the Spanish nation would refrain from becoming involved in the present European conflict.

I take advantage of this occasion to express my Government's appreciation of the noble and unselfish motives which prompted the Costa Rican Government to take the initiative in this matter, and of the courtesy shown in bringing to the attention of my Government the information that Your Excellency's Government has considered it fit to terminate its efforts in that connection.

Accept [etc.]

CORDELL HULL

**VII. EFFORTS OF THE UNITED STATES TO SECURE AMONG CERTAIN OTHER AMERICAN REPUBLICS LEGISLATION PROVIDING FOR THE EXCLUSION OF BELLIGERENT SUBMARINES FROM THEIR PORTS AND TERRITORIAL WATERS**

740.00111 European War 1939/3808

*The Ambassador in Argentina (Armour) to the Secretary of State*

No. 750

BUENOS AIRES, June 7, 1940.

[Received June 14.]

SIR: Referring to the Embassy's despatch no. 706 of May 24 last<sup>10</sup> enclosing a memorandum of conversations which took place at a

<sup>9</sup> *Supra.*<sup>10</sup> Not printed.

luncheon at the British Embassy prior to the departure of the French Ambassador, M. Peyrouton, I have the honor to inform the Department that during the time that has elapsed the British Ambassador has on several occasions mentioned to me the preoccupation of his Government lest, in the event of Italy's entering the war,<sup>11</sup> Italian submarines come to the Rio de La Plata for the purpose of attacking British shipping.

The Ambassador informs me that he has taken up the matter of preventing belligerent submarines from having access to Argentine ports several times with the Foreign Minister, thus far without success. According to Sir Esmond Ovey the Secretary General of the Foreign Office, Dr. Santos Muñoz, takes a very legalistic view of the question, while the Minister of Marine, Admiral Scasso, who is currently believed to have pro-Nazi sympathies, is also opposed to any change in the present position of the Argentine Government, which places belligerent submarines in the same category as surface craft. The Ambassador believes that it is the opposition, particularly of these two officials, which accounts for the refusal of the Foreign Minister to take the action recommended by the British Ambassador.

Their Naval Attaché today informed our own Naval Attaché that yesterday Sir Esmond Ovey again spoke to Dr. Cantilo<sup>12</sup> on this question and pointed out that his Government views the matter so seriously that in the event the Argentine Government would not be willing to reconsider its position, it might be necessary for the British Government to make arrangements to purchase necessary supplies, particularly meat, elsewhere, possibly in Brazil, or even in South Africa.

In a recent talk with Sir Esmond he expressed the hope that our Government might be willing to support the British Government's position on this question, and said that he was considering the sending of a telegram to his Government suggesting that the matter be referred to the British Ambassador in Washington for the consideration of the American Government. I ventured to suggest to Sir Esmond that as the Brazilian Government had taken a position similar to our own on the question of submarines, he might possibly consider having his Government take up the matter with the Brazilian Government. It seemed to me that the Brazilian Government could with logic point out to the Argentine Government that its policy with regard to submarines, aside from the question of their own waters and those of Uruguay, constituted a danger to Brazil in that submarines taking refuge in Argentine or Uruguayan waters would presumably be in a position to prey on Brazilian shipping, particu-

<sup>11</sup> See section entitled "Efforts by the United States To Keep Italy From Entering the War Against the Allies", vol. II, pp. 685 ff.

<sup>12</sup> José María Cantilo, Argentine Minister for Foreign Affairs.

larly foreign belligerent shipping visiting Brazilian ports. Sir Esmond seemed to feel that any suggestions from the Brazilian Government would be less effective than those coming from our own Government.

In a recent conversation with the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs with regard to the protest made by the Argentine Government to Berlin on the sinking of the *Uruguay*, Dr. Gache expressed the opinion that the German reply would probably be a negative one. I asked him in this event what action, if any, he thought his Government would be prepared to take. His reply was merely a shrug of the shoulders. I then ventured to suggest, making it clear that this was entirely a personal opinion, that this might be a favorable opportunity for his Government to announce that in the future all belligerent submarines would be banned from Argentine waters subject possibly to the qualifications contained in our own decree. If, as he thought probable, the German reply were to point out that it was impossible to prove that the submarine which sank the *Uruguay* was a German submarine, the Argentine Government, it seemed to me, could properly use the argument that in view of the difficulty of distinguishing between belligerent submarines, all belligerent submarines in the future will be banned from Argentine waters.

Dr. Gache seemed to think well of the suggestion, but of course was not in a position to give me any indication as to what the attitude of the higher authorities would be on this matter.

Respectfully yours,

NORMAN ARMOUR

740.00111 A.R.—Subs/1a: Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in Argentina (Armour)*

WASHINGTON, June 11, 1940—6 p. m.

102. From the Under Secretary.<sup>13</sup> The British Ambassador<sup>14</sup> has expressed to me the great concern of the British Government by reason of the fact that the Argentine Government has not taken action similar to that taken by the Government of the United States and the Governments of many other American Republics in excluding belligerent submarines from their ports and territorial waters. The British Government feels that in as much as the British Isles are now receiving their main food supplies from the River Plate, the failure of the Argentine Government to take this action constitutes a material danger, particularly now that Italy has entered the war and disposes of a sufficient number of submarines to be able to send some of them in order to interfere with allied shipping in the South Atlantic.

<sup>13</sup> Sumner Welles.

<sup>14</sup> Lord Lothian.

Please telegraph me whether the Foreign Minister has spoken with you concerning this question and if not, whether you think it would be expedient for you to discuss the question with Dr. Cantilo on the ground that Italy's participation in the war makes a recurrence of belligerent activities in the waters of the Western Hemisphere more probable, and that the exclusion of belligerent submarines would tend to minimize this danger. [Welles.]

HULL

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740.00111 A.R.—Subs/2 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Argentina (Armour) to the Secretary of State*

BUENOS AIRES, June 12, 1940—3 p. m.

[Received 8:12 p. m.]

210. For the Under Secretary. Your telegram 102, June 11, 6 p. m. This matter fully discussed in my confidential air mail despatch 750 of June 7 which should reach you tomorrow.

In my last talk with the Foreign Minister the question of the British Ambassador's preoccupation regarding Italian submarines came up and Cantilo intimated that the entry of Italy into the war may require his Government to reconsider its position. I expect to see Cantilo tomorrow and unless you advise me to the contrary shall discuss the matter again along the lines of the last paragraph of your telegram.

The President's and Foreign Minister's concern over Vargas' speech yesterday (telegram 209, June 12, noon<sup>15</sup>) may make approach through Brazilian Government suggested in my despatch 750 inadvisable at least until Brazil's representation is further clarified.

ARMOUR

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740.00111 A.R.—Subs/1 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Chiefs of Diplomatic Missions in Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Nicaragua, Peru, and Uruguay*

WASHINGTON, June 13, 1940—8 p. m.

Seven of the American republics, including the United States, have enacted laws or decrees providing for the exclusion from their ports and territorial waters of belligerent submarines. Proclamations to this effect were issued by the President of the United States on October 18, 1939<sup>16</sup> by virtue of the Neutrality Act then in force and

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<sup>15</sup> Printed in vol. v, in section under Brazil entitled "Repercussions of a Speech by President Vargas of Brazil, Delivered June 11, 1940."

<sup>16</sup> 54 Stat. 2668.

on November 4, 1939<sup>17</sup> by virtue of the current Neutrality Act. The other countries which have taken similar action are Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, and Venezuela. The prohibition applies in four of the seven cases including the United States to both armed and commercial submarines while in three cases only war submarines are affected. An exception is made in case of *force majeure*. On February 2, 1940 the Inter-American Neutrality Committee approved and transmitted to the American republics via the Pan American Union a recommendation<sup>18</sup> regarding the exclusion of submarines.

Please discuss this situation with the Foreign Minister and point out to him that it would be highly desirable for all the American republics having sea coasts to adopt a uniform policy in this respect. You may inform him that the Department feels that the adoption of a prohibition on the entrance of belligerent submarines, similar to that already adopted by a number of the republics so situated, by the remaining ones would—under present and prospective circumstances—not only constitute an important contribution to continental community of action in the face of common problems but it would also be of great value in assisting those republics in avoiding unfortunate situations in which they might well be placed if they admitted submarines intending to prey on belligerent and neutral commerce in American waters. The exclusion of submarines would thus be a factor in the practical maintenance of the security zone principle set forth in the Declaration of Panama.<sup>19</sup>

HULL

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740.00111 A.R.—Subs/4: Telegram

*The Minister in Ecuador (Long) to the Secretary of State*

QUITO, June 15, 1940—1 p. m.  
[Received 8:10 p. m.]

107. In response Department's circular of June 13, 8 p. m., Foreign Minister<sup>19a</sup> says Ecuador has complied with all recommendations Inter-American Neutrality Committee: Ecuadoran decree No. 12<sup>20</sup>

<sup>17</sup> 54 Stat. 2672.

<sup>18</sup> Printed in Pan American Union, Law and Treaty Series No. 15, Appendix A, pp. 33, 68 ff.

<sup>19</sup> *Foreign Relations*, 1939, vol. v, p. 36.

<sup>19a</sup> Julio Tobar Donoso.

<sup>20</sup> Decree No. 12 of March 27, 1940, Pan American Union, Law and Treaty Series No. 14, p. 12.

covers submarines, 15<sup>21</sup> internment and No. 19<sup>22</sup> merchant ships and auxiliary vessels.

LONG

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740.00111 A.R.—Subs/5½ : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Argentina (Armour) to the Secretary of State*

BUENOS AIRES, June 15, 1940—3 p. m.

[Received 5:33 p. m.]

227. For Under Secretary. Your telegram 102, June 11, Embassy's telegram June 12, 3 p. m. The Minister for Foreign Affairs informs me that in a recent talk with British Ambassador, President Ortiz explained that his Government did not envisage changing its position on submarines for the present at least. He based this decision on the following factors: (1) remote likelihood of Italian or German submarines coming into these waters; (2) inability of large long-range submarines to operate under the surface in Argentine or Uruguayan waters owing to insufficient depth; (3) orders that have been issued to Argentine navy to sink any submarine attempting to interfere with shipping in Argentine territorial waters whether on surface or submerged.

Should the unexpected happen and belligerent submarines appear, Argentine Government would then decide whether a change in its present policy seems necessary.

Department's circular telegram June 13, 8 p. m. received since above conversation. I shall discuss the matter further with the Minister for Foreign Affairs along the lines of telegram on the first opportunity.

ARMOUR

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740.00111 A.R.—Subs/6 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Cuba (Messersmith) to the Secretary of State*

HABANA, June 17, 1940—noon.

[Received 12:40 p. m.]

65. Department's circular June 13, 8 p. m. Secretary of State said that he would add to Cuba's neutrality legislation a provision excluding belligerent submarines from Cuban ports and territorial waters similar to that contained in the proclamation of the President of the United States of November 4, 1939.

MESSERSMITH

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<sup>21</sup> Decree No. 15 of March 31, 1940, Pan American Union, Law and Treaty Series No. 14, p. 14.

<sup>22</sup> Decree No. 19 of April 30, 1940, *ibid.*, p. 18.



740.00111 A.R.—Subs/8: Telegram

*The Minister in El Salvador (Frazer) to the Secretary of State*

SAN SALVADOR, June 18, 1940—5 p. m.

[Received June 19—12:20 p. m.]

27. Referring to the Department's circular telegram June 13, 8 p. m. Government of El Salvador evinces hesitation regarding promulgating decree proposed. This attitude is in nowise due to reluctance to adhere to a uniform Pan American policy, but to the fact that this Government has no means whatever of enforcing what it considers would be therefore a meaningless gesture. The Minister for Foreign Affairs <sup>22a</sup> expressed the view that the 300-mile security zone sufficiently meets the object in view. He asks to be informed regarding position taken in this matter by the Governments of the other Central American countries.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs conferred with the President before conferring with me today.

FRAZER

740.00111 A.R.—Subs/10

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

No. 1312

GUATEMALA, June 19, 1940.

[Received June 24.]

SIR: With reference to the Department's circular telegram of June 13, 8 p. m., and to the Legation's reply thereto No. 53, June 18, 11 a. m.,<sup>23</sup> I have the honor to enclose herewith a copy and translation of the Decree signed by President Ubico on June 17,<sup>24</sup> by which the entrance of belligerent submarines into Guatemalan territorial waters is forbidden.

The Department will note that the Decree declares Guatemalan territorial waters to extend twelve sea miles from the low tide mark and to include the Bay of Amatique.

When I discussed this matter with the Foreign Minister,<sup>25</sup> in accordance with the Department's instructions he stated that the recommendation of the Inter-American Neutrality Committee had not been received by the Guatemalan Government, but he later informed me by telephone that he had been mistaken in making this statement. From the comments made to me by the Foreign Minister, it was quite evident that the Guatemalan Government gladly acceded to the Department's initiative.

Respectfully yours,

FAY ALLEN DES PORTES

<sup>22a</sup> Miguel Angel Araujo.<sup>23</sup> Latter not printed.<sup>24</sup> For text of Decree No. 2393, June 17, 1940, see Pan American Union, Law and Treaty Series No. 14, p. 21.<sup>25</sup> Carlos Salazar.

740.00111 A.R.—Subs/9 : Telegram

*The Ambassador in Cuba (Messersmith) to the Secretary of State*

HABANA, June 20, 1940—1 p. m.

[Received 1:17 p. m.]

68. Embassy's telegram No. 65, June 17, noon. Press publishes a Presidential decree dated June 17<sup>26</sup> excluding belligerent submarines identical with the provisions on that subject contained in the President's Proclamation of November 4.

MESSERSMITH

740.00111 A.R.—Subs/8 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Minister in El Salvador (Frazer)*

WASHINGTON, June 24, 1940—3 p. m.

23. Your 27, June 18, 5 p. m. As indicated in the Department's circular telegram of June 13, 8 p. m. the Government of Honduras has provided for the exclusion from Honduran ports and territorial waters of belligerent submarines. On June 17 the Foreign Minister of Guatemala signed a decree to the same effect.<sup>27</sup> Under the circumstances, the Department believes that the issuance of a similar decree by the Government of El Salvador could by no means be considered "a meaningless gesture". You are requested to continue to discuss this matter with the Foreign Minister and to endeavor to obtain a favorable decision in regard thereto.

HULL

740.00111 A.R.—Subs/12 : Telegram

*The Minister in Uruguay (Wilson) to the Secretary of State*

MONTEVIDEO, June 26, 1940—5 p. m.

[Received 8:40 p. m.]

131. My 111, June 14th.<sup>28</sup> The decree excluding belligerent submarines was issued last night.<sup>29</sup>

Repeated to Rio de Janeiro.

WILSON

<sup>26</sup> Decree No. 1603, June 17, 1940, revising Decree No. 2073 of September 1, 1939; for text, see Pan American Union, Law and Treaty Series No. 15, p. 1, or *Official Gazette*, June 21, 1940.

<sup>27</sup> Article 9 of Decree No. 38 of November 13, 1939, Pan American Union, Law and Treaty Series No. 12, p. 46.

<sup>28</sup> Not printed.

<sup>29</sup> Decree of June 19, 1940, Pan American Union, Law and Treaty Series No. 15, p. 4.

740.00111 A.R.—Subs/16 : Telegram

*The Minister in El Salvador (Frazer) to the Secretary of State*

SAN SALVADOR, June 28, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received 7 p. m.]

30. Salvadoran decree excluding belligerent submarines and other naval vessels from ports and territories promulgated June 26th.

FRAZER

740.00111 A.R.—Subs/17

*The Chargé in Nicaragua (Muccio) to the Secretary of State*

No. 1141

MANAGUA, July 3, 1940.

[Received July 15.]

SIR: I have the honor to refer to the Department's circular telegram of June 13, 1940, 8:00 p. m., pointing out that various American Republics have enacted laws or decrees designed to keep belligerent submarines from their territorial waters and ports. The Department also points out the desirability of all of the American Republics having sea coasts to adopt similar laws.

Immediately following its reception the contents of the Department's instruction were brought to the attention of the Nicaraguan Minister of Foreign Affairs<sup>29a</sup> informally, who readily proffered to take the matter up with the President. There is now transmitted herewith a copy of Decree No. 76 passed by the Nicaraguan Congress without opposition on June 25, 1940, and signed by President Somoza on June 28, 1940,<sup>30</sup> which, with certain qualifications, prohibits the use of Nicaraguan territorial waters and ports by belligerent submarines.

It will be noted that this decree goes into effect on the date of its publication in *La Gaceta*, but this publication has not yet taken place.

Respectfully yours,

JOHN J. MUCCIO

740.00111 A.R.—Subs/19

*The Minister in Costa Rica (Hornibrook) to the Secretary of State*

No. 2355

SAN JOSÉ, July 13, 1940.

[Received July 22.]

SIR: I have the honor to refer to the Department's circular telegram of June 13, 8 p. m., concerning the possible adoption by the American Republics of a uniform policy with regard to the exclusion of belligerent submarines from the ports and territorial waters of these republics, and to inform the Department that this matter was brought to the attention of the Minister of Foreign Affairs on June 14.

<sup>29a</sup> Mariano Argüello Vargas.<sup>30</sup> For text, see Nicaragua, *La Gaceta*, July 5, 1940.

After subsequently pressing several times for a reply, the Minister informed the Legation in a note dated July 1 that the matter had been referred to the Ministry of Public Security for consideration. Nothing further on the subject has been heard from the Foreign Office since that time.

Respectfully yours,

WM. H. HORNIBROOK

740.00111 A.R.—Subs/21

*The Minister in Haiti (Mayer) to the Secretary of State*

No. 942

PORT-AU-PRINCE, July 26, 1940.

[Received July 29.]

SIR: Referring to the Department's telegram of June 13, 8 p. m., 1940, relative to proclamations by the American Republics prohibiting the entry of belligerent submarines into their territorial waters, I have the honor to report that pursuant to these instructions I discussed this matter with President Vincent and the Minister for Foreign Affairs,<sup>30a</sup> both of whom assured me that an appropriate declaration would be made with reference to submarines in Haitian ports.

The Government of Haiti has now prohibited, with the exception of a case of *force majeure*, the entry of belligerent submarines into its territorial waters, by a Decree dated July 8, 1940, and published in the official *Moniteur* of July 18, 1940, a translation of which is enclosed.<sup>31</sup>

Article I of the Decree prohibits the entry of all submarines belonging to States at War into the territorial waters, except in the case of a *force majeure*. In this latter case Article II of the Decree requires the submarine to travel on the surface and identify itself clearly. No specific penalties are provided in the case of violation. Article III merely states that punishment will be in accordance with international law.

Respectfully yours,

FERDINAND L. MAYER

740.00111 A.R.—Subs/19

*The Acting Secretary of State to the Minister in Costa Rica  
(Hornibrook)*

No. 406

[WASHINGTON,] July 29, 1940.

SIR: With reference to your despatch no. 2355 of July 13, concerning the possible adoption by the American republics of a uniform policy with regard to the exclusion of belligerent submarines, you are informed that laws or decrees to this effect have been adopted by 14

<sup>30a</sup> Léon Laleau.

<sup>31</sup> Not printed.

of the 19 American republics having seacoasts. In Central America, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua have taken positive action in this respect since the outbreak of the current European war.

This information may be of use to you in any further discussion of this matter with the Costa Rican authorities which may be initiated by the latter.

Very truly yours,

For the Acting Secretary of State: [sic]  
SUMNER WELLES

740.00111 A.R.—Subs/25

*The Ambassador in Chile (Bowers) to the Secretary of State*

No. 721

SANTIAGO, August 7, 1940.

[Received August 13.]

SIR: Referring to the Department's circular telegram of June 13, 8 p. m., and to my telegrams Nos. 134 and 136 of June 20, 4 p. m., and June 20, 6 p. m. respectively,<sup>32</sup> I have the honor to transmit herewith a copy and translation of Chilean Decree No. 1,120, dated July 8, 1940, as published in the *Diario Oficial* of today's date.<sup>33</sup>

The decree prohibits entry into Chilean ports and entry or navigation in Chilean territorial waters to belligerent submarines except in necessity arising from stress of weather or damages. In substance, the phrasing appears to cover the purpose of the comparable Executive Orders in present force in the United States. At one time I was informed that the Government had decided to include naval aircraft carriers as well as submarines in the decree, but this idea has apparently been abandoned.

Respectfully yours,

CLAUDE G. BOWERS

740.00111 A.R.—Subs/26: Telegram

*The Chargé in Argentina (Tuck) to the Secretary of State*

BUENOS AIRES, August 29, 1940—7 p. m.

[Received 8:20 p. m.]

383. Department's 102, June 11, 6 p. m., and Embassy's despatch No. 750 of June 7. I was informed by the British Ambassador today that during the very recent visit to Buenos Aires of the H.M.S. *Hawkins* he invited to dinner on August 26 Admiral Harwood and Foreign Minister Cantilo. The Admiral talked straight from the shoulder to Cantilo as to the possible consequences of the failure of

<sup>32</sup> Telegrams Nos. 134 and 136 not printed.

<sup>33</sup> The decree is published in the issue of August 6, 1940.

the Argentine Government not [*sic*] to take steps to exclude belligerent submarines from its ports and territorial waters. Harwood said that the Admiralty knew that some German submarines were in the western Atlantic and expressed the opinion that if they were to sink any of the specially constructed British meat ships off the River Plate, his Government might find it necessary to purchase supplies, particularly meat, elsewhere.

Cantilo was apparently impressed and promised to look into the matter more. He evidently was as good as his word for the Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Gache, informed me at lunch today that the question of Argentina's position in this matter had been referred to the Ministry of Marine for consideration.

TUCK

#### VIII. ATTEMPTS BY THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT TO OBSTRUCT CO-OPERATION ON NEUTRALITY MEASURES AMONG THE AMERICAN REPUBLICS

740.00111 A.R./1103 : Telegram

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

GUATEMALA CITY, May 20, 1940—1 p. m.

[Received 3:56 p. m.]

43. The Foreign Minister <sup>33a</sup> has just shown me a memorandum presented today by the German Minister <sup>33b</sup> with regard to the Argentine non-belligerency proposal <sup>34</sup> and the protest of the American Republics made upon the initiative of Uruguay against the invasion of the Low Countries.<sup>35</sup> After defending the German invasion of these countries the memorandum goes on to say that the German Government would consider it "a markedly unfriendly act" if Guatemala should join in any such moves, which the memorandum states are propaganda inspired by the personal hatred of certain foreign politicians.

The Legation would be grateful to know if a similar threat has been presented to the other American Republics and the United States.

DES PORTES

<sup>33a</sup> Carlos Salazar.

<sup>33b</sup> Otto Reinebeck, German Minister in Central America.

<sup>34</sup> See pp. 743 ff.

<sup>35</sup> See pp. 184 ff.

740.00111 A.R./1103: Telegram

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

WASHINGTON, May 21, 1940—4 p. m.

34. Your 43, May 20, 1 p. m. The Department has not been informed that similar memoranda have been presented to the other American republics. Inquiries, however, are being made. You may so advise the Foreign Minister.

HULL

740.00111 A.R./1103: Circular telegram

*The Secretary of State to All Chiefs of Mission in the American Republics Except Guatemala and Brazil*<sup>36</sup>

WASHINGTON, May 21, 1940—6 p. m.

The Department has been informed that the German Minister to Guatemala has presented a memorandum to that Government with regard to the Argentine non-belligerency proposal and the protest of the American republics against the invasion of the Low Countries. The memorandum states that the German Government would consider it "a markedly unfriendly act" if Guatemala should join any such moves.

Please inquire whether similar representations have been made by Germany to the Government to which you are accredited and report by telegraph.

HULL

740.00111 A.R./1152

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

No. 1268

GUATEMALA, May 22, 1940.

[Received May 27.]

SIR: With reference to my telegram No. 43, May 20, 1 p. m., and to the Department's telegram No. 34, May 21, 4 p. m., I have the honor to enclose herewith a copy and translation of the memorandum which the German Minister handed to the Foreign Minister on May 20, with respect to the protest of the American Republics against the invasion of the Low Countries. The original memorandum, which was shown to me by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, was written in Spanish;

<sup>36</sup> To Chile as telegram No. 83, Colombia as No. 82, Costa Rica as No. 33, Cuba as No. 58, Dominican Republic as No. 57, Ecuador as No. 43, El Salvador as No. 15, Haiti as No. 71, Mexico as No. 144, Nicaragua as No. 33, Panama as No. 69, and Venezuela as No. 49.

Only the replies which contained substantial affirmative answers are printed.

the original copy of it given me by the Foreign Minister was prepared in the Foreign Office.

The Foreign Minister informed me that the German Minister had stated to him that the memorandum was presented under instructions from the German Government. The wording of the memorandum would seem to confirm this statement. It is therefore peculiar that no similar memorandum seems to have been presented by [*to?*] any other American Republic.

The Department's attention is particularly invited to the extraordinary wording of the penultimate paragraph of the memorandum.

Respectfully yours,

FAY ALLEN DES PORTES

[Enclosure—Translation]

*Memorandum by the German Minister in Central America (Reinebeck) to the Guatemalan Minister for Foreign Affairs (Salazar)*

To its profound regret, the Government of the Reich has learned that the German preventative act in Holland and Belgium has given rise to the following acts in America:

1) The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Argentine Republic proposed that the American States should abandon the concept of neutrality maintained up to the present time, which had come to be a mere fiction, and that they should adopt a state of "non-belligerency".

2) The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Uruguay suggested a common protest of the American Republics against the German act in Holland and Belgium.<sup>87</sup> The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Panama, in turn, has transmitted the suggestion to all of the American Governments in order that the latter may state their respective positions; and among others, the High Government of Guatemala also by a Note on the fifteenth of the present month, addressed to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Panama, expressly adhered to this proposal.

The Government of Germany must refute as unfounded the (step of) protest suggested on the part of Uruguay, in as much as its action, against which this country is objecting, is fully justified by the reasons explained in detail in the German Memoranda of the tenth of May delivered to the Belgian and Dutch Governments as well as in the annexes to these.<sup>88</sup> As explained in these two Memoranda, Germany had recognized and respected the sovereignty of Belgium and Holland as long as both countries observed the most strict neutrality. How-

<sup>87</sup> See pp. 727 ff.

<sup>88</sup> See *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, series D, vol. IX, document No. 214, p. 301.



ever, Belgium and Holland had not maintained this neutral position, but had unilaterally favored the adversaries of Germany and acquiesced in their intentions. The information of the German High Command, which was brought to the attention of the Government of the Reich, and which was added to the Memorandum, contained a résumé of the violations of neutrality of both countries, the tenor of which may be inferred from No. 168 of the bulletins of information of the press section of the German Legation, which is enclosed with the present (Memorandum).<sup>39</sup> In view of the situation explained above, the Government of the Reich was no longer able to doubt that Belgium and the Netherlands had not only resolved to tolerate an imminent Franco-British attack against the Basin of the Ruhr through their own territories but also actively to favor it. Additional and irrefutable documents proving such intention to attack of England and France, and the participation of the two supposedly neutral Governments, which had in the meantime come into the hands of German troops, will shortly be published.

The Government of Germany, being unable passively to await this planned attack, in consequence ordered its troops to ensure by all the military means in their power the neutrality of both countries. It has declared that the German troops have not come as enemies of the Belgian and Netherlands peoples, and that it would not infringe the sovereignty of these countries, either for the present or in the future.

In as much as it is consequently not a question of a German invasion, as the Uruguayan Minister of Foreign Affairs alleges, but of the frustration of an invasion systematically prepared by England and France, the German Government must consider such steps of third governments against its action without object, and therefore consider the participation in such transactions a markedly unfriendly act for which there is no reason.<sup>40</sup>

The Government of the Reich has ample motives to suppose that the attitude of the Government of Uruguay is based upon certain foreign influences tending to create a feeling in the Latin American States that this Continent might be threatened by Germany. It is not necessary to go into details regarding this argument, the inconsistency and absurdity of which is patent. I wish only to confine myself to expressing the hope of the Government of the Reich that those States which maintain friendly relations with Germany will pay no attention to propaganda against the German Government which arises from personal motives of hatred of certain foreign politicians.

GUATEMALA, May 18, 1940.

<sup>39</sup> Not attached to file copy of memorandum.

<sup>40</sup> Typewritten note on file translation reads, "The underlining in the penultimate paragraph did not appear in the original memorandum shown by the Foreign Minister to Mr. Des Portes."

740.00111 A.R./1137 : Telegram

*The Minister in El Salvador (Frazer) to the Secretary of State*

SAN SALVADOR, May 23, 1940—3 p. m.

[Received 10:18 p. m.]

21. Following is translated text of note from German Minister at Guatemala to the Government of El Salvador referred to in Department's telegram No. 16 [15?] <sup>41</sup>

[Here follows text of memorandum similar to the one presented to the Guatemalan Minister for Foreign Affairs dated May 18, printed *supra.*]

FRAZER

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740.00111 A.R./1132 : Telegram

*The Chargé in Mexico (Boal) to the Secretary of State*

MEXICO CITY, May 23, 1940—4 p. m.

[Received 8:40 p. m.]

165. Department's telegram No. 144, May 21, 6 p. m.<sup>41</sup> In a strictly confidential conversation this morning General Hay, Minister for Foreign Affairs, gave me the following information to be transmitted in confidence to the Department. The German Minister <sup>42</sup> called on him May 21 and presented three confidential memoranda.

1. A memorandum protesting against the Argentine non-belligerency proposal and the protest of the American Republics against the invasion of Holland, Belgium and Luxemburg. This memorandum after reciting the above proposals states that the German Government would consider it an unfriendly act for the Mexican Government to participate in these proposals. It argues that hasty conclusions are being drawn since the status of these nations can be restored later. It attributes the origin of the protest against the invasion of the Low Countries to the United States although the initiative was actually taken by Uruguay. It accuses the United States of endeavoring to stir up animosity toward Germany in the Latin American countries and of endeavoring to interfere with the friendly relations of Germany with the other American Republics. It urges Mexico to disregard the suggestions of the United States and to take a firm stand on behalf of its own "neutral" position.

2. A memorandum protesting against the statements in the press attributed to Ambassador Daniels regarding Nazi activities in Mexico. It refers to these as having been made in Mexico before the Ambassador's departure for the United States. It says that French-British agents are active in Mexico trying to foment trouble between Mexico and Germany; that the Ambassador's statements may be attributed

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<sup>41</sup> See footnote 36, p. 788.

<sup>42</sup> Baron Ruedt Collenberg.

to misinformation supplied the Embassy by irresponsible agents. It speculates on whether Ambassador Daniels did not make these statements about Nazi activities to distract attention from the activities of the British and French agents in Mexico. The memorandum further states that British and French agents are trying to make it appear that German agents are threatening the safety of the Panama Canal and organizing in Mexico for sabotage in order to increase the tension between Germany and the United States and to frighten the Latin American Republics into distrust and hostility towards Germany.

3. A memorandum attempting to justify German invasion of the Low Countries on the ground that such invasion was already prepared by France and England and was imminent.

General Hay stated that he had replied orally and in a preliminary fashion to the first two memoranda as follows :

1. Mexico's attitude and line of conduct in this matter is based on the general principles arising out of the successive Pan-American conferences. It is not inimical to any particular country but is consistent with Mexico's attitude at Geneva and at the Pan-American conferences throughout. Mexico protested against the invasion of Finland and at the same time did not agree to the proposal for expulsion of Russia from the League of Nations<sup>43</sup> because the League had not taken similar action with regard to Italy and Germany when they attacked weaker countries.

The protest against the invasion of the Low Countries did not within the knowledge of the Mexican Government originate with the United States and in any event Mexico's foreign policy is entirely independent and the decisions which it has reached in this matter are its own decisions and are immutable.

2. General Hay expressed surprise that the German Minister should present a protest to the Mexican Government against the utterances of a foreign ambassador to Mexico. The proper channel for the presentation of this protest would be through the German Embassy in Washington to the United States Government. Hay was unwilling to take into consideration any action on the part of his Government on the protest presented to him and declined to give any weight to the imputations assigned by the memoranda regarding possible motives of Ambassador Daniels.

3. Being merely an informative memorandum stating German contentions regarding the invasion of Low Countries required no answer. Hay stated he had prepared written replies to the first two memoranda in the sense I have given above which he would transmit to the German Minister.

He read me all of the foregoing at considerably greater length from a memorandum he had made of the conversation which he had had with German Minister. He added that he had today sent a telegram

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<sup>43</sup> See section entitled "Proposed Collective Protest by the American Republics Against the Soviet Invasion of Finland," *Foreign Relations*, 1939, vol. v, pp. 128 ff. For correspondence regarding the Soviet-Finnish war and the expulsion of the Soviet Union from the League of Nations, see *ibid.*, see *ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 952 ff.

to the Foreign Minister of Panama suggesting that the American Republics consider including in their protest a reference to the invasion of Norway and Denmark. He remarked that when the protest on the invasion of the Low Countries was first presented to him by the Uruguayan Minister here he had suggested some changes designed to simplify and clarify the text by the omission of some references and that he gathered from what he had seen in the newspapers that some account had been taken of his suggestions although he had specifically stated that with a view to expediting the matter he would not stand on his suggestions if it were desired to proceed with the original text.

General Hay requested that all of the foregoing be treated in the utmost confidence and that it be kept from the knowledge of the German Minister that he had discussed these matters with me. He said that he did not feel free to give me any written summary, memorandum, or copy on the matter but in view of his great confidence in the United States and friendliness for our Government was willing to give me the foregoing information orally and personally to study. Hence the foregoing summary of the three German memoranda and the two replies is from memory of what General Hay read me aloud rather rapidly in Spanish. As I left I noticed that the German Minister was there to see the Minister for Foreign Affairs, this being the day the Minister for Foreign Affairs receives members of the Corps.

Day before yesterday Durban in discussing with me the steps connected with the drafting of the protest on the invasion of the Low Countries remarked that there had been a reference to the resolution on Christian morality which had caused some difficulty to the Minister for Foreign Affairs in connection with the conference he last attended at Panama and that one of the General's desires was to have this reference eliminated. He gathered that this had been or would be done.

BOAL

740.00111 A.R./1159

*The Minister in Honduras (Erwin) to the Secretary of State*

No. 1043

TEGUCIGALPA, May 23, 1940.

[Received May 28.]

SIR: Referring to my telegram No. 26, May 23, 4 p. m., 1940.<sup>44</sup> I received in confidence from the Honduran Foreign Office today through Señor don Fernando Lardizabal, Chief of Protocol, the copy of memo-

<sup>44</sup> Not printed; it stated that the Honduran Government received on May 23 similar protest from the German Government, a copy of which Minister Erwin was sending to the Department by air mail (740.00111 A.R./1133).

randum submitted to the Honduran Government by the German Minister in Guatemala, which, together with a translation thereof are made enclosures to this despatch.<sup>45</sup>

The reply of the Honduran Government has not at this hour been formulated and, therefore, I am not able to state its contents. It will probably be several days before an answer is ready for delivery, as the Foreign Minister<sup>46</sup> must confer with President Cárías before anything is done. However, my information is that the response will decline to give any satisfaction to this protest.

Respectfully yours,

JOHN D. ERWIN

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740.00111 A.R./1173

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

No. 1271

GUATEMALA, May 23, 1940.

[Received May 31.]

SIR: With reference to the Legation's despatch no. 1268, of May 22, 1940 (File No. 711.1/820.02<sup>47</sup>), I have the honor to enclose herewith a copy and translation of the Guatemalan reply<sup>45</sup> to the German memorandum regarding the protest of the American Republics against the invasion of the Low Countries. This copy has been transmitted by the Foreign Office in confidence to the Legation.

The Department will observe that the Note is, for the most part, courteous and mild but that there are one or two barbs in it, notably in regard to the activities of the German colony in this country.

The Guatemalan Government's reply to the German memorandum was perhaps more candidly expressed by the publication of the note of protest of the twenty-one American Republics on May 20<sup>48</sup> on the front page of the three principal newspapers in this city. This action was of course taken at the suggestion of this Legation, but the German Minister cannot fail to have noted that there would have been plenty of time after his protest for the Guatemalan Government to have told the newspapers not to publish the note, if the latter had desired to do so.

Respectfully yours,

FAY ALLEN DES PORTES

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<sup>45</sup> Not printed.

<sup>46</sup> Salvador Aguirre.

<sup>47</sup> Department file No. 740.00111 A.R./1152.

<sup>48</sup> See circular telegram of May 18, 8 p. m., and footnote 76, p. 742.

740.00111 A.R./1180

*The Minister in Nicaragua (Nicholson) to the Secretary of State*

No. 1104

MANAGUA, May 24, 1940.

[Received May 31.]

SIR: I have the honor to refer to my telegram of May 23 No. 48 11:00 a. m.<sup>49</sup> in which I reported to the Department that the German Chargé d'Affaires in Managua had delivered a memorandum to the Nicaraguan Minister of Foreign Affairs<sup>49a</sup> protesting against Nicaragua's adherence to the proposal made by Uruguay regarding the invasion of Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg by Germany.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs has sent me a copy of the memorandum delivered by the German Chargé d'Affaires and I am forwarding herewith the Spanish text of the memorandum.<sup>50</sup>

The memorandum says in brief that the present action of Germany in Holland and Belgium has had two results in America. First, that Argentina proposed that the American States abandon their previous concept of neutrality and adopt a status of "non-belligerency". Secondly, Uruguay suggested a protest by the American Republics against the German action in Holland and Belgium. The memorandum goes on to say that the German action was fully justified and in support of the German point of view the German Chargé sent with his memorandum to Nicaragua a copy of the memorandum sent by Germany to the Belgian and Netherlands Governments on May 10th.

The memorandum to Nicaragua added that Germany's action had been to frustrate an invasion of the low countries systematically prepared by England and France and therefore protests of third Governments against this action could be considered "markedly unfriendly". The German memorandum closes by stating that the German Reich has reason to believe that the attitude of Uruguay had been brought about by foreign influences wishing to create in the Latin American States the fear that this continent would be menaced by Germany.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs informed me that he would study the German memorandum before making a reply and that in the event that the United States Government has received a similar memorandum from Germany he would like to have information regarding our reply. In discussing the memorandum the Minister of Foreign Affairs said that he could not accept the German point of view regarding the invasion of Holland and Belgium and that he

<sup>49</sup> Not printed.

<sup>49a</sup> Mariano Argüello Vargas.

<sup>50</sup> The text was similar to the memorandum presented to the Guatemalan Minister for Foreign Affairs, p. 789.

thought the American Republics should act in unison in replying to the German protest.

I thanked Doctor Argüello for his courtesy in giving me this information and for what I considered a friendly act on his part.

Respectfully yours,

MEREDITH NICHOLSON

740.00111 A.R./1160 : Telegram

*The Minister in Honduras (Erwin) to the Secretary of State*

TEGUCIGALPA, May 27, 1940—10 a. m.

[Received 2:40 p. m.]

27. Referring to my dispatch No. 1043, May 23, 1940, I am informed that Honduran Government merely acknowledged memorandum. No further response.

ERWIN

710.Consultation (2)/218 : Telegram

*The Chargé in Nicaragua (Muccio) to the Secretary of State*

MANAGUA, July 8, 1940—2 p. m.

[Received 8:35 p. m.]

62. The Nicaraguan Minister for Foreign Affairs has just furnished me a copy of a note dated July 1 from the German Minister stating that, under instructions from his Government, he is communicating the attitude of the German Government toward certain proposals in the project of the agenda for the Habana Conference,<sup>51</sup> which is as follows:

“Take into consideration that in view of the future development of the commercial relations between Germany and the American states the replacement of European products by American ones, even though it might be theoretically possible, would be against the economic interests of the majority of the American states since only European suppliers, and especially German ones, are in a position to receive in payment the products of the American states, as will be both desirable and necessary.

The purpose to give proposals of the Neutrality Committee in Rio de Janeiro an effective form refers apparently to the project submitted for discussion to the Neutrality Commission—which in practice would affect unilaterally only German and Italian vessels—under which merchant vessels of belligerent nations stationed in American ports should be interned. I must not neglect to call Your Excellency's attention to the fact that the Government of the Reich in such a case would find itself obliged to consider the utilization of German boats actually in American ports by an American state and without the

<sup>51</sup> For correspondence regarding the Second Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the American Republics held at Habana July 21-30, 1940, see vol. v, pp. 2 ff.

consent of Germany as an unneutral attitude and incompatible with the friendly relations between Germany and the American nations.

Furthermore I am instructed to express in general the firm hope of the Government of the Reich that the work of the above-mentioned conference, in accordance with its objectives, may take place within a well-established neutral policy in which no resolutions will be adopted aimed directly or indirectly against Germany.[""]

Copy and translation of entire note will be forwarded by first mail.

MUCCIO

710.Consultation (2)/254a : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Chargé in Guatemala (Cabot)*

WASHINGTON, July 10, 1940—6 p. m.

54. A United Press item from Guatemala City states that the German Minister has criticised by note to the Guatemalan Government the forthcoming meeting of Foreign Ministers at Habana. Please investigate discreetly and report by telegraph.

HULL

710.Consultation (2)/263 : Telegram

*The Minister in Costa Rica (Hornibrook) to the Secretary of State*

SAN JOSÉ, July 11, 1940—11 a. m.

[Received 3 : 39 p. m.]

86. The Minister for Foreign Affairs<sup>51a</sup> has just informed me that he has received a threatening note from the German Minister accredited to this Government pertaining to the proposed agenda of the Conference to be held at Habana. The Minister expressed the resentment of his Government at the tone of the document. He also read to me another note from the Minister of Germany protesting in vigorous and insulting terms against propaganda unfriendly to Hitler. It was alleged therein that the present Government of Costa Rica is in entire sympathy with the propaganda being circulated in San José and the provinces.

HORNIBROOK

710.Consultation (2)/260 : Telegram

*The Chargé in Guatemala (Cabot) to the Secretary of State*

GUATEMALA CITY, July 11, 1940—3 p. m.

[Received 8 : 40 p. m.]

67. Department's telegram No. 54, July 10, 6 p. m. The Foreign Office has already sent me a copy of the German Minister's note of

<sup>51a</sup> Alberto Echandi.



July 1 evidently as a result of publication of the same story in last night's local newspapers.

The note argues against proposed substitution of American for European products in American markets because only Europe and Germany in particular can receive this hemisphere's products in payment.

It states that Germany would consider the utilization by any American state of the German vessels laid up in American ports an unneutral attitude incompatible with friendly relations.

It concludes by saying that Germany hopes that the conference will pursue a policy of neutrality and will not adopt measures directly or indirectly aimed at Germany.

I was informed last night that the German Minister has sent a strong protest to the Foreign Office regarding the Schlesinger pamphlet<sup>52</sup> intimating that Germany will take commercial reprisals after the war if her protests are not heeded. I hope [I will?] be given a copy of this note also.

CABOT

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710.Consultation (2)/334

*The Chargé in Guatemala (Cabot) to the Secretary of State*

No. 1356

GUATEMALA, July 11, 1940.

[Received July 16.]

SIR: With reference to my telegram No. 67 of July 11, 5 [3] P. M., 1940, I have the honor to enclose herewith a copy and translation of the Note which the German Minister forwarded to the Guatemalan Foreign Office under date of July 1st with regard to the forthcoming Consultative Meeting at Habana.

As reported in the above-mentioned telegram, I discovered when checking up the newspaper story mentioned by the Department, that a copy of this Note had already been forwarded to me by the Foreign Office that morning and, in fact, it reached me shortly after midday. I do not know why the Foreign Office should have sent a copy of this Note to this Legation ten days after it was written, but presume that it must have been done on the basis of the newspaper story similar to that mentioned in the Department's telegram which was published in the local newspapers on the evening of July 10th, under date line of San José, Costa Rica.

The German Minister's Note does not appear to call for any particular comment. It is couched in the same arrogant terms as other

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<sup>52</sup> *El Arma Secreta: La Quinta Columna*, by Alfredo Schlesinger (814.00-N/95).

recent communications to the Guatemalan Government in connection with acts of the latter which have been distasteful to the German Government (see particularly this Legation's despatch No. 1268 of May 22, 1940, file No. 711.1/820.02 <sup>52a</sup>).

As mentioned in my telegram under reference, I hope to be given a copy of the German protest to the Foreign Office in regard to Alfredo Schlesinger's recently published pamphlet, *El Arma Secreta: La Quinta Columna*, (see despatch No. 1348 of July 6, 1940, file No. 820.02 <sup>53</sup>), and if it is given to me I shall forward it in a separate despatch.

Respectfully yours,

JOHN M. CABOT

[Enclosure—Translation <sup>54</sup>]

*The German Minister in Central America (Reinebeck) to the Guatemalan Minister for Foreign Affairs (Salazar)*

GUATEMALA, July 1, 1940.

MR. MINISTER: Under instructions from my Government, I have the honor to communicate to Your Excellency the following:

The Government of the German Reich has been informed that the following proposals have been made for the deliberations of the Conference of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the American Republics:

1. Neutrality:

The work of the Neutrality Commission in Rio de Janeiro should be given an efficacious and uniform form. Respect for American neutrality and the prevention of activities by the belligerent powers within American territory should be attained by new measures.

2. Measures of an economic character:

a) European products should, whenever possible, be replaced in the American market by merchandise of American origin.

b) The maritime tonnage of the belligerent States should be employed exclusively in inter-American traffic, against suitable payment which should be made only after the present war, in order to avoid economic aid to the belligerent State in question.

The Government of the Reich takes the following position in regard to these proposals:

With regard to point 2, a), be good enough to take into consideration that, in view of the future development of commercial relations between Germany and the American States, a substitution of European products by American, even where it might theoretically be

<sup>52a</sup> Department file No. 740.00111 A.R./1152.

<sup>53</sup> Not printed.

<sup>54</sup> Original in Spanish.

possible, would be contrary to the economic interests of the majority of the American States, since only European suppliers and particularly Germany, are in a position to receive in payment the products of those countries in the desirable and necessary manner.

Point 2, *b*). The proposal to give the work of the Neutrality Commission in Rio de Janeiro an efficacious form apparently refers to the project submitted for discussion to the Neutrality Commission—and which in practice would only affect German and Italian boats unilaterally—by which merchant vessels of the belligerent nations laid up in American ports should be interned. I should not wish to fail to call the attention of Your Excellency to the fact that the Government of the Reich in such case would find itself under the necessity of considering the utilization of German boats now in American ports, by an American State, and without the consent of Germany, as an attitude contrary to neutrality and incompatible with the friendly relations between Germany and the American nations.

Moreover, I am instructed to express in general the firm hope of the Government of the Reich that the work of the above-mentioned Conference, in accordance with its purposes, will be carried out within a well understood policy of neutrality, and that no resolutions aimed directly or indirectly against Germany will be adopted.

I avail myself [etc.]

OTTO REINEBECK

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710.Consultation (2)/270: Telegram

*The Chargé in Honduras (Cousins) to the Secretary of State*

TEGUCIGALPA, July 12, 1940—5 p. m.

[Received 9:10 p. m.]

41. The Honduran Foreign Office has just informed me that it has received a note warning from the German Minister accredited to this country regarding participation in the Habana Conference. A copy of this note presumably identical with those sent to other Latin American countries which the Secretary of State commented upon yesterday, will be forwarded by air mail.

COUSINS

710.Consultation (2)/260 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Chargé in Guatemala (Cabot)*

WASHINGTON, July 12, 1940—6 p. m.

57. Your 67, July 11, 3 p. m. If you have not already done so, please give the Foreign Minister a copy of my statement in this regard as quoted in Radio Bulletin No. 164, July 11.<sup>55</sup>

HULL

710.Consultation (2)/263 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Minister in Costa Rica (Hornibrook)*

WASHINGTON, July 12, 1940—6 p. m.

64. Your 86, July 11, 11 a. m. If you have not already done so, please give the Foreign Minister a copy of my statement in this regard as quoted in Radio Bulletin No. 164, July 11.

HULL

710.Consultation (2)/323

*The Minister in El Salvador (Frazer) to the Secretary of State*

No. 1057

SAN SALVADOR, July 12, 1940.

[Received July 16.]

Subject: German Minister's note of July 1, 1940, to the Central American Republics in regard to the approaching Conference

SIR: I have the honor to report that the note above referred to has aroused considerable public indignation and adverse comment in this country. Both the Secretary and the Under Secretary of Foreign Affairs<sup>55a</sup> expressed resentment at what they termed the minatory attitude of the German Minister, and newspaper headings describe it as "A note of Intimidation," "An Unheard-of Procedure" and in similar terms.

<sup>55</sup> The statement is as follows: "A correspondent said that there were press reports from Central America—specifically Guatemala, Nicaragua and Costa Rica—to the effect that German diplomatic representatives had warned the republics of Central America against taking any measures contrary to neutrality at the forthcoming Habana meeting of Foreign Ministers of the American Republics. The correspondent asked whether the Secretary was familiar with these warnings and whether he could comment on them. In reply, the Secretary said that he had heard something regarding despatches of this nature. He said that the Habana meeting was an inter-American conference, held by agreement among the American nations for the purpose of considering matters relating solely to themselves. The Secretary said that this was apparently a species of intimidation of nations whose sovereignty and freedom of action and integrity were entitled to the fullest regard by every other country, and he asserted that there was no theory on which any country should attack such sovereignty or freedom of action."

<sup>55a</sup> Miguel Angel Araujo and Arturo Ramón Avila, respectively.

A copy of the note, of the Salvadoran Government's reply to it, and of newspaper clippings referring to it are enclosed herewith.<sup>56</sup>

These enclosures have just been received, only very shortly before the closing of today's air mail, and have therefore not been translated.

In view of the resentment obviously felt by the Foreign Office here, I was somewhat surprised to see that it expressed its thanks to the German Minister for his note. This tone, however, should be attributed wholly to the following of the usual diplomatic form of correspondence and the reply not taken at its face value.

Respectfully yours,

ROBERT FRAZER

710.Consultation (2)/292: Telegram

*The Ambassador in Argentina (Armour) to the Secretary of State*

BUENOS AIRES, July 13, 1940—1 p. m.

[Received 4:47 p. m.]

294. With reference to reported German efforts in Central America to interfere with the objectives of the Habana Conference, the German Embassy at Buenos Aires through its daily news bulletins and through the German subsidized newspapers including the *Pampero* and *Crisol* is endeavoring to create an impression that the United States is seeking to lead the other American Republics into a policy that it is designed to serve only the interests of the United States and that would be highly dangerous for the other Republics. Emphasis is placed upon the trade cartel plan,<sup>57</sup> which it is claimed would prevent the other American countries from dealing with the rest of the world on a profitable basis. See Embassy's despatches Nos. 913 of July 8 which left in yesterday's air mail pouch and 832 of June 22.<sup>58</sup>

The following from an editorial in *Crisol* of July 9 is typical of the subsidized press comment:

"We are on the eve of the opening of the Pan-American Conference at Habana, convoked at the initiative of the White House for considering three subjects of utmost importance for the future of this part of the world: the adoption by all America of the Monroe Doctrine, the plan of continental defense and the already famous economic 'cartel'. These three subjects may be summarized in only one: the acceptance by Latin America of the political, economic and military hegemony of the Yankees. To accept what is desired of them would be simply suicide."

ARMOUR

<sup>56</sup> Only newspaper clippings (not reprinted) were found attached to the despatch.

<sup>57</sup> See vol. v, section under General entitled "Program Proposed by the United States for Inter-American Economic Cooperation."

<sup>58</sup> Neither printed.

733.62/12 : Telegram

*The Minister in Uruguay (Wilson) to the Secretary of State*

MONTEVIDEO, July 13, 1940—2 p. m.

[Received 4:20 p. m.]

160. Guani<sup>59</sup> informs me that the German Minister<sup>59a</sup> called on him yesterday afternoon. The Minister began by referring to press accounts of statements concerning the Habana meeting made to the Central American Governments by the German Minister to those countries at which point Guani interrupted by saying that he had considered such action in very bad taste. The German Minister then said that all the German diplomatic representatives in the American Republics had received similar instructions but in order to save susceptibilities they would not press the matter in some countries.

The German Minister then said that so long as the Uruguayan Government had not rectified by some public statement the unfortunate situation which had been created by the publicity given to the investigation of Nazi activities here which had made it appear that these activities constituted a danger to the country the German Government would consider itself offended. (I gather that Guani may try to find some formula to satisfy the German Government.)

The Minister went on to speak of the "new Europe" and the vast economic system to be created in countries under German control, adding that of course Germany could not offer economic advantages to a country which had assumed an unfriendly attitude toward Germany. Guani stated that he had replied that Uruguay had always been able to dispose of its products in the past and he was quite sure that it would find a way to do so satisfactorily in the future.

WILSON

710.Consultation(2)/376

*The Minister in Bolivia (Jenkins) to the Secretary of State*

No. 277

LA PAZ, July 13, 1940.

[Received July 19.]

SIR: I have the honor to report that Mr. Julio Guzmán Téllez, who, as reported in the last paragraph on page 6 of my despatch No. 272, of July 11, 1940,<sup>60</sup> approached me at Foreign Minister Ostria Gutiérrez's request to support the latter's stand on his non-attendance at the Consultative Meeting of Habana, informed me that he had been told by

<sup>59</sup> Alberto Guani, Uruguayan Minister for Foreign Affairs.<sup>59a</sup> Otto Langmann.<sup>60</sup> Not printed.

Dr. Ostria Gutiérrez that the German Minister, Mr. Ernst Wendler, had "advised" an official of the Foreign Office that Bolivia had no real interest in the Habana Meeting and should take no part in it. Mr. Wendler does not appear to have discussed the subject with the Foreign Minister himself. This attitude of the German Minister may be of interest to the Department in connection with the Secretary's reported statement at a press conference yesterday regarding pressure in the same sense brought to bear on Central American Foreign Offices by the German diplomatic representatives.

Respectfully yours,

DOUGLAS JENKINS

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710.Consultation (2)/399

*The Chargé in Honduras (Cousins) to the Secretary of State*

No. 1076

TEGUCIGALPA, July 15, 1940.

[Received July 22.]

SIR: I have the honor to refer to my telegram of July 12, 5 p. m., 1940, informing the Department of the receipt by the Honduran Minister of Foreign Affairs of a note from the German Minister accredited to this country, Mr. Otto Reinebeck, commenting upon certain subjects which are understood will be discussed at the forthcoming Conference of Foreign Ministers at Habana, and warning this Government that favorable action on some of these proposals would be viewed as an unfriendly act by his Government.

For the Department's information, a copy of this note, together with a translation thereof, is hereto attached.<sup>61</sup>

As I mentioned in my telegram of July 15, 10 a. m., 1940,<sup>61</sup> the Honduran Government has to date made no reply to the note in question. I have been informed by an official in the Foreign Office that it is possible that the note will be filed without being answered, but should an answer be made, it will probably be merely an acknowledgement.

Respectfully yours,

ALBERT H. COUSINS, JR.

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710.Consultation (2)/457

*The Ambassador in Argentina (Armour) to the Secretary of State*

No. 955

BUENOS AIRES, July 17, 1940.

[Received July 27.]

SIR: With reference to the Embassy's telegram no. 294 of July 13, 1 p. m. and its despatch no. 951 of July 16,<sup>62</sup> as well as previous despatches, reporting German propaganda in Argentina hostile to the

<sup>61</sup> Not printed.

<sup>62</sup> Latter not printed.

United States, I have the honor to enclose a translation of the first page of the daily news bulletin of the German Embassy here for July 10 last, which criticizes the Monroe Doctrine. As the Embassy has noted in previous communications, these bulletins appear under German Embassy letter-heads and purport to be "official news received by cable from Berlin".

Respectfully yours,

NORMAN ARMOUR

[Enclosure—Translation]

*Press Release by the German Embassy in Argentina, July 10, 1940*

### THE MONROE DOCTRINE

In connection with the military preparations of British warships against the French island Martinique<sup>63</sup> in Central America [*sic*] and with the publication of the reply of the Government of the Reich to the note of the United States regarding the interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine,<sup>64</sup> statements were made in Washington<sup>65</sup> and Hyde Park which could not be understood even by those who are well acquainted with American opinions. It is now being pointed out that the occupation of French colonies in America by British forces does not necessarily imply a change of sovereignty. A difference is also being made now between the real transfer of territorial property and political intervention. It is finally declared that all the American nations should gather information relative to British measures against Martinique since the United States does not wish to assume responsibility regarding those possessions. For the first time there arises in Washington in this respect the idea of allocating American possessions of European powers in the form of mandates.

On top of this, the statements made by competent American sources also refer to the possibility of a new territorial order in Asia. Roosevelt's secretary said that this matter in the sense of an Asiatic Monroe Doctrine should be discussed exclusively by Asiatic countries. It is not easy to form an accurate idea of the present trend of the American policy based on this number of new and disconcerting versions. Is this supposed to be a new generous distribution of the world, for which Washington accepts as a "fait accompli" the defeat of the British Empire and the future status of France? Do the governments of Australia, The Netherland Indies and French Indo-China react against that attitude? Has approval from London been obtained or is this an independent act of American policy? Or do the speakers

<sup>63</sup> See vol. II, pp. 505 ff.

<sup>64</sup> See telegram No. 1652, June 17, 11 a. m., to the Chargé in Germany, and reply No. 2293, July 2, 5 p. m., vol. II, pp. 494 and 495, respectively.

<sup>65</sup> See statement by the Secretary of State released July 5, Department of State *Bulletin*, July 6, 1940, p. 3.



consider themselves as interpreters of the President's personal opinion? Is it a non-transparent electoral maneuver? As long as these questions remain unanswered, the countries directly affected by the statements referred to will continue to feel confused and in doubt. At present all that can be said with certainty is that the reply of the Government of the Reich has created a great impression in the United States, and it shows that in addressing its note to Berlin the American Government did not consider the possibility that territorial changes in the Western Hemisphere might turn into serious problems, particularly between France and England.

Finally, the indecision with which Washington observes the British greediness, allowing the Martinique problem to approach a state which every day can assume the nature of the butchery which took place in Oran,<sup>66</sup> has caused uneasiness in Latin American countries. Evidently at the latter's initiative the problem of the transfer of possessions assumes in Washington the importance of a question of Pan American significance. The future development of this question awakens all the more interest, inasmuch as the spirit of a doctrine lies in the unalterability of principles once they are adopted.

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710.Consultation (2)/469

*The Minister in Costa Rica (Hornbrook) to the Acting Secretary of State*

No. 2383

SAN JOSÉ, July 22, 1940.

[Received July 29.]

SIR: I have the honor to refer to my telegram No. 86 of July 11, 11 a. m., concerning the notes the Foreign Minister had received from the German Minister accredited to this Government, and resident in Guatemala City.

On the night of July 11, the Foreign Minister informed me at the residence that the tone of one of the German notes concerning propaganda unfriendly to Germany which was being distributed in Costa Rica was so insulting that it had been decided to return the note unanswered.

Saturday, July 20, 1940, at a reception at the Colombian Legation, I was informed that the Foreign Office had received an apology from the German Minister in Guatemala for this note. Both of the leading daily newspapers the following day carried headlines confirming the fact that the German Minister, on instructions from

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<sup>66</sup> For correspondence regarding the attack by a British fleet upon French warships at Mers-el-Kebir near Oran, Algeria, July 3, 1940, see vol. II, pp. 469-474.

Berlin, apologized for the tone of the note and requested the Costa Rican Government to consider that the note had not been sent.

The incident is now considered closed and in a manner highly satisfactory to the people and Government of Costa Rica.

Respectfully yours,

WM. H. HORNIBROOK

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710.Consultation (2)/530

*The Chargé in Guatemala (Cabot) to the Secretary of State*

No. 1401

GUATEMALA, July 29, 1940.

[Received August 5.]

SIR: I have the honor to report that in the course of an informal conversation which I had yesterday with the Acting Foreign Minister, I had the opportunity to ask him whether there was any truth to the press report that the German Minister had withdrawn his recent Notes of protest to Guatemala (the press report to which I referred said that the Notes of protest to Costa Rica had been withdrawn, and inferred that the same had been done in the case of those to Guatemala).

The Acting Minister said that this press report was erroneous, and that the Notes to Guatemala had not been withdrawn. He added that Guatemala had tried to compare the text of the Note which it had received regarding the Habana Conference with those received by the other Central American countries. He said that those received by El Salvador and Honduras were identical with those received by Guatemala, but that the Note addressed to Costa Rica had been distinctly stiffer.

Respectfully yours,

JOHN M. CABOT

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810.911/59

*The Minister in Bolivia (Jenkins) to the Secretary of State*

No. 317

LA PAZ, August 8, 1940.

[Received August 16.]

SIR: I have the honor to refer to my despatch No. 297, of July 27, 1940,<sup>67</sup> in regard to sources of news in the Bolivian press, and to report that, since the date of that despatch, the German Legation has become more open in transmitting so-called news bulletins direct to the Bolivian press instead of through the German propaganda committee.

This change in tactics has been careless enough so that a news bulletin under the heading "The End of the Habana Conference Disillusions Anglo-American Imperialism" was sent, apparently by in-

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<sup>67</sup> Not printed.

advertence, to *La Razón*, the sole La Paz newspaper which is definitely pro-American and anti-German. This news bulletin was seen by an officer of the Legation. It was mimeographed on paper bearing the letterhead of the German Legation. An English translation of the Spanish text is enclosed.

*La Razón* published the news bulletin in full in its edition of August 2, 1940, as an example of the improper activities of the German Legation, making the following comment :

“An idiotic employee of the German Legation has sent us the following bulletin which we print so that the sensible public may enjoy this German joke. It is probable that this absurdity will be published today in some of our colleagues as a ‘Special’ cable or credited to T. O. (Trans-Ocean), P. P., P. O., P. U., K. O., Z. M. or some other set of initials.”

*La Razón's* publication of the article seems to have forestalled its being carried by any of the normal press vehicles for German propaganda in La Paz if such was the intention.

It should be mentioned that this Legation has, for some time, been receiving from the German Legation copies of bulletins on the same letterhead and in the same general form. These have, however, been carefully selected and only anti-British, not anti-American propaganda, has been received.

Prior to the Franco-German armistice,<sup>68</sup> this Legation also received propaganda bulletins from the French Legation but, before starting to send these, a member of the staff of this office was asked by the French Minister whether the Legation would like to receive them and was informed that it would. The German Legation has never enquired whether this office desired to receive its bulletins which have been sent entirely gratuitously. Neither the British nor the Italian Legations, the other belligerent missions in La Paz, seem to broadcast any news or propaganda bulletins.

Because of the Bolivian national holidays, it has been impossible for me to take up with the Foreign Minister the question of the German bulletin sent to and published in *La Razón*. I do, however, intend to discuss the matter with him tomorrow in all its aspects, including the impropriety of the German Legation's action. The question would appear to be of as much interest to the Bolivian Government as to ourselves or the rest of the American Republics since the bulletin is critical of the Habana Meeting as a whole. The bulletin seems obviously intended to arouse Latin American doubts as to the accomplishments of the meetings. I shall report to the Department the attitude of the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Respectfully yours,

DOUGLAS JENKINS

<sup>68</sup> Signed June 22, 1940; *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, series D, vol. ix, p. 671.

[Enclosure—Translation]

*Press Release by the German Legation in Bolivia, July 30, 1940*THE END OF THE HABANA CONFERENCE DISILLUSIONS ANGLO-AMERICAN  
IMPERIALISM

The Conference of Habana terminated with a resolution in which all the American States mutually assure one another that they will intervene against any transfer of British, French or Dutch possessions in the western hemisphere to third powers which are not American.

No concrete agreement was reached in regard to this question. Article 5 stresses the provisional character of the Convention. The general agreement and the announcement made in regard to it in which the American States express their support of the freedom of world commerce is hailed in the North American as well as the Latin American press and the newspapers of some countries take pride in stating that their country's point of view prevailed. From this it may be deduced that the object of certain elements at the Conference, i. e., a common front of the American States against the new order in Europe, has not been attained. Above all, the prudent wording in regard to the colonies of the Allies in America leads to the conclusion that the Latin American countries evaded all possibility of being enmeshed in the European conflict as the result of intervening in those territories.

Although the American States thus maintained their complete freedom of political and economic action, the negotiations, as negotiations, were of fundamental importance.

For the first time before the forum of the New World and in the presence of official representatives the defeat of Great Britain was exposed as a fact, the division of its inheritance being placed in discussion. One portion of the British Empire was declared ripe for mandate.

The Powers which met to make this declaration are not, of course, enemies of England; on the contrary, among them are countries which Great Britain itself considers as friends and helpers. Thus, there is to be seen on a world political stage a drama made familiar through many human tragedies: it is the dearest and closest relatives who are made happiest by the death of the patriarch. Their impatience to divide the inheritance makes them try to hasten the end of the dying man before his enemies have given him the *coup de grace*. However, although London carried the British people into the war under the pretext of combatting the supposed National Socialistic plans to share the world, it must be noted with displeasure that the first steps toward such a partition come from that part of the world which has been lauded as an example of democratic liberty and love of peace.



## INDEX



## INDEX <sup>1</sup>

- Aaland Islands, status of, 328, 332, 333, 333-334, 340-341, 344-345, 349, 350, 554
- Achilles, Theodore C., 216*n*, 217
- Agreements. *See* Treaties, conventions, etc.
- Aguirre, Salvador, 794, 804
- Aguirre Cerda, Pedro, 770-772
- Aite, Aveten, 397
- Aktay, Ali Haydar, 459-460, 476, 484, 498-499, 520-522, 532-533, 561, 570-571, 606-607
- American Red Cross, 204, 207
- American Republics, cooperation among the American Republics in their reaction to the European war, 681-809
- Argentine proposal that American Republics declare themselves to be "nonbelligerents" rather than "neutrals", 743-770
- Argentine presentation and explanation of proposal to United States (*see also* U. S. views, *infra*), 743-746, 748-749
- Attitudes of Bolivia and Chile, 768
- Brazil: Argentine discussion with Brazil, and Brazilian attitude, 754-755, 756, 759, 765-766; U. S. exchange of information and views with Brazil, 755-756, 757-758, 760-761, 762-763, 766, 767
- German Government's efforts to prevent American Republics from participating in, 787-788, 789, 791, 792-793, 795
- Permanent Neutrality Committee, suggestions for possible submission of Argentine proposal to, 767, 768
- Press information and question of source of, 761-762, 763, 765-766, 766; Argentine statements to the press, 764-765, 769-770
- American Republics, etc.—Continued
- Argentine proposal—Continued
- U. S. views:
- Inability to adopt or support proposal, 752-754; Argentine reaction and substitution of modified proposal, 754-755, 758-759
- Opinions of Under Secretary of State Welles, 746-748; of U. S. Ambassador in Argentina, 749-751
- Belligerent submarines, question of exclusion from ports and territorial waters of American Republics, 776-787
- British representations to Argentine Government and desire for U. S. support, 776-779, 786-787
- U. S. efforts to secure legislation among certain American Republics for exclusion of belligerent submarines: Compliance of various governments, 779-781, 781-786; position of Argentina, 779, 781, 786-787
- Chilean President Aguirre Cerda's proposal to President Roosevelt for a joint appeal by American Republics for peace, 770-772
- Costa Rican proposal for a collective note from American Republics to Spain urging maintenance of Spanish neutrality, 773-776
- German Government's attempts to obstruct cooperation on neutrality measures among American Republics, 787-809
- Habana Consultative Meeting of Foreign Ministers (*July 21-30*), German efforts to interfere with objectives:
- Criticism of agenda, 796-800, 801-804, 806-807; statement by U. S. Secretary of State, 801*n*

<sup>1</sup> In indexing persons the intention has been to include all references to persons of significance for an understanding of the record, with the following exceptions: (1) The name of the Secretary of State or the Acting Secretary of State appearing as the signer of outgoing instructions unless there is a clear indication of the Secretary's or Acting Secretary's personal interest; (2) the name of an American officer in charge of a mission appearing as the signer of reports to the Department of State, except for personal items; (3) the names of persons to whom documents are addressed.

Persons are not identified by office in the index, but usually where a person is first mentioned in any section a footnote identification is given unless that person is identified in the text.



- American Republics, etc.—Continued  
 German Government's attempts to obstruct cooperation, etc.—Con.  
 Habana Consultative Meeting—Continued  
 Press release by German Legation in Bolivia (*July 30*), 807-809  
 Propaganda in Argentina, 802, 804-806; in Bolivia, 807-809; in Mexico, 791-792  
 Representations to various countries, and their responses, 791-800, 801-802, 803-804, 806-807  
 Invasion of Denmark and Norway by Germany, suggested protest by American Republics, 724-726; U. S. attitude, 726  
 Invasion of the Netherlands, Luxembourg, and Belgium by Germany, collective protest by American Republics (Uruguayan proposal), 727-743  
 Argentina's proposed modification, negotiations regarding, 732-733, 734-735, 736, 737-738, 739-740, 767-768  
 Declaration of Foreign Ministers Meeting at Panama (*1939*) on "Maintenance of International Activities in Accordance with Christian Morality", cited, 727, 728, 729, 731  
 Draft texts of joint declaration, 729, 731  
 German Government's efforts to prevent American Republics from joining in protest, 787-791, 792-796  
 Information concerning attitudes and ultimate acceptance of proposal by all countries, 732-736, 737, 738-739, 741, 742-743  
 Initiative of Uruguay, 727, 728, 765, 766  
 Publication of joint declaration, 741-742  
 Suggestions for including Denmark and Norway in protest, 733, 734, 742-743, 793  
 U. S. cooperation with Uruguay in support of proposal, 727-728, 729-732, 735, 738-739, 742, 767  
 Security zone established by Declaration of Panama, violations by belligerents, 681-724  
 Action of British cruiser *Orion* off coast of Florida, U. S. note to British Government, 688-689  
 British position regarding security zone, and concern over certain problems and contingencies, 684-688
- American Republics, etc.—Continued  
 Security zone, etc.—Continued  
 German ships blockaded in harbors of American Republics, discussions concerning, 709-711; case of the *Stella*, 710-711  
*Graf Spee*. See Naval battle of Montevideo, *infra*.  
*Hannover* incident, 706-707, 709, 711-712, 714-724  
 Inter-American Neutrality Committee, competence to deal with violations of security zone, 681, 682-684, 686, 699, 700, 709, 715, 715-716, 719, 720, 721-722, 723  
*Königsberg*, activities of, 699-700  
 Naval battle of Montevideo, protest by American Republics: British position, 689-692; French position, 692-695; German position, 684, 696-698  
*Tacama* incident, 682  
*Wakama* incident, 695-696, 699-706, 707-709, 712-714  
 Anderson, Sir John, 79, 80  
 Andresen, Nicol, 385, 398, 402  
 Antheil, Henry William, Jr., 372*n*, 379  
 Antonescu, Gen. Ion, 504-505, 525, 530, 533-534  
 Aranha, Oswaldo, 695-696, 700, 701, 704, 713, 725, 729, 734-735, 744, 757-758, 760, 761, 762-763, 765-766, 767  
 Araujo, Miguel Angel, 782, 801  
 Argentina (*see also* American Republics: Argentine proposal; *also under* American Republics: Invasion of the Netherlands, etc.):  
 Attitude toward a suggested protest by American Republics against German invasion of Norway and Denmark, 724-725, 725-726  
 Nazi propaganda and pro-German influences in, 739, 748-749, 755, 769-770, 777, 802, 804-806  
 Position regarding a proposed American Republics joint note to Spain, 773-774  
 Position with respect to proposed collective protest by American Republics on the *Hannover* incident, 719-720; on the *Wakama* incident, 702-703, 707-708  
 Response to U. S. approach to neutral countries on postwar problems, 117-118, 120  
 Argetoianu, Constantine, 489-490, 490-491  
 Argüello Vargas, Mariano, 784, 795-796  
 Arita, Hachiro, 639-640  
 Arliss, S. H. I., 681  
 Armour, Norman, 739-740, 749-751, 755-756, 764  
 Arsène-Henry, Charles, 669  
*Asama Maru* incident, 638*n*

- Ashton-Gwatkin, F. T. A., 604  
 Assarsson, Per Vilhelm Gustaf, 293-294, 297-298, 303, 309, 311-312, 319, 320-322, 325-326, 327, 332, 344-345, 354, 550, 553*n*  
 Associated Press, 761, 763, 766  
 Atatürk, Mustapha Kemal, 445  
 Atherton, Ray, 431*n*  
 Attlee, Clement, 80-81, 90, 233  
 Attolico, Bernardo, 50, 557  
 Auriti, Giacinto, 637  
 Austria, 26-27, 35-36, 63-64, 84, 88-89, 101-102  
 Avakumovich, Alexander G., 531  
 Avila, Arturo Ramón, 801
- Balkan Entente, 454, 456, 460, 483, 494, 514  
 Balkans, activities of the Soviet Union in (*see also* Soviet-German wartime cooperation), 444-538  
 Appraisals of Balkan situation, 444-451, 467, 468-469, 470-472, 482, 483-484, 493-494, 495, 514-516  
 Axis policies:  
 German-Soviet relations, 444, 446, 447, 449-450, 451, 452, 454, 455, 464, 477-478, 482, 503, 505, 507-508, 509, 516-518, 521, 522-523, 528-529, 530-532, 533, 535-536, 536-537, 539, 556-557, 615  
 Hitler, conversations with Bulgarian Foreign Minister and with King Boris, 496, 529-530, 532; with Rumanian Foreign Minister, 533; with Molotov, 530-531, 533, 536*n*  
 Influence in Balkan affairs (*see also* German-Soviet relations, *supra*, and Rumania, *infra*), 453, 454, 474, 481, 483, 484, 487, 488-489, 490-491, 496, 500-501, 501-503, 503-505, 510-511, 513, 519-520, 523-524, 529-532, 538  
 Rumania: Axis assistance and guarantee of Rumanian integrity, 26, 467, 478-479, 486, 487, 488-489, 502-503, 505, 506, 507, 507-508, 509, 517, 525, 530, 533-534, 562-564, 567, 568-569, 580, 615; *rapprochement* with Germany, 485*n*, 488-489, 490-491, 496; question of German occupation, 519-520, 523-524; repatriation to Germany of German subjects from Rumanian territory, 458-459, 519, 520, 525, 560; Rumanian adherence to Tripartite Pact, 531, 533*n*  
 Tripartite Pact: Bulgarian adherence, question of, 529, 530-531, 532, 535, 537, 631-632; Rumanian adherence (*Nov. 23*), 531, 533*n*  
 Vienna arbitral award (*Aug. 30*), 501-503, 505, 510*n*, 533
- Balkans, etc.—Continued  
 Balkan Entente, meeting in Belgrade, 454, 456, 460  
 Bessarabia, seizure of (*see also* Appraisals, etc., and Axis policies, *supra*):  
 Developments preceding Rumanian cession of Bessarabia to Soviet Union, 452, 453, 461-462, 465-469, 469, 472, 472-473, 475, 477-478, 479, 481  
 Rumanian appeal to United States to obtain clarification of Soviet intentions, and U. S. attitude, 468-469, 469-470, 472, 473  
 Rumanian defense measures, 452, 453, 477, 478-479, 483, 485, 488  
 Soviet ultimatums followed by occupation of ceded Rumanian territories, 479-481, 482-483, 484-485, 486, 488, 489-490, 492-493, 519; incorporation of ceded territories into Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, and organization of Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic, 492, 496-497  
 Bulgaria:  
 Adherence to Tripartite Pact, question of, 529, 530-531, 532, 535, 537, 631-632  
 Claims to certain Rumanian territories, and Rumanian cession of, 457, 482, 487, 496, 497, 503, 504-505, 506-507, 513  
 Relations with Soviet Union, 452, 453, 454, 482, 486, 506-507, 535, 537; economic agreements signed *Jan. 5*, 453  
 Danube Commission, European, 464*n*, 490*n*, 511*n*, 514, 522-523, 524-525, 526-527, 533-534  
 Danube Commission, International, termination and reorganization of activities, 464*n*, 490, 500-501, 503-504, 510-511  
 Danubian Conference, 507-508, 517, 522-523, 524-525, 525, 526-528, 531, 536-537  
 Exchange of populations of ceded Rumanian territories, 502, 504, 505, 506  
 Franco-British assistance and guarantee to Rumania, 452, 488-489, 491  
 Freezing of Rumanian assets in United States, 520  
 Hungary: Cession of Rumanian territory to Hungary (Vienna arbitral award), 501-503, 505, 510*n*, 533; relations with Soviet Union, 486, 531, 532  
 Military activities. *See* Rumanian-Soviet border incidents, etc., *infra*.

## Balkans, etc.—Continued

- Relations among the various countries in the Balkan area, 454, 455-456, 481, 482, 483-484, 486-487, 488, 494, 496, 500, 501-502, 504-505, 506, 514, 521-522
- Rumanian-Soviet border incidents and other military activities in Balkan area, 452-453, 459, 460, 465-466, 466-467, 468, 469, 472-473, 474, 477, 479, 485, 497-498, 499-500, 502-503, 505, 507, 508-509, 510, 511-512, 517-518
- Rumanian-Soviet diplomatic relations, 461, 473, 475, 477, 478, 495-496
- Rumanian-Soviet economic negotiations, 510, 538
- Turkey, relations with Soviet Union and attitude toward developments in Balkans, 444-451, 457-458, 459-460, 470, 474, 476-477, 486-487, 493-494, 495, 497-499, 513, 514-516, 520-522, 523-524, 526, 528-529, 532-533, 536, 537, 561-562
- Yugoslavia: Attitude toward Germany and Soviet Union, 518-519; establishment of diplomatic relations with Soviet Union, 463-464, 475, 476, 478; negotiations with Soviet Union concerning economic and political matters, 462-465, 470, 475-476
- Baltic States, occupation by Soviet Union (*see also* Soviet-German wartime cooperation), 357-444
- Developments preceding occupation: Lithuanian alleged provocative acts, Soviet demands for discontinuance of, 362-363, 366, 368
- Military pact between Baltic States, Soviet accusations concerning, 369, 370-371, 374, 379-380, 380, 383-384
- Soviet demands for extensive concessions, 357-360, 361-362, 362-368, 370, 371, 372-373
- Soviet ultimatum, 368-369, 372, 373, 374, 375, 382-383, 387
- Entry of Soviet troops into and occupation of Baltic States, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372-373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 389
- Estimate of Soviet troops in Baltic States, 384, 404-405
- Estonian President's desire to bring his family to United States, 403; U. S. reply, 405
- Flight of Lithuanian President to Germany, 369-370, 387
- Freezing of American deposits, 404

## Baltic States, etc.—Continued

- Freezing of Baltic assets in United States and United Kingdom after Soviet occupation, 389-392, 395-399, 408-409, 410-414, 439-440; protests by Soviet Union and Baltic governments, 395-399, 430-431, 443-444
- German-Soviet relations, 364, 366, 378, 382, 383, 384, 387-388, 394, 402-403
- Incorporation of Baltic States into Soviet Union: Denouncement by Lithuania of 1934 Baltic Pact, 383
- Elections, 380, 381, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 389, 392-393, 393-394, 399, 400, 402
- Formation of new governments on Soviet request, 368-369, 369-370, 371-372, 373, 375-376, 377, 379-380, 381, 382-383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 389
- Invalidation of visas issued by Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian representatives, 419
- Nationalization of land, industries, and banks, 399, 402, 405-406
- New constitutions of the Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republics, Soviet adoption of, 429-430
- Refusal by Soviets of visas to Baltic nationals, and question of repatriation of Germans, 382-383, 384, 394, 403, 404
- "Requests" by Baltic governments and various groups for incorporation into Soviet Union, 383-384, 386, 394, 399, 400, 405-406, 407-408
- Soviet citizenship for citizens of Baltic States, ukase concerning, 438-439
- Soviet ruble, introduction as legal currency in Baltic States, 441-442
- Termination of activities of Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian Missions and Consulates in United States, 409-410, 417, 427
- Liquidation of foreign diplomatic missions in Baltic States, question of (*see also* U. S. diplomatic missions, *infra*), 377, 378, 382, 382-383, 384-385, 403-404, 416-417, 417-419, 419-421, 422-424, 424-425
- Nationalization of foreign property in Baltic States, and negotiations by Germany and Sweden regarding compensation by Soviet Union, 440-441, 442-443

- Baltic States, etc.—Continued
- Nonrecognition by United States of Sovietization of Baltic States (*see also* Freezing of Baltic assets, *supra*, and U. S. diplomatic missions, *infra*), 393, 401–402, 421; steps to protect American interests and property, 393, 414–416, 426, 428–429, 433–434, 435, 439–440
  - Protests by the diplomatic representatives in United States of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania against violation of their countries' integrity by the Soviet Union, 389, 400–401, 406–407
  - Sequestration in United States and United Kingdom of gold and ships of Baltic States, 391–392, 395–397, 410–414, 430–431, 439–440, 443–444, 612
  - U. S. considerations regarding the closing of certain Soviet Consulates, 424–425
  - U. S. diplomatic missions (*see also* Liquidation of foreign diplomatic missions, *supra*): Closing of Legations and Consulates in Baltic States at Soviet request, 393, 403–404, 417–418, 419–420, 431, 432–433, 434, 436–438, 439; extension of closing date, U. S. request for, and Soviet replies, 420–424, 425–429, 432, 434, 435–436; incident involving death of an American clerk in airplane explosion, 372*n*, 379
  - U. S. statement of policy on the use of force in the conduct of international relations, 401–402, 421
- Bank for International Settlements, 412–413
- Barbarin, Evgeny, 545
- Belgium. *See* Invasion of the Netherlands, Luxemburg, and Belgium by Germany.
- Bentinck, Charles Henry, 681
- Bérenger, Henri, 240
- Berkis, Gen. K., 359, 366, 367–368, 368*n*, 371, 382
- Berle, Adolf A., Jr., 129–133, 138–140, 143, 217, 345–346, 709–711
- Bernhard, Prince, of the Netherlands, 187, 210
- Berrins, A., 362
- Bessarabia. *See under* Balkans.
- Biddle, Anthony J. Drexel, Jr., 266
- Bilmanis, Alfred, 389, 390, 406
- Bizauskas, Kazys, 370, 371
- Blücher, Wipert von, 291–292, 318
- Bohlen, Charles E., 431, 437
- Bolivia: Attitude toward Argentine proposal regarding “nonbelligerency” of American Republics, 768;
- Bolivia—Continued
- attitude toward proposed joint protest by American Republics against German invasion of the Netherlands, Luxemburg, and Belgium, 733; Nazi propaganda in, 807–809; position with respect to German Government's attempts to obstruct cooperation on neutrality measures among American Republics, 803–804
  - Bombing of civilian populations: Brussels, 190, 192, 195, 201; French cities, 189, 196
  - Bonnet, Georges, 52–53, 67, 69–70
  - Bonsal, Philip W., 729
  - Boris III, King of Bulgaria, 460, 482, 529–530, 532, 537, 631–632
  - Boyd, Augusto, 692–693, 712, 713, 727, 741
  - Boyd, Jorge E., 695, 696
  - Brazil (*see also under* American Republics: Argentine proposal, etc.): Attitude toward a possible joint American Republics declaration on rights of small nations, 725; attitude toward proposed joint protest by American Republics against German invasion of the Netherlands, Luxemburg, and Belgium, 735–736; legislation for exclusion of belligerent submarines from ports and territorial waters, 780; *Wakama* incident, sinking of German ship *Wakama* off coast of Brazil, 695–696, 699–706, 707–709, 712–714
  - Briceño, Julio E., 684
  - British and French efforts to obtain closer relations with the Soviet Union, 539–632
  - Appointment of new British and French Ambassadors to Soviet Union, 604, 605–606
  - Attempts to bring about change of Soviet policy toward Germany, 601, 606–608, 610, 613; suggestion of U. S. *démarche* in connection with, 600–601, 606
  - Attitude of France, and request for recall of Soviet Ambassador from Paris, 589–592, 593–596, 597–598
  - British proposals for improvement of Soviet-British relations, and Soviet failure to reply, 619–621, 623–624, 627, 628, 630–632; publicity, 629–630, 631, 668–669
  - British-Soviet negotiations for a trade agreement:
    - Appointment of Sir Stafford Cripps as Ambassador to Soviet Union, 604, 605–606
    - British aims, 603–604

- British and French efforts, etc.—Con.  
 British-Soviet negotiations for a trade agreement—Continued  
 Exploratory talks: Initiation of discussions, 597, 598, 599–600, 603–604; Moscow conversations, 609–610, 611–612, 620, 621–622, 630, 632, 668  
 Oil shipments to Soviet Union, British suggestion regarding, and U. S. view, 624–625  
 Sequestered gold and ships, Soviet request for release of, 602, 603, 612, 613, 628, 630  
 Tass communiqué concerning, 601–603  
 Far East situation, British policy and discussions with Soviets, 614–615, 617–619, 620, 622–623  
 Hitler speech (*July 19*), British comment on, 608  
 Molotov visit to Berlin, effects on British-Soviet relations, 628, 630  
 New Danube Commission, British protest against Soviet decision to create and participate in, and Soviet rejection of note, 626–627  
 Soviet foreign policy, 599, 609, 615–617; Stalin's views, 610, 611, 612  
 Soviet-Japanese *rapprochement*, British concern over possibility of, and desire for U. S. assistance to prevent, 614–615, 617, 618–619, 620, 622–623  
 Tripartite Pact, question of Soviet adherence to, 614, 617  
 Bruce, Stanley Melbourne, 82  
 Bucknell, Howard, Jr., 217  
 Bulgaria. *See under* Balkans.  
 Bullitt, William C., 266  
 Bülow-Schwante, Vicco von, 192, 195  
 Burma Road, British decision to reopen, 614, 616, 617–618, 656  
 Butler, Nevile M., 603–604, 620*n*, 674, 699–700, 710–711  
 Butler, R. A., 90  
 Cadogan, Sir Alexander, 79, 593  
 Campbell, Sir Ronald I., 241, 243, 260, 490  
 Campinchi, Cesar, 222, 223, 258–259  
 Cantilo, José María, 708, 719, 724–725, 725–726, 729, 732–770 *passim*, 777, 779, 781, 786–787, 789  
 Carias Andino, Tiburcio, 794  
 Carol II, King of Rumania, 452, 469, 481, 488–489, 495–496; abdication, 504*n*, 506, 520, 564  
 Chamberlain, Neville: Comments concerning Welles mission to Europe, 1–4, 14–15; conversations with Sumner Welles, 74–78, 87–91; in Churchill Cabinet, 613  
 Charles-Roux, François, 231–232, 600  
 Charlotte, Grand Duchess of Luxembourg, 196, 214–215  
 Charvériat, Emile, 217–218, 600  
 Chatfield, Lord, 82  
 Chautemps, Camille, 67, 69  
 Chauvel, Jean, 669  
 Chiang Kai-shek, Generalissimo, 569, 635, 643, 645–646, 647, 660*n*, 667, 670–671, 673, 674, 675  
 Chile: Attitude toward Argentine proposal regarding “nonbelligerency” of American Republics, 768; attitude toward proposed joint protest by American Republics against German invasion of the Netherlands, Luxemburg, and Belgium, 735, 737, 738, 741; legislation for exclusion of belligerent submarines from ports and territorial waters, 779–780, 786; position in connection with a proposed American Republics joint note to Spain, 773–774; President Aguirre Cerda's proposal to President Roosevelt for joint appeal by American Republics for peace, 770–772; views in connection with security zone established by Declaration of Panama, 681, 682–684  
 China. *See under* Japan, relations with Axis Powers and with Soviet Union.  
 Chomakov, Stoyan Petrov, 531  
 Christian X, King of Denmark, 167  
 Christov, Theodore, 452, 535, 538  
 Churchill, Winston S.: Attitude toward Finland in Soviet-Finnish war, 275; conversations with Sumner Welles, 83–85, 90; German invasion of France, views on situation and visits to France to discuss military problems, 220–221, 224, 233, 240, 242, 246–252; messages exchanged with President Roosevelt, 246–247, 247*n*, 254–255, 257  
 Ciano, Count Galeazzo, 127, 244, 501; conversations with Sumner Welles, 21–27, 96–100, 104–106, 110–113  
 Cincar-Markovich, Alexander, 464  
 Clark Kerr, Sir Archibald J. K., 667, 674  
 Colombia: Attitude toward proposed joint protest by American Republics against German invasion of the Netherlands, Luxemburg, and Belgium, 733, 734, 737, 741, 742, 743; legislation for exclusion of belligerent submarines from ports and territorial waters, question of, 779–780  
 Communism in Europe, 94–95  
 Communist activity and propaganda in Finland, 335; in Germany and German-occupied countries, 582; in Poland, 558  
 Communist Party in United States, 583  
 Conventions. *See* Treaties, conventions, etc.

- Costa Rica: Attitude toward proposed joint protest by American Republics against German invasion of the Netherlands, Luxemburg, and Belgium, 733; legislation for exclusion of belligerent submarines from ports and territorial waters, 779-780, 784-785, 785-786; proposal for a collective note from American Republics to Spain urging maintenance of Spanish neutrality, 733-776; views with respect to German Government's attempts to obstruct cooperation on neutrality measures among American Republics, 797, 806-807
- Cot, Pierre, 601
- Coulondre, Robert, 67, 220, 590
- Craigie, Sir Robert L., 636, 637, 640-641, 642-643, 666*n*
- Credit Freezing Emergency Act, 198
- Creighton, Comdr. John M., 639, 664-666
- Cripps, Sir Stafford, 573, 649, 667-669, 604-632
- Cretzianu, Alexander, 522-523, 530-532, 536-537
- Crewe, Lord, 78, 79
- Cuba: Attitude toward proposed joint protest by American Republics against German invasion of the Netherlands, Luxemburg, and Belgium, 732; legislation for exclusion of belligerent submarines from ports and territorial waters, 779-780, 781, 783
- Czechoslovakia, 36-37, 53-54, 63, 84, 88, 101, 103
- Dahlerus, Birger, 279-280
- Daladier, Edouard, 220, 236, 238, 240, 277, 306, 590, 597, 693-695; conversations with Sumner Welles, 59-66, 67
- Daniels, Josephus, 791-792
- Danube Commissions: European, 464*n*, 490*n*, 511*n*, 514, 522-523, 524-525, 526-527, 533-534; International, 464*n*, 490, 500-501, 503-504, 510-511; New Danube Commission, 626-627
- Dardanelles (*see also* Turkey: Straits regime), 561, 576-578, 584-585, 612
- Darlan, Adm. Jean-François, 222, 248, 267
- Davidescu, Gheorghe, 461, 465-466, 472, 473, 476, 479, 480, 483, 489, 495
- Davignon, Vicomte Jacques, 50, 184, 187-188, 191-192, 194
- Declaration of Panama (1939). *See* American Republics: Security zone established by Declaration of Panama.
- de Gaulle, Gen. Charles, 240-241, 247, 267
- de Geer, D. J., 186
- Dekanozov, V. G., 367, 369, 371, 392, 499-500, 508, 509, 511-512, 517, 533, 587-588
- de la Blanchetai, Pierre H., 692-693
- de Margerie, Roland, 261
- Denmark. *See* Invasion of Norway and Denmark by Germany.
- Derevyansky, V. K., 363
- de Ribes, Champrier, 66, 67
- Despradel, Arturo, 711, 712, 714-716, 718
- Diamantopoulos, Christos, 498-499
- Dimitrov, Georgy, 582
- Disarmament: Postwar problems, U. S. interest in exchange of views with neutral countries, 117-119, 121; Welles mission to Europe, discussions, 46-47, 55, 64-66, 69, 70-71, 74, 77-78, 83, 89, 91-92, 95, 99, 101, 103, 104, 105, 106, 116, 117
- Djordjevich, Milorad, 465
- Dodd, Charles, 689-690
- Dominican Republic: Attitude toward proposed joint protest by American Republics against German invasion of the Netherlands, Luxemburg, and Belgium, 735; *Hannover* incident, sinking of German ship *Hannover* off coast of Dominican Republic, 706-707, 709, 711-712, 714-724; legislation for exclusion of belligerent submarines from ports and territorial waters, 780
- Duchich, Yovan, 481, 492
- Duggan, Laurence, 699, 728, 729
- Duncan, Sir Andrew, 82-83
- Dunn, James C., 389*n*
- Echandi, Alberto, 775, 776, 797, 801, 806
- Ecuador: Attitude toward proposed joint protest by American Republics against German invasion of the Netherlands, Luxemburg, and Belgium, 735, 741, 743; legislation for exclusion of belligerent submarines from ports and territorial waters, 779-780, 780-781
- Eden, Anthony, conversations with Sumner Welles, 78-79, 80, 83
- El Salvador: Attitude toward proposed joint protest by American Republics against German invasion of the Netherlands, Luxemburg, and Belgium, 735; legislation for exclusion of belligerent submarines from ports and territorial waters, 779-780, 782, 783, 784, 786; views with respect to German Government's attempts to obstruct cooperation on neutrality measures among American Republics, 791, 801-802
- Erkko, Eljas, 288, 298-299, 300, 301, 323, 325, 352, 554-555
- Ertegin, Mehmet Münir, 131-133, 534-535

- Espil, Felipe A., 745-748, 752-754, 755, 763
- Estonia (*see also* Baltic States), neutrality, 157
- Evacuation. *See under* Invasion of the Netherlands, Luxemburg, and Belgium by Germany *and* Invasion of Norway and Denmark.
- Export-Import Bank, 282, 313-314, 318, 326*n*, 346
- Fabricius, Wilhelm, 493
- Far East (*see also* Japan): British estimate of Far Eastern situation, 635-636; British policy and discussions with Soviet Union, 614-615, 617-619, 620, 622-623; Italian position regarding, 100
- Fifth column activities in French Army, 226-227; in Spain, 223
- Filov, Bogdan, 461
- Finland, Soviet-Finnish winter war and peace of Moscow, 269-356
- Aaland Islands. *See under* Postwar developments: Soviet demands, *infra*.
- Aerial bombardment of Helsinki, 277
- Arms, ammunition, and implements of war, question of U. S. supply to Finland, 279, 287-288
- Efforts to bring about end of Soviet-Finnish war:
- Finland's desire to find procedure to bring about peace, 271-273, 274-275, 289-290, 296; acceptance of Soviet invitation to negotiate, 298-299, 299-300
  - German position, 272-273, 286, 288-289, 291-292, 299, 302, 304, 310-311, 312, 539-541, 547-548
  - Hungarian suggestion for mediation, 291
  - Soviet position, 284, 286, 287, 289; territorial demands and attitude toward a negotiated peace, 293-299
  - Swedish-German unofficial conversations, 279-280, 283-284, 304
  - Swedish position and good offices, 287, 288, 296, 299, 300, 301-302, 302-303, 304, 309, 311-312, 360
  - U. S. *démarche*, question of, and attitudes of Finland and Soviet Union, 271, 273, 274-275, 281-282, 284-286, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 305-306, 306*n*, 322
  - U. S. economic aid, 269, 274, 276, 278, 280-281, 282-283, 290-291, 292, 313-314; loan to Finland, question of, 269, 272, 274, 280, 282-283, 292, 293
- Entry of Allied countries into Soviet-Finnish conflict, question of, 270, 277, 287, 293, 295, 300
- Kuusinen government, 294, 297, 306, 312-313, 317, 547-548
- Finland, etc.—Continued
- Loan to Finland by United States, question of, 269, 272, 274, 280, 282-283, 292, 293, 335-336, 345-346
  - Military assistance to Finland:
    - Anglo-French aid, and assistance by Norway and Sweden, 67, 91, 269-271, 272, 276-277, 293, 300, 306-307, 309, 310, 539; transit of British and French troops through Sweden, question of, 90, 270, 293, 296, 299, 299-300, 304, 309, 310, 312, 539-540
    - Hungarian troops, 456
    - Italian aid, 25, 26, 275
  - Military situation, 271-272, 273, 275, 278, 287, 290, 292-293, 298, 299, 303, 360-361
  - Moral embargo, 283*n*, 324
  - Peace of Moscow:
    - Implementation. *See* Postwar developments, etc., *infra*.
    - Negotiations and terms, 300-301, 302-306, 307-308, 309, 311-313; signature of peace treaty and protocol *Mar. 12*, 314, 316-317; summary, 314-316
  - Petsamo nickel mines. *See under* Postwar developments: Soviet demands, *infra*.
  - Postwar developments and implementation of peace treaty:
    - Appraisal of Finnish situation, 318, 319-320, 322, 323, 325, 336, 349-350, 350-351
    - Communist activity, 335
    - Construction of railway in accordance with *art. 7* of peace treaty, 329
    - Defensive alliance between Finland, Norway, and Sweden, negotiations concerning, 318-319, 320-322, 322-323, 323, 324, 325, 341-342
    - Delineation of new frontiers, 319, 324-325, 325, 327, 339; signature of boundary protocol, 328, 353, 354
    - Discontinuance of Soviet blockade, 326
    - Evacuation of ceded areas, 318, 319-320, 325, 327; agreements regarding restoration and compensation for property, 331, 339, 351, 354
    - Fear of further Soviet aggression, 333, 335, 338-339, 340, 341, 346-347, 349-350, 351-352
    - Finnish Government: Reorganization of Cabinet, 320, 321, 339-340, 356; resumption of diplomatic relations with Soviet Union, 321, 325; Ryti's accession to Presidency, 356

- Finland, etc.—Continued  
 Postwar developments and implemen-  
 tation of peace treaty—Continued  
 German-Finnish relations: Con-  
 clusion of agreement for the  
 transit of German troops  
 through Finland to Norway,  
 347-349, 350, 351-352; trade  
 and clearing agreement, 342-  
 343  
 German-Soviet relations, effect on  
 Finland, 310, 318, 330, 341, 342,  
 343, 348, 349, 351-352, 353-354,  
 576-577  
 Karelo-Finnish Soviet Socialist  
 Republic, formation of, 313*n*,  
 324  
 Society of Friends of the Soviet  
 Union, activities of, 337-338,  
 339, 347  
 Soviet demands regarding—  
 Aaland Islands, Hangö Penin-  
 sula, and related matters,  
 328, 332, 333, 336-337, 340-  
 341, 344-345, 351, 554; settle-  
 ment of questions, 333-334,  
 336-337, 343-344, 349, 350  
 Petsamo nickel mines, 326, 327,  
 332, 334-335, 344, 352-353,  
 354-356, 559  
 Soviet-Finnish trade agreement,  
*June 28*, 330-331, 331-332, 339  
 Soviet protest against publication  
 in Finland of certain books  
 concerning the winter war, 353  
 Swedish request for indemnity for  
 damage caused by Soviet aerial  
 attack, and Soviet payment,  
 327-328  
 U. S. aid for reconstruction and  
 rehabilitation, discussions con-  
 cerning, 318, 323, 325, 326,  
 335-336, 345-346, 350; post-  
 ponement of payments on Fin-  
 nish debts, option for, 329-330  
 Finnish-American Trading Corp., 269,  
 313  
 Four Freedoms, 2  
 France (*see also* British and French  
 efforts to obtain closer relations  
 with the Soviet Union; Invasion  
 of France by Germany; Invasion  
 of Norway and Denmark by Ger-  
 many: British and French meas-  
 ures *and* French statement):  
 Anglo-French assistance and guar-  
 antee to Rumania, 452, 488-489,  
 491; French Fleet, 250, 252, 255,  
 257, 258-259, 261, 267; naval action  
 by belligerent ships off coast of  
 Norway, French position, 692-695;  
 Soviet-Finnish war, military as-  
 sistance to Finland, 67, 91, 270,  
 276-277, 293, 296, 300, 304, 306-307,  
 309, 310  
 Franco, Gen. Francisco, 773  
 François-Poncet, André, 244  
 Fushimi, Prince, 646, 663  
 Gache, Roberto, 702-703, 778, 787  
 Gafencu, Grigore, 468, 476, 495, 499-  
 500, 508, 509, 510*n*, 511-512, 516-  
 518, 573-574  
 Garay, Narciso, 689, 695-696, 703, 705,  
 712, 718-719, 722, 724, 732, 733, 737,  
 741, 742, 789, 793  
 Gavrilovich, Milan, 475, 478*n*  
 Gazitúa, Guillermo, 683  
 George, Lloyd, 85-86  
 Germany. *See* American Republics,  
 etc.; Balkans: Axis policies; Brit-  
 ish and French efforts to obtain  
 closer relations with the Soviet  
 Union; Invasion of France by Ger-  
 many; Invasion of the Nether-  
 lands, Luxemburg, and Belgium by  
 Germany; Invasion of Norway and  
 Denmark by Germany; Japan, re-  
 lations with Axis Powers, etc.;  
 Soviet-German wartime coopera-  
 tion.  
 Gigurtu, Ion, 478, 483, 485*n*, 488, 490,  
 499  
 Gil Borges, Esteban, 704, 719, 721, 723  
 Go, Toshi, 664  
 Goering. *See* Göring, Hermann.  
 Gold Reserve Act of 1934, 411, 413-414  
 Göring, Hermann, 264, 273, 279-280,  
 283-284, 302, 469*n*, 552-553, 579,  
 585-586; conversation with Sumner  
 Welles, 51-56  
 Graf Spee incident (*see also* Naval  
 battle of Montevideo *under* Ameri-  
 can Republics: Security zone),  
 748-749, 751  
 Greek Orthodox and Mohammedan  
 faiths, President Roosevelt's pro-  
 posal to send special envoys to  
 Turkey to confer with leaders of,  
 129-135  
 Green, Joseph C., 279  
 Greenwood, Arthur, 80-81  
 Grew, Joseph C., 636  
 Guachalla, Luis Fernando, 768  
 Guani, Alberto, 714, 727-742 *passim*,  
 765, 766, 773-774, 789, 790, 803  
 Guatemala: Attitude toward proposed  
 joint protest by American Repub-  
 lics against German invasion of the  
 Netherlands, Luxemburg, and Bel-  
 gium, 733; legislation for exclusion  
 of belligerent submarines from  
 ports and territorial waters, 779-  
 780, 782, 786; Schlesinger pam-  
 phlet, 798, 799; views with respect  
 to German Government's attempts  
 to obstruct cooperation on neu-  
 trality measures among American  
 Republics, 787-790, 794, 797, 797-  
 800, 807  
 Gufler, Bernard, 431



- Günther, Christian Ernst, 150, 151, 288, 323, 555
- Gustaf Adolf, Crown Prince of Sweden, 323
- Gutiérrez, Ostria, 768, 803-804
- Guzmán Tellez, Julio, 803
- Haakon VII, King of Norway, 164, 168, 170, 172, 173, 175, 179
- Habana Consultative Meeting of Foreign Ministers of the American Republics. *See under* American Republics: German Government's attempts to obstruct cooperation, etc.
- Hackzell, Antti, 290
- Hague Convention XIII of 1907, cited, 681, 682
- Haiti: Attitude toward proposed joint protest by American Republics against German invasion of the Netherlands, Luxemburg, and Belgium, 732; legislation for exclusion of belligerent submarines from ports and territorial waters, 779-780, 785
- Halifax, Lord, 13-14, 72-74, 78-80, 140, 259, 269, 270, 597-598, 599n, 599-600, 601-603, 630-631, 632n, 635-636, 669
- Hambro, Carl J., 318, 321
- Hamilton, Maxwell M., 672
- Hankey, Lord, 82, 83
- Hannover* incident, 706-707, 709, 711-712, 714-724
- Hansson, Per Albin, 150, 156, 283-284, 288
- Harriman, Florence J., 144, 149-150, 154, 157, 158, 165, 167, 168, 170-171, 176, 179n, 180
- Harwood, Rear Adm. Sir Henry, 786-787
- Hashimoto, Col. Kingoro, 646
- Hay, Gen. Eduardo, 791-793
- Hedin, Sven, 304
- Hellenic Youth Association, 130
- Henderson, Loy W., 389-390, 431n, 624-625
- Henderson, Nevile, 43
- Heinlein, Konrad, 63n
- Herriot, Edouard, 68-69, 260
- Hess, Rudolf, 50-51, 579
- Hilger, Gustav, 546-547
- Himmler, Heinrich, 191
- Hirohito, Emperor of Japan, 648, 649, 663, 666
- Hitler, Adolf (*see also under* Balkans: Axis policies): Attitude toward certain protests of American Republics, 684, 697, 737; attitude toward Finland, 302, 304, 335, 343; comments and observations of various persons concerning Hitler, 2, 9, 66, 98, 105-106, 200, 247, 248-249, 253, 259, 275; conversation with Sumner Welles, 43-50; conversations with Molotov, 581-582, 584-586, 630, Hitler—Continued  
632n, 675; edict relative to German-occupied areas in Norway, 162; meeting with Mussolini at Brenner Pass, 102, 109-110, 110-112, 113, 523; possibility of movement against the Americas, 229, 230, 234, 253; presentation of armistice terms to France, 264-265; pressure on Gen. Franco of Spain, 773; relations with Soviet Union and policy regarding eastward expansion, 377, 378, 388, 540, 559, 560-561, 569; speech of *July 19*, British comment on, 608
- Hoare, Sir Samuel, 90, 91
- Hobson, Henry A., 387n
- Holma, Harri, 307
- Honduras: Attitude toward proposed joint protest by American Republics against German invasion of the Netherlands, Luxemburg, and Belgium, 735; legislation for exclusion of belligerent submarines from ports and territorial waters, 780, 786; views with respect to German Government's attempts to obstruct cooperation on neutrality measures among American Republics, 793-794, 796, 800, 804
- Hoppenot, Henri Etienne, 593, 595
- Hore-Belisha, Leslie, 275
- Horinouchi, Kensuke, 667
- Hsu Mo, 659-660
- Hull, Cordell:  
Conversations with British Ambassador, 19-20, 439-440; Finnish Minister, 274, 341; Norwegian Minister, 152-153, 156-157, 161-162; Soviet Ambassador, 324  
Statement regarding German attempts to obstruct cooperation on neutrality measures among American Republics, 801n; regarding Welles mission to Europe, 8
- Hungary: Cession of Rumanian territory to (Vienna arbitral award), 501-503, 505, 510n, 533; relations with Soviet Union, 436, 531, 532; suggestion for mediation in Soviet-Finnish war, 291
- Huntziger, Gen. Charles, 228, 268
- Huthsteiner, Maj. George B., 364n, 366-367
- Ibn Saud, King of Saudi Arabia, 129-130
- I. G. Farben Industrie, 355
- Immigration Act of 1924, 658
- Indochina, French, 656-657
- Inönü, Ismet, 133, 134-135, 447, 493, 526
- Inter-American Neutrality Committee (*see also under* American Republics: Security zone), 749, 767, 768, 780, 782, 796, 800
- International Nickel Co. of Canada, 355-356

- Invasion of France by Germany and collapse of French resistance, 217-268
- Air bombardment of civilian population, 224, 233
- Armistice between France and Germany, information concerning terms and signature, *June 22*, 262, 263, 264-265, 265-266, 268; between France and Italy, *June 24*, 265, 267
- British support to France in planes and troops and reasons for withdrawal of, 221, 224-225, 239, 240-243
- Dunkirk: Situation of British and French troops, 234, 237-238; withdrawal of British troops, 239
- Enlistment of American volunteers as pilots in French Army, question of, 225-226, 230, 231
- Fifth column activities in French Army, 226-227; in Spain, report concerning, 223
- French Fleet, question of disposition for future use, 250, 252, 255, 257, 258-259, 261, 267
- Italy's entry into the war against France: Anticipation of, 221, 234, 236-237, 238-239, 241; information concerning, 244*n*, 246.
- Meeting between British and French at Tours, 246-251
- Military action and developments at the front, reports and discussions concerning, 220-221, 222-223, 224-225, 228-229, 233, 234, 237-239, 244-246, 252, 253, 260, 262
- Occupation of Paris, 238, 241-242, 245-246, 247, 252, 258
- Open cities, French declaration concerning, 262
- Political situation in France: Decisions of Premier Reynaud relative to certain Cabinet posts, 240-241; resignation of Reynaud and formation of a "peace Cabinet" under Pétain, 261-262
- Recognition by United Kingdom of General de Gaulle's National Committee, 267
- Resentment in France toward the British, 264, 266-267
- Resistance outside metropolitan France, French intentions regarding, 245, 246, 247, 248, 252, 256-257, 258-259, 261, 265
- Separate peace between France and Germany (*see also* Armistice, *supra*), British conditions and French position regarding, 248-249, 250, 258, 259-261
- Training of French transport pilots in United States, question of, 217-218, 219-220, 221
- U. S. aid for civilian refugees in France, 255
- Invasion of France—Continued
- U. S. Embassy in France, assignments of the Ambassador and Deputy Ambassador following German occupation, 266
- U. S. intervention or declaration of war on Germany, question of: French appeal and discussions concerning, 227-228, 229-230, 231-232, 233-234, 235-237, 245-246, 249, 250-251, 253-254
- Messages exchanged between President Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Churchill, 246-247, 247*n*, 254-255, 257; between President Roosevelt and French Premier Reynaud, 245-246, 247-248, 252-253, 255-256, 262-263, 265
- Publication of Roosevelt message to Reynaud of *June 13*, question of, 249-250, 251-252, 254-255, 256
- Recommendation of U. S. Chargé in Germany, 235-236, 237
- U. S. military aid to France: French appeals for airplanes and destroyers, and U. S. position, 218-219, 220, 221, 222-224, 230, 232, 238, 243-244; U. S. efforts to increase supplies and matériel, 237, 248, 254, 255-256, 259
- Visits to France by Churchill, 224, 246-251
- Invasion of the Netherlands, Luxemburg, and Belgium by Germany (*see also* under American Republics, etc.), 184-217
- Aerial combats over Luxemburg and the Netherlands, 184-185
- American securities owned by Belgian and Netherlands nationals, question of protection of, 196-197, 198
- Belgian neutrality, violation of: Exchange of messages between King Leopold and President Roosevelt, 194, 196, 197; question of a statement by United States, 185, 186, 188
- Bombardment of French cities, 189, 196
- Bombing of Brussels (open city) 190, 192, 195; Roosevelt message to Hitler regarding, 201
- Evacuation of Netherlands Crown Princess Juliana and children, 186-187, 202-203, 210-211, 214*n*
- German military offensive, anticipation of, 184, 185, 186, 188
- German ultimatum: Information concerning, 187-188, 190-192
- Rejection by Belgium and the Netherlands, 193-194; German refusal to accept, 195

- Invasion of the Netherlands, etc.—Con.  
 Military action and occupation of Belgium, Netherlands, and Luxemburg (*see also* Protests against German aggression, *infra*), 189–193, 195, 199, 200–201, 202, 212–214
- Netherlands Royal Family: Evacuation of Crown Princess Juliana and children, 186–187, 202–203, 210–211, 214; President Roosevelt's interest in welfare of, 202–203, 205, 210–211; status of Royal Family and of Government in exile, 202–203, 205–206, 210, 214*n*
- Protests against German aggression: Exchange of messages between King Leopold and President Roosevelt, 194, 196; official protest by Luxemburg, 214–215; severance of diplomatic relations with Germany by Belgium and the Netherlands, 193–194, 195
- Reaction in Germany, 199–200
- Severance of diplomatic relations with Germany by Belgium and the Netherlands, 193–194, 195
- Status of Belgian Government in exile, 203–209, 209–210, 212–214; U. S. continued recognition of Belgian Government, discussions concerning, 216–217
- Status of Netherlands Government in exile and of Royal Family, 202–203, 205–206, 210, 214*n*
- Surrender of Belgian King: French press reaction, 209; King Leopold's letters to President Roosevelt and Pope Pius XII, 211–212; proclamation of Belgian Prime Minister, 208–209
- U. S. aid for Belgian civilian population: Exchange of messages between President Roosevelt and King Leopold, 203–205; possible steps by Red Cross and others, 207
- U. S. diplomatic missions (*see also* U. S. Embassy in Belgium and U. S. Legation in Netherlands, *infra*): Designation of Chargés to Netherlands and Belgian Governments in London, 202*n*, 217; withdrawal at request of German Government, 174, 175–176, 214
- U. S. Embassy in Belgium, scope of activity following German invasion, including cooperation in relief efforts, 206–207
- U. S. Legation in Netherlands, arrangements for protection of American securities owned by Belgian and Netherlands nationals, 196–197, 198
- Invasion of the Netherlands, etc.—Con.  
 U. S. moral condemnation of German aggression, proposals concerning, 185, 186, 188, 196; exchange of messages between President Roosevelt and King of the Belgians, 194, 196, 197
- Invasion of Norway and Denmark by Germany, 136–183
- British and French measures (prior to invasion) to prevent use of Norwegian territorial waters by German vessels:  
 Arrangements and announcements, 136–141, 142–143  
 German timing of invasion of Norway, relation to, 137–138, 151, 152, 153, 155, 162  
 Norway's request for U. S. support of her protest, 136–138, 139–140, 143; U. S. position, 138, 139
- Notes to Norway and Sweden, and joint public declaration, 140–141, 143
- Departure of Norwegian Government from Oslo, 144, 147, 158; establishment of King and Government in England, 168, 170, 173–174
- Estonian neutrality, 157
- Existence of state of war, question of, 149, 156–157, 158–159
- Evacuation of American citizens, 154, 173, 177–178, 180; of Crown Princess of Norway and children, 158, 168–169, 172–173, 177–178, 180, 182, 183
- Finland's position, 151–152
- French statement in support of Norwegian resistance, 147
- German administration of occupied areas in Norway, 162–164, 169, 170–172, 174, 179; British views and U. S. position concerning question of recognition of a puppet government, 175, 176–177
- Military occupation of Denmark, and attitude of Danish people, 141–142, 144, 145–146, 165–167
- Military occupation of Norway and acts of war, 141–142, 144, 144–147, 148, 149–150, 152–153, 168; U. S. position, 152, 156–157, 157–158, 159–162
- Norwegian Minister to United States, status and views of, 146, 152–153, 156–157, 158–159
- Norwegian Royal Family: Evacuation of Crown Princess and children to United States, 158, 168–169, 172–173, 177–178, 180, 182, 183; King Haakon VII and Crown Prince, information concerning position and status following

- Invasion of Norway, etc.—Continued  
 German occupation of Norway, 164, 168, 170, 172, 173, 175, 179  
 Protest by American Republics, suggested, 724–726  
 Quisling government, 150, 156, 169, 172  
 Reaction in Germany, official and unofficial, 155–156  
 Sweden's situation, and determination as to strict neutrality, 148–149, 150–151, 156  
 Termination of Norwegian resistance upon withdrawal of British forces, 164, 168, 169  
 U. S. diplomatic missions (*see also* U. S. Legation, *infra*), designation of Chargé to Norwegian Government in London, 179, 181; withdrawal at request of German Government, 174, 175–176, 178, 182–183  
 U. S. Legation in Norway: Assumption of British and French interests, 144, 153, 154; matters affecting, 153–154; movements of U. S. Minister, 144, 154, 158, 165, 167, 179*n*
- Italy (*see also* Balkans: Axis policies; and Japan, relations with Axis Powers, etc.):  
 Argentine citation of Italy as example of "nonbelligerency", and U. S. attitude, 744, 747–748, 749, 752, 762  
 Armistice agreement with France (*June 24*), 265, 267  
 Attitude toward Balkan situation, 26, 98, 110, 112; Far Eastern situation, 100; Soviet-Finnish war, 25, 26, 94, 110  
 Entry into the war against France, 221, 234, 236–237, 238–239, 241, 244*n*, 246
- Jablonskis, A., 409  
 Jacquin, Gen. Paul Antoine, 219, 221, 222  
 Jeanneney, Jules, 68  
 Japan, relations with Axis Powers and with Soviet Union, 633–680  
 British estimate of situation, 635–636  
 China situation:  
 Chinese views on Japanese-Axis alliance, 659; on Japanese-Soviet relations, 660  
 German attitude toward, 647, 674  
 Relation to question of Japanese-Soviet relations, 634–635, 642, 645, 656, 667–668, 671, 673, 677, 678  
 German pressures on Japan and on Soviet Union, 640–641, 642–643, 658, 675  
 Italian concern with regard to a possible Soviet-Japanese accord, 637
- Japan, relations, etc.—Continued  
 Japanese-Axis alliance:  
 Activities and negotiations leading to, 647–651, 662–663  
 Tripartite Pact signed *Sept. 27*:  
 Effect on future Japanese moves, opinion of U. S. Ambassador in Japan, 658  
 Information concerning signature and ratification, 651, 651*n*, 666–667  
 Interpretation of *art. 3*, 651, 663–664, 665  
 Official and public reaction in Japan, 657–659, 661–662, 664–665  
 Reaction among Soviets, Chinese, and others, 653–656, 659, 660–661  
 Reports concerning a *procès-verbal*, 666, 669  
 U. S. Ambassador in Japan, letter to Maxwell M. Hamilton, and reply, 652–653, 672
- Soviet-Japanese relations (*see also* China situation: Relation to, etc., *supra*):  
 Agreements of *Dec. 31, 1939*, regarding boundary and fisheries questions, 633–634, 636  
 Improvement of relations, possibilities of, 643–644, 645–646, 655, 660, 664  
 Japan's policy of southward advance, 646, 652, 666  
 Manchurian-Outer Mongolian boundary delimitation, 637–638, 641–642, 670–671  
 Negotiations relative to trade and other matters, reports and discussions concerning, 639–640, 642, 670–671, 672, 679  
 Nonaggression pact, negotiations for, 569, 672–674, 676–680; Soviet territorial demands, 674, 676, 678–679  
*Rapprochement* between Japan and Soviet Union, possibility of: British concern over, 614–615, 617, 618–619, 620, 622–623; German interest in, 568–569, 571–572, 573, 581, 585; Italian attitude, 637  
 Tripartite Pact, *Sept. 27*. *See under* Japanese-Axis alliance, *supra*.  
 U. S. instructions to representatives in China regarding discussions with Soviet or Japanese officials, 639
- Johnson, Herschel V., 635–636  
 Jones, Jesse H., 269, 346*n*  
 Juliana, Crown Princess of the Netherlands, 186–187, 202–203, 210–211, 214*n*

- Kaganovich, L. M., 542, 543-544, 566  
 Kaiv, Johannes, 390, 400  
 Kalinin, M. I., 294  
 Kallio, Kyösti, 356*n*  
 Kanin, Prince, 646, 663  
 Keitel, Gen. Wilhelm, 264, 268  
 Kerensky, A. F., 381  
 Kiosseivanov, George, 455, 456  
 Kirchensteins, Augusts, 379*n*, 380, 381, 394  
 Kirk, Alexander C., 42, 235-236, 237  
 Knatchbull-Hugessen, Sir H. M., 447, 476  
 Kobayashi, Kikuo, 649-651, 652  
 Kocins, Fricis, 367  
 Koht, Halvdan, 144, 146-147, 175, 181  
 Kollontay, Mme. A. M., 284, 288, 328  
 Konoye, Prince, 644, 648, 650, 657, 661-662, 663  
 Korosec, Antun, 518  
 Kotilainen, Väinö A., 332  
 Kotze, Hans Ulrich von, 382-383, 384, 388  
 Kreve-Mickevičius, Vincas, 386*n*, 418  
 Kuh, Frederick, 629  
 Kurusu, Saburo, 650, 653  
 Kuusinen, Otto W., 285, 294, 304, 306, 308, 313, 313*n*, 317, 388*n*, 548*n*
- Labonne, Erik, 379, 605*n*, 606, 607  
 Lacis, Vilis, 380, 386  
 Lafèche, L. R., 225  
 Laidoner, Gen. Johan, 358, 359, 366, 378  
 Laleau, Léon, 785  
 Langmann, Otto, 803  
 Lardizabal, Fernando, 793  
 Latvia. *See* Baltic States.  
 Laurent-Eynak, André Victor, 218-219, 225  
 Laval, Pierre, 261, 267  
 Lavrentyev, A. I., 475, 477, 478, 489, 492-493  
 Lebrun, Albert, 58-59, 692-693  
 Le Gallais, Hugues, 214  
 Léger, Alexis, 66-67, 227-228, 276  
 Lenin, V. I., 430*n*  
 Leonard, Walter A., 431  
 Leopold III, King of the Belgians: Attitude in France toward King's surrender, 209, 234, 236, 240, 242; exchange of messages with President Roosevelt, 194, 196, 197, 203-205, 211-212; position at time of German invasion, and subsequent surrender, 185, 188, 195, 208-209, 211-213  
 Le Rougetel, John H., 599, 605  
 Le Tellier, P., 186, 205  
 Lightner, E. Allan, Jr., 178, 182, 437  
 Lindh, N., 442  
 Lithuania. *See* Baltic States.  
 Livesey, Frederick, 391  
 Loktionov, Col. Gen. A. D., 364, 382  
 Lothian, Lord, 140-141, 142, 143, 176-177, 221, 234, 260, 266, 270, 439, 598*n*, 635, 684-686, 709-711, 778
- Lozovsky, S. A., 395, 410, 421, 426, 427, 430, 432, 435, 436, 437, 594, 621, 660-661  
 Luxemburg. *See* Invasion of the Netherlands, Luxemburg, and Belgium by Germany.  
 Macchi, U. P., 637  
 Machek, Vlatko, 518  
 Mackenzie King, W. L., 225-226, 231  
 MacVeagh, Lincoln, 131  
 Maglione, Cardinal, 108-110  
 Maisky, I. M., 593, 596, 597-598, 600, 601-603, 605  
 Manchurian-Outer Mongolian boundary delimitation, 637-638, 641-642, 670-671  
 Mandel, Georges, 225, 258-259, 260  
 Manini Rios, Pedro, 713-714  
 Mannerheim, Baron Karl Gustav, 285, 296*n*, 298, 304  
 Mannerheim Line, 350  
 Manoilescu, Michael, 501, 502-503  
 Marquis, Robert L., 437  
 Marris, A. D., 624-625  
 Marshall, Gen. George C., 276  
 Martha, Crown Princess of Norway, evacuation to United States, 158, 168-169, 172-173, 177-178, 180, 182, 183  
 Martius, Georg, 524  
 Mascia, L., 607  
 Massigli, René L. D., 447, 476  
 Matsuoka, Yosuke, 643-645, 646, 650, 662, 663, 664, 664-666, 666*n*, 670, 672-673, 679  
 Maxton, James, 87  
 Maziones, John, 437  
 McClung, John E., Jr., 437  
 Menemencioglu, Numan Rifaat, 455, 474  
 Meny, Jules, 218-219  
 Meretskoy, Gen. K. A., 378*n*  
 Merkys, Antanas, 367, 370, 371, 379, 387, 394  
 Mexico: Attitude toward proposed joint protest by American Republics against German invasion of the Netherlands, Luxemburg, and Belgium, 733, 734, 737, 743, 793; legislation for exclusion of belligerent submarines from ports and territorial waters, 780; Nazi activities in, 791-792; views with respect to German Government's attempts to obstruct cooperation on neutrality measures among American Republics, 791-793  
 Micara, Msgr. Clemente, 201  
 Michael I, King of Rumania, 504*n*  
 Mikkola, Erkki, 346  
 Mikoyan, A. I., 332, 416, 465, 542, 545, 609, 610, 611-612, 622, 664  
 Minni, J. W., 313  
 Moffat, J. Pierrepont, 146, 158-159, 278*n*

- Mohammedan and Greek Orthodox faiths, President Roosevelt's proposal to send special envoys to Turkey to confer with leaders of, 129-135
- Mohammed Khan, Faiz, 528*n*
- Molotov, V. M. :  
 Balkan situation, 460-483 *passim*, 507, 509, 520-522, 528, 530-531, 533
- Incorporation of Baltic States into Soviet Union, 361-362, 363, 364, 367, 378, 379*n*, 382, 387, 406, 416, 419-420, 422, 426, 428
- Soviet-Finnish war, 281-355 *passim*
- Soviet relations with Germany, 542-588 *passim*; with Japan, 633-634, 635, 641, 642, 664, 668-679 *passim*; with United Kingdom and France, 594-632 *passim*
- Visit to Berlin, 573-586, 587-588, 628, 630, 677-678
- Monroe Doctrine, 38-39, 40-41, 804-806
- Moral embargo, 283*n*, 324
- Moreno Fernández, Salvador, 223
- Morgenstierne, Wilhelm Munthe de, 136-140, 143, 146, 152-153, 156-157, 158-159, 161-162, 170, 180
- Morin, Relman, 651
- Morishima, Morito, 662
- Munch, Peter, 166
- Munters, Vilhelms, 357, 359, 360, 367, 375, 377
- Murray, Wallace, 131-133, 135
- Mussolini, Benito: Comments by various persons concerning Mussolini, 12-13, 66, 90, 93, 98, 105-106, 108, 113-114, 115, 127, 445; conversations with Sumner Welles, 27-33, 100-104
- Naggiar, Adm. Paul Emile, 590-591, 605*n*
- Natkevičius, Ladas, 363, 367
- Nenonen, Lt. Gen. Vilho Petter, 276, 279
- Netherlands. *See* Invasion of the Netherlands, Luxemburg, and Belgium by Germany.
- Netherlands East Indies, 647, 651, 656
- Neutrality (*see also* American Republics, etc.): Invasion of the Netherlands, Luxemburg, and Belgium by Germany; Invasion of Norway and Denmark by Germany: Estonia, 157; Sweden, maintenance of neutrality, 148-149, 150-151, 156, 553-554, 555; U. S. approach to neutral countries regarding exchange of views on postwar problems, 117-122
- Neutrality Act, cited, 751, 753, 758, 779-780
- Neutrality Committee. *See* Inter-American Neutrality Committee.
- Newall, Sir Cyril, 90
- Nicaragua: Attitude toward proposed joint protest by American Republics against German invasion of the Netherlands, Luxemburg, and Belgium, 735, 737, 738-739, 741; legislation for exclusion of belligerent submarines from ports and territorial waters, 779-780, 784, 786; views with respect to German Government's attempts to obstruct cooperation on neutrality measures among American Republics, 795-796, 796-797
- Nikitin, K. K., 357, 359, 367
- Nomura, Adm. Kichisaburo, 637
- Norway (*see also* Invasion of Norway and Denmark by Germany): Defensive alliance between Finland, Norway, and Sweden, negotiations concerning, 318-319, 320-322, 322-323, 323, 324, 325, 341-342; German-Finnish agreement for transit of German troops through Finland to Norway, 347-349, 350, 351-352; transit of Allied troops through Norway to Finland, 293, 296, 300, 310
- Norwegian Line vessels, 139-140
- Obradovich, Sava, 465
- Ohashi, Chuichi, 658-659, 659-660, 669
- Oil: Baku oil fields, 592, 597, 620; British suggestions regarding shipments to Soviet Union, 624-625; Rumanian oil fields, 477, 520, 563
- Okamoto, M., 604
- Olav, Crown Prince of Norway, 168, 170, 172-173, 183
- Open cities, question of bombing of, 190, 192, 195, 201, 262
- Ortega, Abraham, 681, 683, 768
- Ortiz, Roberto M., 739, 743-744, 754-755, 755-756, 757-758, 761, 769, 781
- Oshima, Gen. Hiroshi, 647, 650
- Ott, Maj. Gen. Eugen, 650
- Ottawa agreements, 31
- Oumansky. *See* Umansky, K. A.
- Ovey, Sir Esmond, 708, 777-778, 786-787
- Paasikivi, Juho Kusti, 299, 300, 302, 304, 316, 321, 322, 325, 325*n*, 327, 332, 339, 340, 344-345, 350, 352
- Packer, Earl L., 431, 438, 439*n*
- Paleckis, Justas, 375, 387
- Panama :  
 Legislation for exclusion of belligerent submarines from ports and territorial waters, 780  
 Role in connection with collective protest by American Republics against German invasion of the Netherlands, Luxemburg, and Belgium, 727-743 *passim*; in connection with violations by belligerents of security zone established by Declaration of Panama, 684-724 *passim*

- Panama Consultative Meeting of Foreign Ministers of American Republics (1939), agreements and resolutions cited, 727, 728, 729, 731, 742*n*, 746-747, 753-754, 759
- Papen, Franz von, 11-12, 474, 494
- Paraguay, attitude toward proposed joint protest by American Republics against German invasion of the Netherlands, Luxemburg, and Belgium, 735, 737
- Patagonia incident, 751*n*
- Päts, Konstantin, 372, 376, 378, 384, 389, 402*n*, 403, 405
- Paul, Prince Regent of Yugoslavia, 475
- Payart, Jean, 306-307, 593, 594, 595-596, 599, 605*n*
- Peace:
- Chilean President Aguirre Cerda, proposal to President Roosevelt for joint appeal by the American Republics for peace, 770-772
  - Finnish-Soviet war, peace of Moscow. *See* Finland: Peace of Moscow.
  - Greek Orthodox and Mohammedan faiths, President Roosevelt's proposal to send special envoys to Turkey to confer with leaders of, 129-135
  - Taylor, Myron C., appointment as President Roosevelt's personal representative to Pope Pius XII, 123-129
  - Welles mission to Europe. *See* Welles, Sumner: Special mission to Europe.
- Pekkala, Mauno, 313, 335
- Pelényi, John, 457
- Pella, V. V., 524
- Pertinax (André Géraud), 6
- Peru: Attitude toward a proposed American Republics joint note to Spain, 774; attitude toward proposed joint protest by American Republics against German invasion of the Netherlands, Luxemburg, and Belgium, 733; legislation for exclusion of belligerent submarines from ports and territorial waters, question of, 779-780
- Pétain, Henri Philippe, 238, 258, 261, 262, 266, 267
- Petsamo nickel mines, 326, 327, 332, 334-335, 344, 352-353, 354-356, 559
- Pierlot, H. M. E., 208-209, 212, 216
- Piip, Ants, 357, 358-359, 359, 360
- Pilet-Golaz, Marcel, 121, 122
- Plotnikov, Viktor A., 478
- Poland: Attitude toward question of military aid to Finland, 276-277; Communist propaganda in, 558; Welles mission to Europe, discussions in connection with Polish situation, 3, 25, 27, 32, 37-38, 46, 52-53, 72, 73, 84, 88, 89, 101, 102-103, 105
- Pope Pius XII: Conversation with Sumner Welles, 106-108; letter from King Leopold III, 212; President Roosevelt's appointment of Myron C. Taylor as his personal representative to Pope Pius, 123-129
- Popov, Ivan, 454, 461, 482, 496, 504-505, 513, 529-530, 537
- Posdnyakov, N. G., 357, 359, 367, 371
- Postwar problems, U. S. approach to neutral countries regarding exchange of views on, 117-122
- Potemkin, V. P., 459
- Pound, Sir Dudley, 79-80
- Povilaitis, A., 368, 370
- Preston, Thomas H., 418, 423
- Procopé, Hjalmar J., 274, 279, 283, 287-288, 326, 329-330, 334, 335, 341, 345
- Propaganda:
- Communist activity and propaganda in Finland, 335; Germany and German-occupied countries, 582; Poland, 558
  - Nazi propaganda and pro-German influence in Argentina, 739, 748-749, 755, 769-770, 777, 802, 804-806; Bolivia, 807-809; Mexico, 791-792
- Prytz, Bjorn Gustav, 270
- Quisling government, 150, 156, 169, 172
- Ramsay, Henrik, 355
- Rangell, Jukka W., 318, 356
- Rankin, Karl L., 182
- Rastikis, Gen. Stasys, 367*n*, 368
- Ratay, Maj. John P., 466
- Rebane, Hans, 357, 363
- Recognition: Belgium, Government in exile, U. S. continued recognition of, 216-217; de Gaulle National Committee, recognition by United Kingdom, 267; nonrecognition of conquest of territory acquired through military aggression, U. S. policy concerning, 255-256; Norway, question of U. S. recognition of a German puppet government, 175, 176-177
- Reconstruction Finance Corporation, 269, 313-314, 345
- Rei, August, 357, 358, 361-362, 373, 378
- Reinebeck, Otto, 787, 788, 788-790, 791, 794, 797, 799-800, 804, 806-807
- Reinhardt, G. Frederick, 431, 437, 439
- Relief, U. S. aid for Belgian and French civilian population, 203-205, 207, 255
- Reynaud, Paul (*see also* Invasion of France by Germany): Conversations with Sumner Welles, 14, 70-72, 91-92, 116; messages exchanged with President Roosevelt, 245-246, 247-248, 252-253, 255-256, 262-263, 265

- Ribbentrop, Joachim von, 145, 190-192, 195, 273, 283-284, 447, 456, 496, 501, 502-503, 545, 563-564, 568, 575-579, 579, 581-582, 584, 647, 650, 653, 654; comments of various persons concerning Ribbentrop, 24, 27, 66, 99, 105, 105-106, 107-108, 109; conversation with Sumner Welles, 33-41
- Richling, J., 682
- Ritter, Karl, 288-289, 452, 539, 542, 543-544, 545
- Roca, Julio A., 774
- Rochat, Charles, 189
- Rodríguez Alves, José, 754-755, 755-756, 757, 759, 766, 767
- Rome Exposition of 1942, question of U. S. participation, 22, 29, 115
- Roosevelt, Franklin D. (*see also* Invasion of France by Germany):  
 Appointment of Myron C. Taylor as President's personal representative to Pope Pius XII, 123-129  
 Exchange of messages with President Aguirre Cerda of Chile, 770-772; with Winston Churchill, 246-247, 247*n*, 254-255, 257  
 Expressions of esteem for Roosevelt by certain European officials, 60, 66, 93, 96, 108, 113  
 Four Freedoms, 2  
 German invasion of Belgium and the Netherlands:  
 Exchanges of messages with King Leopold III, 194, 196, 197, 203-205, 211-212; with Queen Wilhelmina, 187*n*, 202-203  
 Interest in welfare of Netherlands Royal Family, 187*n*, 202-203, 205, 210-211  
 Message to Hitler regarding bombing of Brussels, 201  
 German invasion of Norway: Arrangements leading to evacuation to United States of members of Norwegian Royal Family, 168-169, 172-173, 177-178, 180, 182, 183; statement condemning German aggression, 157-158  
 Letters to Mussolini, 29; Neville Chamberlain, and reply, 75, 87*n*  
 Press statements concerning Welles mission to Europe, 4, 20  
 Proposal to send special envoys to Turkey to confer with leaders of Greek Orthodox and Mohammedan faiths regarding possibility of peace, 129-135  
 Soviet-Finnish war, interest in and recommendation to Congress regarding loan to Finland, 269, 278, 280, 282, 283, 298*n*, 299, 305, 317, 346*n*, 356*n*  
 Soviet occupation of Baltic States: Letter from Sumner Welles in connection with, 424-425; re-
- Roosevelt—Continued  
 quest of Estonian President for assistance in protecting his family, 403, 405
- Rosso, Augusto, 517, 583, 607
- Ruedt Collenberg, Baron, 791-793
- Rumania. *See* Balkans.
- Ryti, Risto H., 271-356 *passim*
- Saavedra Lamas, Carlos, 740
- Sahlin, S. E. G., 302
- Saint-Quentin, Count de, 227, 243-244
- Sakhalin, 643, 670, 674, 676, 679
- Salazar, Carlos, 782, 787, 788, 789-790, 801
- Sandler, Rickard J., 309
- Santos Muñoz, P., 777
- Saraçoglu, Sükrü, 444, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 460, 476-477, 486-487, 493-494, 495, 513, 514, 516, 523, 526, 536, 557
- Saydam, Refik, 448, 457-458, 493
- Sayre, Francis B., 640
- Sazonov, S. D., 577*n*
- Scasso, Adm., 777
- Schacht, Hjalmar, 56-58
- Schlesinger, Alfredo, 798, 799
- Schnurre, Karl, 539, 543-544, 545, 562, 571, 572, 579, 587, 588
- Schoenfeld, Rudolf E., 179, 181, 202*n*, 216*n*
- Schulenburg, Friedrich Werner, Count von der, 286, 294, 351*n*, 353-354, 364, 471, 473, 484, 503*n*, 507, 508, 509, 517, 547-573 *passim*, 621
- Security, discussions of Sumner Welles during his special mission to Europe, 91, 92-93, 95, 98-99, 101, 102, 103, 104-105, 106-107, 116-117
- Seeds, Sir William, 605
- Seja, Ludwigs, 359*n*, 386
- Serrano Suñer, Ramón, 223
- Shale Oil Co. in Estonia, 440-441
- Shao, Li-tzu, 655, 660-661
- Shiratori, Toshio, 650
- Shkvartsev, A. A., 568, 588
- Shumenkovich, Iliya, 470
- Sikorski, Gen. Wladyslaw, 72, 277
- Simon, Sir John, 49, 82-83
- Sinclair, Sir Archibald, 81, 90
- Skucas, Kazys, 363, 370
- Smetanin, Constantin, 645-646
- Smetona, Antanas, 369-370, 387, 389
- Smilyanich, Miloye, 475
- Smith, Laurence, 662
- Snell, Lord, 78
- Sobolev, A. A., 532, 535, 537, 631-632
- Soderhjelm, J. O., 355
- Souritz, Y. Z., 592, 593, 594, 595
- Soviet-German wartime cooperation, 539-589  
 Appraisals and observations on German-Soviet relations, 540, 548, 549-550, 551-552, 558-562, 564-565, 565-566, 575-579, 580-581, 582-583, 615-616  
 British attitude toward, 573-574, 580



- Soviet-German wartime cooperation—  
Continued
- Consular offices, opening of, 558
  - Economic cooperation and agreement (*Feb. 11*), 539, 541, 542, 543-547, 551-553, 562, 572, 585-586, 587, 588-589, 599<sup>n</sup>
  - Frontier agreement, announcement concerning, 548-549
  - German attitude toward Soviet moves in Baltic area and Balkans, 539-541, 555, 556-557, 558-562, 569
  - German-Italian guaranty of Rumanian integrity, Soviet reaction regarding, 562-564, 567, 568-569, 580
  - German military activities in northern and northeastern Europe, 542-543, 549, 565-566
  - Japanese-Soviet agreement, possibility of, 568-569, 571-572, 573, 581, 585
  - Molotov's visit to Berlin, purposes and results, 573-586, 587-588, 677-678
  - Moscow discussions of outstanding German-Soviet problems (*see also* Molotov's visit to Berlin, *supra*), 568-573
  - Rail communications agreement, 566-567
  - Regulation of border disputes, conclusion of treaty for, 555
  - Soviet attitude toward German actions in Norway and Denmark, the Baltic and Balkan areas, 549, 550, 554-555, 556, 567, 568-569
  - Sweden's neutrality, maintenance of, 553-554, 555
  - Tripartite Pact, significance in Soviet-German relations, 564-565, 568-569, 580, 584, 615-617
- Soviet Union. *See* Balkans, activities of the Soviet Union in; Baltic States, occupation by Soviet Union; British and French efforts to obtain closer relations with the Soviet Union; Finland, Soviet-Finnish winter war; Japan, relations with Axis Powers and with Soviet Union; Soviet-German wartime cooperation.
- Spaak, Paul-Henri, 187-188, 190
- Spain: Attitude toward Italy's desire for support in war effort, 223; Costa Rican proposal for a collective note from the American Republics to Spain urging maintenance of Spanish neutrality, 773-776
- Stahmer, Heinrich, 647
- Stalin, I. V., 273, 308, 312, 358, 378, 448, 461, 468, 477, 478, 528, 540, 542, 564-565, 581, 597, 610, 611-613
- Stamenov, Ivan, 497, 507
- Stanley, Oliver, 79, 80
- Stanley, Robert, 355
- Steinhardt, Laurence A., 643-645, 645-646
- Stella*, case of, 710-711
- Sturdza, Prince Mihail, 526-528, 534
- Suma, Yakichiro, 662
- Surits. *See* Souritz, Y. Z.
- Surplus Commodities Corp., 346
- Svinhufvud, P. E., 304, 310, 311, 311<sup>n</sup>
- Sweden (*see also* Finland, Soviet-Finnish winter war), neutrality of, 148-149, 150-151, 156, 553-554, 555
- Switzerland, U. S. approach to neutral countries on postwar problems, and Swiss response, 121-122
- Tacoma* incident, 682
- Tani, Masayuki, 640
- Tanner, Väinö A., 272-345 *passim*
- Tanriöver, Hamdullah, 492
- Tatarescu, Gheorghe, 462, 485<sup>n</sup>
- Tatekawa, Lt. Gen. Yoshitsugu, 569, 619, 644, 646, 670-671, 673, 674, 676-677, 679, 680
- Taylor, Myron C., appointment as President Roosevelt's personal representative to Pope Pius XII, 123-129
- Tele, Ferid, 639
- Teleki, Count Paul, 456
- Terboven, Joseph, 162, 163
- Terentyev, A. V., 447, 498
- Thayer, C. W., 608
- Theunis, Georges, 209-210, 216
- Thomsen, Hans, 42
- Tinoco, Luis D., 773, 774
- Tobar Donoso, Julio, 780
- Togo, Shigenori, 569, 571, 634, 639-640, 641, 642, 644, 663, 671
- Tojo, Hideki, 663<sup>n</sup>
- Trade, international: Postwar problems of economic reconstruction, U. S. interest in exchange of views with neutral countries, 117-118, 120, 121; Welles mission to Europe, discussions, 12, 14, 15, 16-17, 22-23, 29-30, 30-31, 47-48, 55, 69, 70-71, 89
- Treaties, conventions, etc.:
- Aaland Islands, convention regarding nonfortification of (*1921*), cited, 328<sup>n</sup>, 333, 349, 350
  - Anglo-French-Turkish treaty of *Oct. 19, 1939*, 447, 448, 449, 459, 474, 476-477
  - Armistice agreement between France and Germany (*June 22*), 262, 263, 264-265, 265-266, 268; between France and Italy (*June 24*), 265, 267
  - German-Danish nonaggression pact (*1939*), 166
  - Hague Convention XIII of *1907*, cited, 681, 682
  - Montreux convention on regime of the Straits (*1936*), 445, 448, 612
  - Soviet-Finnish peace treaty (*1920*), 315

- Treaties, conventions, etc.—Continued
- Soviet-Finnish peace treaty signed *Mar. 12*. See Finland: Peace of Moscow.
  - Soviet-German consular treaty (1925), 440-441
  - Soviet-German nonaggression pact (1939), 364, 444, 540, 556, 566, 571, 574, 580, 615, 617
  - Soviet mutual assistance pacts (1939) with "Democratic Republic of Finland", 285; Estonia, 365; Latvia, 368*n*.; Lithuania, 369; Turkey, 447, 448-449, 450
  - Soviet-Turkish treaty of friendship and neutrality (1925), and protocol (1929), 445, 476
  - Tripartite Pact of *Sept. 27*, Germany-Italy-Japan (see also under Japan, relations with Axis Powers and with Soviet Union; Japanese-Axis alliance; Soviet-German wartime cooperation): Bulgarian adherence, question of, 529, 530-531, 532, 535, 537, 631-632; Rumanian adherence (*Nov. 23*), 531, 533*n*.; Soviet adherence, question of, 614, 617
  - Tripartite Pact. See under Treaties, conventions, etc.
  - Tsvetkovich, Dragisha, 518-519
  - Turkey (see also under Balkans): President Roosevelt's proposal to send special envoys to Turkey to confer with leaders of Greek Orthodox and Mohammedan faiths regarding possibility of peace, 129-135; relations with Soviet Union, 612-613; Straits regime, 444-445, 448, 450, 491, 495, 515, 522, 524, 529, 533, 561, 577*n*., 612
  - Türkmen, B., 565-566
  - Ubico, Jorge, 782
  - Ulmanis, Karlis, 357, 358, 363, 373, 374, 377, 380, 382, 389
  - Umansky, K. A., 139, 324, 419, 443-444, 461*n*
  - Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. See Soviet Union.
  - United Kingdom (see also American Republics: Security zone, etc.; British and French efforts to obtain closer relations with the Soviet Union; Invasion of France by Germany; Invasion of Norway and Denmark by Germany: British and French measures and German administration of occupied areas in Norway): Far Eastern situation, estimate of, 635-636; Franco-British assistance and guarantee to Rumania, 452, 488-489, 491; need for U. S. destroyers, 247; representations to Argentina on question of belligerent submarines
  - United Kingdom—Continued
    - having access to Argentine ports, 776-779, 786-787; shipping, war losses, 84-85; Soviet-Finnish war, British military assistance to Finland, 90, 270, 293, 296, 300, 304, 306-307, 309, 310; Soviet-German wartime cooperation, British attitude, 573-574, 580
  - Urbsys, Juozas, 394
  - Uruguay (see also American Republics, etc.: Invasion of the Netherlands, etc.):
    - Legislation for exclusion of belligerent submarines from ports and territorial waters, 779-780, 783
    - Position with respect to German Government's attempts to obstruct cooperation on neutrality measures among American Republics, 803
    - Views in connection with security zone established by Declaration of Panama, 682, 714; press comment on *Wakama* incident, 713
  - U. S. citizens, evacuation from Norway, 173, 177-178, 180
  - U. S. Congress, Senate bill providing for loan to Finland, 282
  - U. S. diplomatic missions. See under Invasion of the Netherlands, Luxemburg, and Belgium by Germany and Invasion of Norway and Denmark by Germany.
  - Valkov, V. A., 426, 427, 429
  - Van der Straten-Ponthoz, Count Robert, 209-210, 216
  - Van Kleeffens, Eelco Nicolaas, 203, 210, 211
  - Vansittart, Sir Robert, 82
  - Vares, Johannes, 379, 385*n*., 402, 402*n*
  - Vargas, Getulio, 757
  - Vasilevsky, A. M., 307-308, 309, 316
  - Venezuela:
    - Attitude toward proposed joint protest by American Republics against German invasion of the Netherlands, Luxemburg, and Belgium, 733
    - Legislation for exclusion of belligerent submarines from ports and territorial waters, question of, 780
    - Position regarding proposed collective protest by American Republics on the *Hannover* incident, 719, 720-724; on the *Wakama* incident, 703, 704
  - Vereker, Gordon, 347, 352
  - Victor Emmanuel III, King of Italy, conversation with Sumner Welles, 92-96
  - Vienna arbitral award (*Aug. 30*), 501-503, 505, 510*n*., 533
  - Voionmaa, Väinö, 302*n*., 316

- Voroshilov, Marshal K. E., 592  
 Vuillemin, Gen. Joseph, 218-219  
 Vyshinsky, A. Y., 352, 377, 394, 508, 517, 532-533, 611-612, 619-621, 621, 623-624, 626-627, 627
- Wakama* incident, 695-696, 699-706, 707-709, 712-714
- Walden, Gen. Rudolf, 302*n*, 316, 356  
 Waller, George P., 182  
 Wang Ching-wei, 636, 647, 674  
 Ward, Angus I., 426, 431, 436, 437  
 Washington, S. Walter, 437  
 Weizsaecker, Ernst von, 42-43, 557
- Welles, Sumner:  
 Argentine proposal regarding "non-belligerency" of American Republics, opinions concerning, 745-748, 762-763  
 Conversations with Argentine Ambassador, 745-748; British Ambassador, 635-636, 684-686; French Ambassador, 243-244; Hungarian Minister, 457; Turkish Ambassador, 534-535  
 Letter to President Roosevelt, 424-425  
 Special mission to Europe, 1-117  
 Attitudes of countries to be visited, 4-6, 7, 8-9, 10-12, 13-14, 14-15  
 Comments of British Prime Minister Chamberlain, 1-4  
 Interviews with officials in—  
 France, 58-72, 91-92  
 Germany, 33-58  
 Italy, 21-33, 92-113  
 United Kingdom, 72-91  
 Plans and travel arrangements, 4, 5, 7, 9-10  
 Press statements regarding: *Feb. 9*, by President Roosevelt on purpose of mission, 4; *Feb. 14*, by Secretary of State Hull on proposed mission, 8; *Mar. 29*, by President Roosevelt, upon conclusion of mission, 20  
 Reaction in Italy and in France to Welles' visit, 12-13, 14, 17-18  
 Rumors and erroneous press report concerning, 18-20; statement issued by Welles, 19
- Welles, Sumner—Continued  
 Special mission to Europe—Continued  
 Text of Welles' report (dated *Feb. 26-Mar. 19*), 21-117  
 Views of Welles, upon conclusion of mission: Role of Italy and U.S.-Italian relations in connection with question of peace in Europe, 113-116; summary conclusions on basic problem of peace, 116-117  
 Statement of *July 23*, upon Soviet occupation of Baltic States, 401-402, 421  
 Suggestion by Alexander C. Kirk regarding war situation, and reply, 235-236, 237  
 Western Hemisphere Security Zone, discussions in connection with violations by belligerents, 682-684, 684-686, 699
- Wendler, Ernst, 804  
 Western Hemisphere Security Zone. *See under* American Republics.  
 Weygand, Gen. Maxime, 242, 243, 248, 250, 258, 261  
 Wiley, John C., 437  
 Wilhelmina, Queen of the Netherlands. *See* Invasion of the Netherlands, etc.: Netherlands Royal Family.  
 Wilson, Edwin C., 729, 730, 766  
 Wilson, Sir Horace, 82, 83  
 Winter, Hans von, 696-698  
 Winther, Wilhelm, 542-543  
 Witting, Rolf J., 321*n*, 324-325, 330, 331, 333-334, 337, 339, 340, 343, 347-348, 349, 351, 354, 355, 554  
 Wood, Sir Kingsley, 82  
 Wuorimaa, Aarne, 271, 274
- Yang Chieh, Gen., 634-635  
 Yeaton, Maj. Ivan D., 340, 404, 466, 588  
 Yonai, Adm. Mitsumasa, 649  
 Yugoslavia. *See under* Balkans.
- Zadeikis, Povilas, 387, 390  
 Zagorov, Slavcho, 453  
 Zaleski, August, 9, 72  
 Zechlin, Erich, 384  
 Zhdanov, A. A., 307-308, 309, 316, 324, 376, 378, 384*n*  
 Zotov, I. S., 325*n*, 337, 349, 357, 358, 359





